



THE ESSEX CRICKETER

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SPRING 2019 | ISSUE 32

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
OF ESSEX COUNTY
CRICKET CLUB

SIMON HARMER
EXCLUSIVE

VARUN CHOPRA'S
FANTASY XI

ANDRE NEL
INTERVIEW

MEMBERSHIP
INFORMATION

PETER SIDDLER
INTERVIEW

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A WELCOME FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

JOHN FARAGHER



“

We know what we're capable of and we know that we can compete with the best. This team has the talent and depth to win trophies again

Welcome to Spring Edition of 'The Essex Cricketer' Magazine, which marks the start of the start of the 2019 playing season.

The winter period has allowed Anthony McGrath and his squad to reflect on last season and put together plans for the upcoming campaign. We finished third in the Specsavers County Championship and reached the quarter-finals of the Royal London One-Day Cup last season, however, we all believe we should be bringing more trophies back to Chelmsford. Both the coaches and players are focused on what needs to be done to improve both our red and white-ball cricket, and I can assure you that everyone at the Club is excited about the challenges that 2019 will bring.

On the playing front, it feels like we've had a player in every corner of the world this winter. Jamie Porter was with the England Lions in India whilst Shane Snater and Ryan ten Doeschate have been on international duty for the Netherlands in Oman. Ravi Bopara has been playing in the Pakistan Super League, alongside recent signing Cameron Delpert, whilst Simon Harmer has been back in South Africa playing for Warriors and Jozi Stars. Some of the players have been away from Essex since October of last year, so as well as training and preparing for the season itself, our pre-season trip to Abu Dhabi is a great opportunity for the players to catch up, spend some quality time together and raise team spirit levels.

A number of our core players signed contract extensions in the winter, including Simon Harmer, Peter Siddle, Ravi Bopara and skipper Ryan ten Doeschate. It's great for the Club to have a committed group of experienced players and there's no doubt that they'll be contributing heavily again this season. Sir Alastair Cook is also back with us and in the dressing room on a permanent basis following his retirement from international cricket, and when it comes to opening the batting, there is no better in world cricket.

We underperformed in white-ball cricket last year, particularly the Vitality Blast, but with the addition of Cameron Delpert alongside the returns of Adam Zampa and Mohammad Amir, we definitely have a side that can move forward and bring us success in this format of the game.

Our focus is now on the start of the season. As mentioned, we know what we're capable of and that we can compete with the best. This team has the talent and depth to win trophies again this season, and after missing out in 2018, the players are as hungry as ever.

I would like to thank all of our Members for their continued support. You are the foundations of this great Club, and I will be doing everything possible to make sure you remain the heartbeat of Essex for so many more years to come.

I look forward to seeing you all this season, for what I'm sure will be another special year for Essex County Cricket Club.



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A VIEW FROM THE TOP

DEREK BOWDEN | CEO



It's always important to bring the right personality into the dressing room as well as the right talent, to ensure they fit in with the Essex ethos

We had a sturdy year as a Club in 2018. Anthony McGrath was promoted to Head Coach following Chris Silverwood's departure to the England set-up, and he oversaw a third-place finish in the Championship whilst we also reached the later phases of the One-Day Cup. Reinforcing the notion that we can consistently challenge for the Division One title was important and we most definitely did that.

We have achieved great things over the last few years and those recent memories will serve us well for the upcoming season. We have a talented squad that wants to win trophies and importantly, knows how to win trophies. With this in mind, bringing more success and a trophy to The Cloudfm County Ground in 2019 has to be what we set out to achieve this year.

Andre Nel joined our coaching staff in March as Assistant Head Coach & Bowling Coach. It was a long and tough selection process, with several stand out candidates, but Andre was the man we believed could impact and benefit the Club the most. Plenty of you will remember Andre from his playing days here at Essex, and he was desperate to come back and get involved and his passion for cricket is second to none.

The Club worked hard on the recruitment of overseas players this winter, and it's always important to bring the right personality into the dressing room as well as the right talent, to ensure they fit in with the Essex ethos.

Australian international Adam Zampa has re-signed with the Club for the 2019 Vitality Blast. He was one of the shining lights for us in what was a disappointing campaign last year and he's highly thought of in white-ball cricket all around the world. He's been in good form for the Australia T20 and ODI sides in recent months too and will be a real wicket-taking threat for us this year.

Mohammad Amir will also be here for a large chunk of the Vitality Blast campaign. The Pakistan international is one of the most dangerous bowlers in world cricket and showed a real desire to come back to Chelmsford and play for the Club. Like Zampa, he's been impressing for his national side and has been in really good form during the recent Pakistan Super League competition.

Our final signing for the Vitality Blast is South African batsman Cameron Delport. The 29-year-old has a wealth of experience and has excelled in the global competitions, and it's a good fit for both the Club and the player. He's joined via his UK Ancestry Visa and will definitely add some firepower to the team. I'm sure he's going to be an excellent addition.

Our results in the T20 format haven't been good enough in recent years, and we've only shown our capabilities and quality in small glimpses. We know that we have to perform on a more consistent basis in T20 cricket, and Anthony and Andre are determined to put that right.

After a few successful years in red-ball cricket, we will once again be aiming for the top and trying to reclaim the Championship in 2019. We know that's a big ask, but we feel we have a squad that is more than capable of pushing the likes of Surrey and Somerset right until the end. We are also very aware of the dangers of complacency in Division One and know what can happen in a small league of eight teams where one will be relegated.

Membership numbers are still increasing, and we continue to play a style of cricket that is entertaining and enjoyable. Hopefully you'll continue to enjoy the cricket on show over the coming years and as always, thank you for your loyal support and I look forward to seeing you around The Cloudfm County Ground.

DEAR DIARY

With the season just kicking off make sure you are up to date with the latest news.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

First home game of the season

Essex Eagles v Middlesex
Royal London One-Day Cup
Friday 19 April

Royal London One-Day Cup Final

Saturday 25 May, Lord's

Vitality Blast Finals Day

Saturday 21 September, Edgbaston

Final home game of the season

Essex v Surrey
Specsavers County Championship
Monday 16 September

Members' Forum

Monday 7 October

Members' Christmas Lunch

Tuesday 17 December

2019 RECIPROCAL

Essex Cricket Members are entitled to free admission into the ground and pavilion Members facilities (subject to availability) at the following counties for all Specsavers County Championship and/or Royal London One-Day Cup fixtures, with the exception of Surrey, which is only valid for matches v Essex.

Gloucestershire - County Championship only

Hampshire County Championship only

Kent - County Championship only, £7 entry to ground

Lancashire - County Championship only*

Northamptonshire - County Championship only

Nottinghamshire - County Championship only

Somerset - County Championship only

Surrey - County Championship & One-Day Cup

Sussex - County Championship only, £7 entry to ground

Worcestershire - County Championship only

Yorkshire - One-Day Cup**

* As long as they do not live within 15 miles of ground

** Pavilion Members/Area only

Essex Cricket Members are entitled to free admission at the following Racecourses on the said dates;












Chelmsford - Thursday 23 May (evening)
Thursday 29 August (afternoon)

Hickstead - Thursday 20 June (Al Shira'aa Hickstead Derby)
Saturday 27 July (Longines FEI Jumping Nations Cup)

Huntingdon - Tuesday 15 October, Thursday 26 December

Newmarket - Tuesday 16 April, Saturday 2 November

2019 MEMBER BENEFITS

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Entry to all Essex home Royal London One-Day Cup (group stage) games	●	○	●	
Entry to the England Women v Windies Women ODI fixture	●	○	●	
Discounted tickets to England Women v Australia Women IT20 fixture	●	○	●	
Discounted tickets for home Vitality Blast games	●	○	●	
Exclusive Members' Forums, Q&As and events	●	○	●	
Exclusive bi-annual Q&A with Club and Committee representatives		○		
Use of Scrutton Bland Premier Suite on home Essex Championship & One-Day Cup games, and upon purchase/application of ticket for Blast and Tourist games		○	● 2019 only	
Priority booking for home Vitality Blast games	●	○	●	
Access to priority booking for Lord's Test matches	●	○	●	
Discount vouchers for The Essex Cricket Store	●	○	●	
£1 parking at the nearby Meteor Way car park, subject to availability	●	○	●	
Free parking at The Cloudfm County Ground or nearest available car park, subject to availability		○	● 2019 only	
Essex Cricket Yearbook		○	●	
Exclusive Member pin badge, lanyard and card	●	○	●	
Full voting rights and access to yearly Report & Accounts	●	○	●	
A Wilkin & Sons Tiptree hamper			● 2019 only	
Official Essex Cricket magazine sent to your inbox twice a year	●	○	●	
Free entry to County Championship games at the following Counties when Essex are NOT the opposition	●	○	●	
£7 entry to County Championship games at the following Counties when Essex are NOT the opposition	●	○	●	
Access to Doug Insole Pavillion & Restaurant				
Use of the Scrutton Bland Premier Suite on home Essex Championship & One-Day Cup (group stage) games and upon purchase/application of ticket for Blast games		○		
Discounted Hospitality dining packages in the Scrutton Bland Premier Suite for One-Day Cup games		○		
50% discount on non-matchday room hire at The Cloudfm County Ground for celebrations	●	○	●	
Discounted coaching at the Allen Ford Group Graham Gooch Cricket Centre				
£1 tea & coffee in the Doug Insole Pavilion	●	○	●	
Free tea, coffee and biscuits in the Scrutton Bland Premier Suite		○	●	
Five guest passes to the Scrutton Bland Premier Suite on County Championship Day's 2, 3, or 4		○		
Free scorecard on each day's play		○	●	





ANTHONY MCGRATH | HEAD COACH

It has been a year since I took over from Chris Silverwood as Head Coach and I'm loving every minute of this role. Essex is a fantastic Club to work for, the fans are exceptional, the players are a great bunch and I feel that we're making big strides in the right direction both on and off the pitch.

Our red-ball cricket has been one of our major strengths over the last few years, and we all know what we're capable of in the longer format of the game. We have an exceptionally talented squad and every player in the dressing room is striving for the same thing; success in the Championship. When September 2019 comes around, we should be right at the top of the Division One table fighting for that title if we play to the level we know we can.

We desperately want to improve on our white-ball cricket as we know we've sold ourselves short in that department in recent years, especially in the Blast. We moved early compared to a lot of other sides in order to secure the players we felt could take us to the next level, and we will have Adam Zampa and Cameron Delpport with us for next year's competition.

'Zamps' was here last year and showed why he's regarded as one of the best leg-spinners around, finishing as our leading wicket taker, whilst Cameron is a lethal opening batsman. We identified early on that we needed to add a batsman to our Blast squad and with all of his global experience, Cameron fits the bill perfectly.

Alastair Cook's international retirement is Essex's gain, as we'll have a world-class batsman within the squad for the entire season. As well as his runs, his everyday presence will bring a professionalism to the dressing room which will make everyone raise their game, and I'm really looking forward to seeing the knock-on effect within the side.

As well as Chef, Peter Siddle has signed for another two seasons, which is a fantastic coup. Like Alastair, he has heaps of international experience and has been back in the Australia set-up over the last few months, which shows how valued he is and how much he has to offer. He took 40 wickets or so in all formats for us last season, and alongside Jamie Porter, Simon Harmer and Sam Cook, I believe that we have the most dangerous bowling attack in the country.

Essex have always done things a certain way and that's created a great culture and atmosphere around the Club. We have strong relationships between the players, the staff and the fans and everybody shares the same success and glory when the team wins, and the same frustration and pain when they lose. We promote youth and take pride in the fact we have so many players representing their home county. All of this and more makes this a special Club and we will do our best to carry on doing things the Essex way.

I look forward to seeing you around The Cloudfm County Ground in the upcoming season and as always, thank you for your continued and loyal support.



RYAN TEN DOESCHATE | CLUB CAPTAIN

We have all had a good period of rest, both physically and mentally, and we're feeling good and positive about the upcoming campaign. The squad have been back training for a while and our focus is firmly on preparing for the 2019 season, so we can play at our absolute best.

All the players need to continue to improve and work on their game. Other counties are recruiting strongly, and we're now seen as one of the best sides in the country, so fully expecting teams to come at us hard this year.

We want to challenge on all fronts in 2019. We know our white-ball cricket needs addressing, particularly in the Blast and we've made strong additions to reflect this. Everybody knows how good 'Zamps' is and how dangerous he is with the ball, so it's good to have him back and Cameron is a stunning batsman. I came up against him in the Afghanistan Premier League at the end of the last year and if he produces the same type of displays with the bat as he did then, the crowd at Chelmsford are in for a real treat.

One thing me and all the players agreed on when we were reflecting on last season is how good the support was. The fans here at Essex are special. They can swing games in our favour so it's great to hear that Memberships are on the up and ticket sales are moving along nicely. The squad can't wait to get out onto the pitch at Chelmsford and when the fixtures were released, that first home match was the one we were all looking for.

This will be my 17th year with Essex, which I still sometimes find hard to believe. There's been plenty of highs and lows since I joined as a 22-year-old, but I still get that exact same buzz when it's a match day and I get the chance to play for this great Club.

As a player, you're constantly reminded of the wonderful history this Club can boast. There's The Doug Insole Pavilion, The Tom Pearce Stand, and of course, England's all-time leading run scorer in the dressing room.

During my time here, I've built into the culture and as Club Captain, I've done my best to put my own stamp on it. There's an ethos of promoting youth and doing so has been vital to our success over recent years.

Alastair Cook, Ravi Bopara, Tom Westley, Dan Lawrence, Adam Wheeler and Sam Cook are all hugely important players for us, and they all came through the Essex Academy. There's more talent coming through too. Jack Plom is an exceptional young player and big things are expected of him, whilst Will Buttler also has a bright future in the game if he fulfils his potential.

We're proud to be a County that gives youth the chance it deserves, that's the Essex way and as Club Captain, I'm delighted to play a small part in it. I look forward to seeing you all soon, and fingers crossed we'll have a fantastic season and bring some silverware back to The Cloudfm County Ground.

A LOOK AHEAD TO THE 2019 SEASON...



SPECSAVERS COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

A strong end to the season saw Essex beat Nottinghamshire, Worcestershire and Surrey in the final three Championship games and ensure a third-place finish in Division One.

New Head Coach Anthony McGrath was tasked with the challenge of defending the title, and although he and his Essex side couldn't quite bring silverware back to The Cloudfm County Ground, they should be proud of their efforts having solidified their place in the top tier of English cricket.

Jamie Porter and Simon Harmer were outstanding with the ball, taking 58 and 57 wickets respectively. Harmer was the runaway winner at the End of Season Gala Dinner too, claiming the Player of the Year, Players' Player of the Year and the Bowler of the Year.

Ravi Bopara was exceptional with the bat, scoring 751 runs including a top score of 133 against Worcestershire. Tom Westley also shone with the bat towards the end of the season and scored a wonderful 134 in the final game of the season as Essex became the only side to beat Surrey in the Championship during 2018.

2019 will certainly be a battle for the side, with the expectation now to challenge Surrey for the title rather than just remain in the division. This Essex side have risen to near enough every obstacle put in front of them in the past three years, and who would bet against them doing it again?



Specsavers
COUNTY
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HAMPSHIRE

Hampshire finished fifth in the Championship last season and will look for more consistency over the course of the 2019 campaign in order to finish further up in the standings. New First Team Manager Adrian Birrell will have a job on his hands, and much will depend on who they can recruit.

Key man - Kyle Abbott



KENT

Following their promotion from Division Two in 2018, many will write off Kent in the same way they did Essex a couple of years ago. Essex fans will know that is a mistake and that Kent will be riding a wave from the off in 2019.

Key man - Sam Billings



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Nottinghamshire avoided relegation because they had one more win than Lancashire, with both sides ending their 2018 campaigns on 133 points. Many will see them as title challengers this season due to their depth and quality.

Key man - Samit Patel



SOMERSET

Somerset were runners up in the Championship last year and will be looking to go one better in 2019. Spin bowler Jack Leach was rewarded for his astounding form by being named in England's Test squad for the tour of Sri Lanka, and again impressed by taking 16 wickets across the three-match series.

Key man - Jack Leach



SURREY

Newly crowned Champions Surrey dominated the Championship last year and will be looking to replicate their success. They have international players in every department and with the likes of Rory Burns, Jason Roy, Sam Curran and Morne Morkel to name but a few, they'll be most peoples favourites to be victorious come September 2019.

Key man - Rory Burns



WARWICKSHIRE

Warwickshire were promoted as Champions of Division Two in 2018 and, like fellow promoted side Kent, they'll be looking to build on last year's campaign and solidify themselves within Division One. They'll be without former England batsman Jonathan Trott, who retired at the end of last season after spending 16 years with the Club.

Key man - Jeetan Patel



YORKSHIRE

Yorkshire enjoyed mixed fortunes in the Championship last year and ended up finishing fourth in Division One. The White Rose County have lost several players for the upcoming season but are still more than capable of winning any game with the likes of Gary Ballance, and Adam Lyth in the ranks.

Key man - Gary Ballance





ROYAL LONDON ONE-DAY CUP

The Eagles were unlucky to crash out of the Royal London One-Day Cup at the quarter-final stages last year, after losing to Yorkshire Vikings in a game in which both teams showcased their skill and quality. Following his international retirement, Alastair Cook should be around for all of the 2019 campaign, which will come as a huge boost to Anthony McGrath. The Essex Head Coach has the tools and talent in his squad to reach the Final on 25 May and that has to be one of the objectives for the upcoming season.



GLAMORGAN

The Welsh side finished rock bottom of the South Group after recording just one victory in 2018. Colin Ingram was the single shining light for the side, averaging 57.42 with the bat, but not even his efforts were enough to move them from the foot of the table.

Key man - Chris Cooke



GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Gloucestershire were unlucky with the weather in 2018 and nearly half of their games ended with no result. They subsequently finished seventh in the South Group and missed out on the playoffs, with Chris Liddle leading the bowling attack with 13 wickets.

Key man - Chris Liddle



HAMPSHIRE

Hampshire won the 2018 Royal London One-Day Cup following a comfortable victory over Kent Spitfires at Lord's last June. James Vince scored a mammoth 527 runs and was well supported by Joe Weatherley and Jimmy Adams with the bat whilst Fidel Edwards and Gareth Berg combined for an impressive 39 wickets.

Key man - Liam Dawson



KENT SPITFIRES

Rivals Kent Spitfires reached the Final and Daniel Bell-Drummond hit a notable 86 on the day, but it wasn't enough to claim victory as Hampshire ran out winners by 61 runs. They have one of the most exciting line-ups in white-ball cricket, including Bell-Drummond, Sam Billings, Alex Blake and Heino Kuhn, and they'll be looking to go one further in this year's competition.

Key man - Daniel Bell-Drummond



MIDDLESEX

Despite Paul Stirling's best efforts with the bat, Middlesex's miserable run in white-ball cricket continued and they ended up finishing sixth in the South Group, despite winning half of their games. Stirling scored well over 500 runs in 2018 and he will be vital in their upcoming campaign.

Key man - Eoin Morgan



SOMERSET

Somerset finished just outside the playoff places and were unfortunate to do so, having only lost three games in the competition. James Hildreth was the danger man with the bat, averaging 62.57 with the bat which included a brilliant century against Welsh side Glamorgan.

Key man - Lewis Gregory



SURREY

Surrey reached the final at Lord's in 2017 but were unable to progress past the group stages last year, finishing fifth in the South Group having mirrored Somerset's results. They certainly have the squad to progress to the later phases of the competition, and can turn to the likes of Ben Foakes, Jason Roy, Sam Curran and Rikki Clarke to do so. The very minimum they'll be aiming for this year is to reach the play-offs.

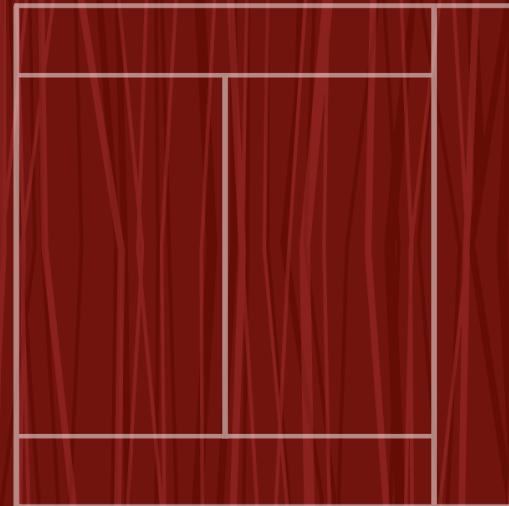
Key man - Ben Foakes



SUSSEX SHARKS

Once again Sussex Sharks failed to qualify for the play-offs after winning just two of their group stage matches. Laurie Evans continued to shine in white-ball cricket and was their most dangerous batsman, but there was little for Sharks fans to get excited about in the Royal London One-Day Cup last year.

Key man - Luke Wright





VITALITY BLAST

The Eagles suffered a disappointing group stage exit in the Vitality Blast in 2018, and will certainly look to improve during McGrath's second season as Head Coach.



Varun Chopra was one of the shining lights in a disappointing campaign, hitting 503 runs throughout the competition and recording six half centuries. If the Eagles are to be successful in this format of the game in 2019, his runs will be almost certainly prove crucial.

Adam Zampa was impressive with the ball and took 12 wickets before departing Chelmsford early to compete in the Caribbean Premier League for the Jamaica Tallawahs. As well as being the sides leading wicket taker, the Australian had an impressive economy rate of 7.90 and averaged a wicket every 20.75 runs. The leg-spinner has re-signed for the 2019 campaign alongside pace bowler Mohammad Amir, Cameron Delport, who has been brought in to add batting firepower to the T20 attack.

GLAMORGAN

Glamorgan reached Finals Day a few years ago but finished sixth in the South Group in 2018, which will have been a disappointment to everyone at the Welsh side. Their white-ball cricket has gone from strength-to-strength and with players like Colin Ingram in their ranks, they'll always have a chance of reaching the later phases of the competition.

Key man - Colin Ingram



MIDDLESEX

Former Essex man Stuart Law has taken over as Head Coach at Middlesex and will be desperate to improve their T20 play. The London-based side finished rock bottom of the South Group in 2018, winning just two of their 14 matches. Despite scoring just short of 500 runs in the competition, Paul Stirling couldn't turn their fortunes around, nor could England ODI Captain Eoin Morgan, and with the talent in their squad Middlesex will look to vastly improve in 2019.

Key man - AB De Villiers



GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Gloucestershire finished fourth in the South Group but were knocked out of the Vitality Blast by eventual winners Worcestershire Rapids in the quarter-finals. David Payne led the way with 18 wickets whilst Australian Andrew Tye chipped in with 13, and Michael Klinger's side will be desperate to go one further in 2019 and reach Edgbaston for Finals Day.

Key man - Andrew Tye



SOMERSET

The West Country side topped the South Group and reached Finals Day with ease, but fell agonisingly short at the last hurdle, losing to Sussex Sharks in the semi-finals at Edgbaston. Corey Anderson surpassed 500 runs in the competition and their bowling attack of Jamie Overton, Jerome Taylor and Lewis Gregory was lethal, combining for 64 wickets. Somerset should again be in the hunt when Finals Day comes around in September.

Key man - Jamie Overton



HAMPSHIRE

Like the Eagles, Hampshire struggled in last years Vitality Blast and ended up winning just two games. There's no doubt they'll be looking to improve under new First-Team Manager Adrian Birrell and with players like James Vince, Sam Northeast and Chris Wood in their side, they can definitely aim high in this year's competition.

Key man - James Vince



SURREY

Surrey had the players and talent at their disposal to really stake a claim for winning the Vitality Blast in 2018, with Aaron Finch and Jason Roy regularly opening together and the Curran brothers ruling with the ball, but they ended up finishing fifth in the South Group. Michael Di Venuto's side will be disappointed with their own performances last year and will be out to set things right in 2019.

Key man - Aaron Finch



KENT SPITFIRES

Battle of the Bridge rivals, Kent Spitfires, made the quarter-finals of the Vitality Blast last year and will be looking to go one further and make it to Edgbaston this time around. Joe Denly led the way with both the bat and the ball, scoring 409 runs and taking 19 wickets. He was well supported by both Daniel Bell-Drummond and Sam Billings, who scored 372 runs apiece.

Key man - Joe Denly



SUSSEX SHARKS

The Sharks came as close as possible without actually winning and will consider themselves unlucky following their Finals Day defeat to Worcestershire Rapids. Laurie Evans was deadly with the bat, scoring 614 runs and the bowling attack of Jofra Archer and Danny Briggs combined for an impressive 40 wickets. With a little more firepower, they very well could have been Champions and that will be their aim for the 2019 Vitality Blast.

Key man - Jofra Archer



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HARMY TAKES THE REINS

SIMON HARMER TAKES OVER AS SKIPPER FOR
THE 2019 VITALITY BLAST CAMPAIGN

It's all change for the Essex Eagles Vitality Blast side this season after Simon Harmer was announced as the new Eagles T20 Captain.

The 30-year-old South African takes over the reins from Ryan ten Doeschate, who will remain as Club Captain and will continue to skipper the red-ball and 50-over side.

Harmer, who joined the Club ahead of the 2017 Championship winning season, was a regular member of last season's T20 campaign and deputised for ten Doeschate during the final home group match versus Kent Spitfires last year.

The off-spinner will now take on the role permanently and will lead the Essex Eagles out at Lord's on Thursday 18 July against Middlesex in the opening fixture of the 2019 competition.

Harmer is ready and raring to go and said on his appointment; "It's an exciting challenge, I think there's going to be a lot of expectation going forward as we haven't performed to the levels we know we're capable of, but it's a challenge that I wanted and I'm really looking forward to leading the team in the right direction.

"My biggest focus is going to be on making sure we're doing the right things off the field, training hard and taking care

“

It's an exciting challenge, I think there's going to be a lot of expectation going forward”.

of the little things in cricket, and ultimately the rest of it should take care of itself.

"Tendo has done an unbelievable job as Captain, if you look at the position Essex were in 5 years ago compared to now, a lot of that is down to him and the decisions he has made at the Club.

"It is daunting in a way as we have so much respect for Tendo, so I think it is going to be different with me coming in and the changing room having a different voice, but I'm sure the players will buy into the things myself and the coaching staff believe in."

Members discounted tickets for the Vitality Blast campaign are on sale now and can be purchased in person, by phone or online. Members tickets can only be purchased up until a week before each match and are subject to availability.





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Essex  Cricket

CRICKET IN THE COMMUNITY



ALL STARS CRICKET

Once again cricket clubs all over Essex are getting ready to deliver their All Stars Cricket Programmes to boys and girls aged five to eight years old.

Since 2017, when the ECB launched the young person's initiative to cricket clubs across England and Wales, there have been over 184 centres activating cricket in Essex and East London. In 2017 and 2018 there were over 2,500 participants taking up cricket at their local club, and 2019 already has over 600 participants signed up to take part this year.

Clubs host eight weeks of one-hour cricket sessions with the emphasis being on having fun and being active. As well as developing the children's movement skills, parents and guardians are encouraged to take part too, offering valuable and fun active time with your children. Each child that signs up receives a backpack full of goodies including a cricket bat, ball, activity book, personalised shirt and cap.

This year's participants also have access to a whole host of opportunities money can't buy. Each participant will have a QR code in their activity book, which they can scan to see if they have won the opportunity to be a Trophy Mascot for one of the Cricket World Cup matches. Alongside this, we are offering All Stars Centres across Essex and East London the opportunity to play at The Cloudfm County Ground, and to attend an All Stars Festival Evening. All Stars Clubs can also register their interest to take part in the Guard of Honour at Chelmsford, leading the Essex players out onto the pitch ahead of T20, 50-over and Championship matches.

To register your child simply go to the website address below to find your local All Stars Centre.

www.ecb.co.uk/play/all-stars



ESSEX BOUNDARY CLUB

ALL SET FOR THE NEW SEASON

For all cricket lovers, April is when the year really begins! The 2019 season is upon us and Essex supporters will be delighted with a third consecutive season of first division cricket and the chance to regain the coveted Championship pennant.

The Essex Boundary Club (EBC) had a successful year in 2018 and all our efforts are now focused on doing even better in 2019. Our Annual General Meeting will be held in a hospitality box during the tea break on the first day of our home Championship game against Nottinghamshire on Tuesday 14 May. It's open to all Boundary Club Members or alternatively, we'd be delighted to sign you up on the day, so why not come along and hear of our plans for 2019!

The EBC exists to improve facilities for all Essex Members, and those who come to watch cricket on an occasional basis, and at the same time we raise funds to support age group and grassroots cricket in the county.

In 2018 we again made donations to the Club including a contribution which went towards the renovation of The Allen Ford Group Graham Gooch Cricket Centre. This is now a superb facility used not only by the professionals, but by local clubs and the various teams run by Essex Cricket in the Community. We are also working with the Club to further improve the visual displays in the Doug Insole Pavilion.

Long term sponsors, Gables Poultry Farm, are now ending their support and we would like to thank Simon and Karen for their huge contribution to the Boundary Club over the years. We are delighted that Len Collins of Purified Air continues to support the Essex Boundary Club, enabling us to provide wonderful prizes in our raffles. Our new sponsor this year is Anne's Pantry and we're extremely grateful for their backing. No doubt you've seen their food outlets at the ground - we reckon it's the best street food on the circuit, so if you haven't tried it, make sure you do ASAP!

GRASSROOTS

We will again be supporting the Under-19 T20 Club competition. In 2018, Finals Day was held at The Cloudfm County Ground giving a real boost to the young players taking part. We also support the Graham Gooch Academy. Graham is our President and supports us in many ways, so we are delighted to be able to help him in his work in developing young talented cricketers.

LUNCHES AND SOCIAL EVENTS

Our first lunch of the season is on Tuesday 28 May, the second day of the Championship fixture where we'll be hosting newly promoted rivals Kent. Once again, we will have a hospitality box which will be available all day with

a pay bar on hand. The two-course lunch is priced at £25 for EBC members and £30 for guests. Please contact the Boundary Club for a reservation and take note that we are planning other events throughout the year and these will be advertised at The Cloudfm County Ground in due course.

CITY LUNCH

We are giving early notice of the City Lunch as places are already in short supply following our sell-out event in 2018, when former snooker World Champion Dennis Taylor entertained 190 people at Ball's Brothers in Mincing Lane. With so many people booked for 2019 coupled with the fact that we are slightly reducing the capacity to increase the amount of space in the room, means that there are only a handful of places left. Our speaker this year is Chris Cowdrey who once captained England and since retiring from the game, has carved a career as commentator, raconteur, after dinner speaker, MC and auctioneer. It promises to be another great occasion and the remaining places will be filled on a first come, first served basis.

KLARNERS TAKING ON EBC TOUR

Klarners will be running several away trips this season on behalf of the Boundary Club. In the Championship there is a trip to Nottinghamshire from 30 June to 3 July, followed by a visit to Worcestershire's Blackfinch New Road, which is always a popular destination, from 13 to 16 July. Our opponents will be Warwickshire - decamped a few miles up the road as Edgbaston is in use for the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup.

We will be travelling to Somerset for what will be a historic match, the first game under permanent floodlights at Taunton. As the 50-over game starts at 1pm, we will be leaving early enough to get to the ground in time for lunch and staying close by in Taunton that evening before returning to Chelmsford the following day. We are also in the process of planning a day trip to Beckenham on 5 May when the Essex Eagles will face Kent Spitfires in the Royal London One-Day Cup.

Klarners will handle all bookings and full details - the number to call is 01206 541211 or email info@klarnerstours.co.uk

2019 ARRANGEMENTS

One of the benefits of EBC membership is the private box which is available during all home Championship matches and selected 50-over one-day games. We are grateful to Essex Cricket for providing this facility and we want to thank those who have made it possible. It is rare that the demand for hospitality is so high that the box cannot be provided, but you will understand that on such occasions, the facility is withdrawn. Advance notice will be given in these circumstances.



ANDRE NEL

A CHAT WITH THE NEW ASSISTANT HEAD COACH

Andre Nel joined Essex in early March as the Club's new Assistant Head Coach & Bowling Coach, with the 41-year-old returning to the Club he played at between 2005 and 2008.

During his time with Essex, he became a popular figure with the crowd, and he can't wait to get his teeth into his new role. "It's great to be back here in Chelmsford, so many aspects of the Club haven't changed since I left," Nel said. "The changing room still has the same feel to it and the people working behind the scenes are still here, which has really helped me settle back in."

Since retiring from playing cricket in 2013, Nel has had several coaching roles, and said: "I've been coaching with Easterns, my very first Club, since the moment I stopped playing and that's been a really good growing experience for me.

"I was also Head Coach of Phantoms for their 2014 and 2015 Ram Slam campaigns, and since 2016 I've also been the Assistant & Bowling Coach at the

South African National Cricket Academy during the off-season.

"I loved all these experiences, and it was a tough decision for me to leave Easterns, but when the opportunity to come and coach at a Club like Essex arose, it was a no brainer and I just had to do it."

Nel was keen to get started straight away and flew out to Abu Dhabi to meet up with Anthony McGrath and the squad before the pre-season tour began.

"It was a really good trip and it was good to meet up with the squad before the cricket started," the South African said. "It's nice knowing that I played with a few of the guys like Tendo and Ravi when I was here, so I wasn't going into the complete unknown, but it was also important to meet all the younger members of the squad."

"The 11 days we spent out there were certainly productive and now we're looking forward to the real cricket starting in early April."

Nel took over 1,000 wickets during his playing career, and as the new Essex Bowling Coach, he was impressed with what he saw during pre-season.

"Jamie Porter is obviously really good," Nel said. "He knows exactly what he wants to do when he has the ball in his hand and that's the sort of confidence that is rewarded with wickets.

"Sam Cook is another one who will be important for us this year. He's really skilful with the ball and one of the best young bowlers I've seen for a long while, whilst we also have Aaron Beard, who looks like he's going to be a massive asset to the Club.

"We're all eagerly anticipating the upcoming campaign and hopefully, with a bit of luck, it's going to be another memorable one for everyone associated with the Club."



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Essex County Cricket Team 2019

Back Row: Shane Snater, Sam Cook, Ben Allison, Paul Walter, Matt Quinn, James Coles, Varun Chopra, Will Buttleman, Aaron Beard. Front Row: Jamie Porter, Michael Pepper, Rishi Patel, Peter Siddle, Adam Zampa (Vice-Captain)



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...n, Jack Plom, Feroze Khushi. Middle Row: Adam Wheeler, Aron Nijjar, Simon Harmer (Eagles T20 Captain), Matt ...orter, Dan Lawrence, Ravi Bopara, Ryan ten Doeschate (Club Captain), Tom Westley, Alastair Cook, Nick Browne. ...tality Blast), Cameron Delport (Vitality Blast), Mohammad Amir (Vitality Blast).



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OVERSEAS ADVENTURES



RAVI BOPARA



Bopara spent October in Afghanistan competing for Balkh Legends in the first ever Afghanistan Premier League T20 competition. Alongside Club Captain Ryan ten Doeschate and cricketing legend Chris Gayle, his side were triumphant and beat Rashid Khan's Kabul Zwanan side by four wickets in the Final.

Bopara followed this up with more success in December and claimed T10 League glory in the UAE with Northern Warriors. Batsman of the Year Bopara was only required to bat once in the entire competition due to the firepower at the top of the Warriors order, but with the ball he took an impressive 6 wickets for 96 runs during the tournament.



SIMON HARMER



Simon Harmer spent the winter months back at home in South Africa playing for Warriors and ended the 2018 calendar year as the world's leading first-class wicket-taker, having picked up 106 dismissals for Essex and Warriors.

Harmer also tasted success with Jozi Stars in the Mzansi Super League T20 competition in late 2018. Playing alongside Chris Gayle and Dane Vilas, Harmer led the bowling attack and took 10 wickets for 218 runs during the competition with his Jozi Stars side beating Cape Town Blitz by 8 wickets in the Final.



RYAN TENDOESCHATE



Club Captain Ryan ten Doeschate joined Ravi Bopara in Afghanistan during October and was a vital player in the Balkh Legends side as they claimed the first ever APL T20 title. He spent December in Nepal playing for Bhairahawa Gladiators and took 8 wickets whilst averaging 22.38 with the bat as his side finished third in the league standings.



SAM COOK



Young Player of the Year Sam Cook spent January and February out in Melbourne playing for Prahran Cricket Club in the Victorian Premier League.



DAN LAWRENCE



Dan Lawrence was in Nepal during October playing for Expert Dhangadhi Blues in the Pokhara Premier League. His side were unlucky to miss out on a play-off place and Lawrence appeared in all five of their matches, with his top score of 52 coming against Butwal Blasters in his penultimate game.



JAMIE PORTER



Jamie Porter travelled to the UAE with the England Lions in November for a four-day match and two 50-over games against a Pakistan A side and took 5 wickets during the trip. The 25-year-old was again selected for both England Lions squads for the tour to India in January.



MATT QUINN



Matt Quinn returned to New Zealand for the winter and has been playing alongside Hampshire's James Vince for Auckland Aces in the Super Smash T20 competition.

CLUB TO COUNTY

JAMIE SPEAKS ABOUT HIS WHIRLWIND CAREER TO DATE, FROM BEING A RECRUITMENT CONSULTANT IN LONDON TO BEING CONSIDERED AS JAMES ANDERSON'S EVENTUAL REPLACEMENT IN THE ENGLAND SIDE

Following another fantastic season with the ball, 25-year-old Jamie Porter has made huge strides towards achieving his dream of playing for England...

After recording 58 Championship wickets during 2018, the seamer made it back to back years as the Club's leading wicket-taker and was named in the England Test squad for the first time.

Although he ultimately missed out on making his England debut, it can't be too long before the Leytonstone-born man is given his chance amongst Joe Root's side.

Just five years ago though, Porter was working as a recruitment consultant in North-East London, preparing for a season of club cricket and thinking his dreams of life in the professional ranks were over.

Porter said: "It's funny how it all works out. There was a point where I had accepted the fact that after three years of second-team cricket, it wasn't going to happen.

"That was the time to see what the real world was offering. I went into recruitment, and I actually enjoyed it, but I was missing cricket and even when working in the office I was thinking about when my next game was. Luckily, I did well for my club side, Chingford, and Essex had some injuries, so I came back into the picture slightly and ended up making my debut at the end of the next season. I only ended up doing three months in recruitment!"

It was during the 2005 Ashes when a 12-year-old Porter fell in love with cricket, explaining: "We were on a family holiday in Portugal and I actually came back paler than when I went because I was just glued to the TV non-stop.

"It was during the Old Trafford test and I just remember Simon Jones and Freddie Flintoff putting on a bowling masterclass. There was one day where everyone I was on holiday with went to the beach and I actually faked being ill so I could stay at the hotel and watch it. From that moment on, playing for England was always the end goal for me."

13 years later and after countless wickets, a Championship and so many individual awards, Porter was finally named in the England squad for their Series opener against India last July. Sam Curran won the contest for the final seam-bowling place in the England side and Porter didn't feature, but nevertheless, he viewed it as a great experience and something to build on in the coming years.

"It was nice to get a feel for how that environment works. I got to know the players I hadn't already met, did the full training sessions with the lads and grasped an understanding of how they go about their business. I guess that means it will be a bit less of a step into the unknown next time around."

He's now one of the names James Anderson mentions when asked how England are going to replace him, and Porter admits that's hugely flattering.

"When I hear things like that, I honestly don't know what to think. Jimmy is an icon of English cricket and someone I watched a lot of when I was younger. For Jimmy to suggest that I could potentially replace him in the England team fills me with confidence and it is certainly one of the biggest compliments I've received."

Watch Jamie's journey from Club Cricket to the Essex First Team in the 'Club to County' series. Available now at www.essexcricket.org.uk.



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

WE TAKE A LOOK AT THREE FORMER ESSEX BATSMEN IN OUR REGULAR FEATURE



BRIAN HARDIE

Born in 1950, the resilient batsman soon became one of the mainstays of the Essex side for almost two decades after moving down from his native Scotland.

He was a rock in the middle-order, although he ultimately formed a highly effective opening pair with Graham Gooch in one-day cricket.

Affectionately known as "Lager", he made his county debut in 1973 and the highlight of his Essex career came in 1979 when Essex won the Benson & Hedges Cup and the County Championship. Brian scored a four hour century against Northamptonshire in the victory that secured the three-day title.

Many would consider his greatest moment came in the NatWest Trophy Final against Nottinghamshire in 1985, when he made 110 from 149 deliveries as he and Gooch posted 202 for the first wicket. Hardie's contribution won him the Man of the Match award in Essex's one-run victory.

Brian scored more than 18,000 first-class runs, passing 1,000 runs 11 times and it was that form that was key to helping Essex achieve so many titles during his time with the Club. He was also an outstanding fielder close to the wicket, taking 346 catches in 374 appearances.

Following his retirement, he took up a position as a Sports Master at The Brentwood School.



BRUCE FRANCIS

The hard-hitting Australian opening batsman scored seven centuries and nearly 3,000 first-class runs for an average of around 39 in his two seasons with Essex.

Stockily-built, he played his state cricket with New South Wales and joined Essex in 1971, quickly becoming a crowd favourite with his aggressive approach to batting.

The right-hander was selected to tour England with the 1972 Australia Ashes squad and although he played in three Tests, it was not a personally successful tour. He resumed his career with the county the following year when he continued to make a favourable impression with the bat.

Whilst fielding was not one of his favourite pastimes, he did have a fondness for devouring ice creams with enthusiasm. Sadly, he never had the stomach for the daily rigours of county cricket and at the age of 25, he decided not to continue beyond the 1973 campaign. He did, though, tour South Africa with the D.H. Robins XI in 1973-74 and 1974-75.

A political science graduate, he retained links with cricket after retiring when becoming involved in setting up Kerry Packer's World Series Cricket in 1979. Later, he helped organise the "rebel" Australian tours to South Africa in 1985-86 and 1986-87. That role included signing up a number of Test players to represent the touring party.



KEN McEWAN

Born in Cape Province, South Africa, in 1952, this most stylish of batsmen boasted admirable technique and timing.

He made his Essex debut in May 1974 and scored 1,056 runs which proved to be his lowest aggregate in an English season. Over the next 11 years, he collected a further 51 hundreds. In 1976, he scored 1,821 runs for an average of just under 50 and enjoyed an astonishing run which brought him five successive centuries. A fixture at number three in our batting order, he was also a prolific contributor in one-day cricket.

During the winter months, he went back home to South Africa to continue his career although he also spent some time playing for Western Australia.

His highest score was 218 against Sussex at Chelmsford in 1977, and the following year, the unassuming player was named as one of Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year.

Kenny left Essex having played 282 first-class matches having accumulated 18,088 runs at an average of 43.27 which also included 52 centuries, whilst his 270 limited-overs matches for the county brought him 8,298 runs at an average of more than 35 and included 13 hundreds and 46 half-centuries.

After retiring in 1985, Ken returned to South Africa where he became a farmer.

SECOND XI



After the heights achieved in 2018, with appearances in both the Championship Final and the T20 Final, Essex Second XI are looking forward to the 2019 season.

Rishi Patel, Aron Nijjar and Michael Pepper all topped various categories in the 2nd XI averages, with Paul Walter's outstanding all-round performances earning him the Second XI Player of the Year award.

The latest fixtures are now available on the website - but one certainty is that the team will play an additional Championship match this season with the MCC Young Cricketers moving back to the South Group, and replacing the Unicorns in the Trophy and T20 groups.

At the moment, April starts with a one-day and three-day friendly against Durham at Chelmsford, and two one-day friendlies against Norfolk (Broxbourne CC) and Suffolk (Frinton CC), before the competitive Trophy campaign opens at Billericay against Middlesex. A further one-day friendly against Cambridge MCCU will be played at Broxbourne. The Trophy and the first Championship match follow against Kent at Tunbridge Wells before the month closes with a Trophy match away to the MCC Young Cricketers at West Herts CC.

May sees the team spending the month at Billericay; opening with a Trophy match against Somerset, then a three-day friendly against Derbyshire, followed by Trophy and Championship matches against Gloucestershire. The now traditional T20 fixture against an East London League representative side will see Essex return to their former ground at Leyton.

In June, Essex return to Bishops Stortford for a Championship match against Middlesex, then travel to Wales to play Glamorgan in both the Trophy and Championship (Trophy at Monmouth School, Championship at The Gnoll, Neath). After a free week, there is a return to Billericay for Championship and two T20 matches against Sussex.

July starts with two one-day friendlies against a Netherlands Development side at Garon Park, before Surrey visit Billericay for the Championship fixture. The traditional Coggeshall week (currently scheduled for 16-19 July) sees the MCC Young become Essex's 12th different opponents during the popular week with a Championship and two T20 fixtures. The following week, Essex are on the road to Somerset (Taunton Vale) for the same competitions, before finishing the month with two T20 matches against Surrey at Chelmsford.

August sees a visit to Middlesex (Merchant Taylor's School) for T20 matches and a trip to Hampshire (Ageas Bowl) for a Championship and two T20s fixtures to complete the competitive season - barring any appearances at Finals! But the month continues with four days in Durham (formats yet to be decided, Darlington), and a four-day friendly at Billericay against Kent. The final match, in September, will be a visit to Middlesex (Radlett).

OPENING UP WITH BROWNE

Playing grade cricket in Melbourne is a world away from England's recent travails in the Caribbean, but Nick Browne is confident he can make a compelling case for a Test call-up by the time the Ashes start this summer.

The opener spent two months in Australia turning out for Geelong, a gig set up by his former Essex teammate Mark Pettini, who recently managed and led the Melbourne Renegades to victory in the Big Bash League.

Browne was an interested observer as England's batsmen suffered a collective meltdown in the Caribbean to hand the Test series to the West Indies with a game to spare.

Browne said: "I've watched bits and pieces of it. It's interesting and they were strange wickets for the batters to play on, and I thought we'd have done much better than we did."

Australians are never shy of sledging an Englishman and results in the Caribbean provided Browne's teammates plenty of ammunition, even if they are not feeling that great about their own team following the recent Test series defeat by India.

"I got a fair bit to be honest with you, but the Aussies aren't looking much better anyway," says Browne. "They all feel like they're going to lose the Ashes, which is quite interesting."

The Ashes will be at the forefront of every English batsman's mind following the display out in the Caribbean. Places will be up for grabs this summer, especially in that top-order which has underperformed in recent times.

Browne, who has a first-class average of 41.92 and scored 1,000 first-class runs for three successive seasons before an injury-hit summer in 2018, is keen to make sure his name is at the top of any list of potential call-ups.

He said: "One hundred per cent I'd love to be in contention for a place. I think it's just human nature to look at the team and say, 'people are struggling' and 'it's up to you to score some runs'. There's nine Championship games before the first Test, so I'm sure there will be a lot of county cricketers sitting there going, 'do you know what? If I can score some runs then I put my name in the hat'. I suppose I'm one of those."

"There are opportunities there - 100 per cent there is - and it was tough last year to score runs, but this year's a new year and hopefully if I start well and put some big scores on then you never know."

"People ask me all the time if I'm looking at England and it's only human nature to do so because you can see what's going on. There's an opportunity there and hopefully I can take it by scoring loads of runs for Essex before that first Test. But who knows what the selectors are thinking?"

At 27 and with such a decent track record at county level, it is remarkable Browne has never even received an England Lions call-up.

Asked if he has ever felt like he has been close - like when he led from the front as Essex won the County Championship in 2017 - Browne replied: "No, not really to be honest. I don't really know where the selectors think I'm at. I've never had any sort of inkling. But I felt a couple of

BATSMAN NICK BROWNE CONTEMPLATES THE UP COMING ASHES SERIES AND ESSEX CHANCES FOR THE COMING SEASON

seasons ago I could have got on a Lions tour and that could have progressed me.

"I think my stats are pretty good. But I'm equally in the dark. I have felt I could have gone on a Lions trip in previous years and shown people what I could do, but it's not happened."

With the international retirement of Alastair Cook at the end of last summer, it might be prudent of England to try to fill the void left by their all-time leading run-scorer with another left-hand opener from Essex.

Cook will continue playing for Essex having signed a three-year deal and Browne is looking forward to spending plenty of time in the middle with the 34-year-old this summer.

Browne explained: "Obviously Cooky coming back is unbelievable for us and the main thing about cricket in England is if you can have a good opening partnership then you're going a long way to winning games of cricket."

"Our middle-order is so strong and if me and Cooky can get to 60 or 70 for none and blunt the new ball, pretty much we've got run scorers in the middle. For me, that's where four-day games are won. If you can get through the new ball you're winning games of cricket."

Cook's influence off the field will also be keenly felt. "He carries such an aura around the place," says Browne. "Even without his runs his professionalism is amazing - I've never seen anyone like him.

"He's the most competitive bloke I've ever met and I ever will meet. So I think he'll score loads of runs. The lads are looking forward to playing with him. He's a legend.

"He's great to learn from. It's fantastic to draw some experience from him. His professionalism is something everyone should aspire to."

As for the Championship, Browne is confident Essex can win back the title they lost to Surrey last summer.

"We're looking great actually," he says. "We've got bowlers who can win games in a session. Jamie Porter has been brilliant the last three or four years and he's just horrible to face in England. Sam Cook has kicked on really well. He nibbles it around and bowls these wobble seamers that are really hard work.

"With Peter Siddle coming back over - he might get picked for the Ashes so we'll see how much he plays - but that's another plus and Simon Harmer, if the ball's turning he's the best in the country if not the world. He's an unbelievable bowler.

"So I think we have a chance to go for the title again. Surrey look strong but they're going to miss quite a few players at the start with the World Cup I'd imagine. I think we've got a really, really good chance."



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CHOPRA'S FANTASY I-XI

2018 Eagles Player of the Year, Varun Chopra, outlines his fantasy I-XI of players he has either played with or against.

1 - Sir Alastair Cook - This selection goes without needing any justification. England's finest and an absolute run machine, and also a Sir!



2 - Jonathan Trott - Jonathan was always super reliable with the bat and always delivered on the big stage. He's also a very funny guy, so I'd have him open with Sir Chef.



3 - Hashim Amla - One of the calmest and classiest batsmen I've ever played with and one of the nicest blokes in cricket, an easy choice.



4 - Andy Flower - A perfectionist and a batting technician. Could bat well against pace bowlers as well as spin bowlers and was always so composed out in the middle.



5 - Shivnarine Chanderpaul - This guy could just bat and bat and bat. If you were chasing a big score, you'd want this man out in the middle. He's also extremely difficult to bowl at.



6 - Ian Bell - Hands down the most elegant batsman I've ever seen and also an unbelievable fielder. Could take catches in his sleep and has a cover drive to die for.



7 - Chris Woakes - A proper all rounder and a winner through and through. He can bat, he can bowl, and you'd struggle to find anyone who has a bad word to say about him.



8 - Simon Harmer - What a player and an absolute luxury to have. One of the best spinners I've ever seen, and he can bat a bit too. Also catches pigeons in the slips making him an easy choice.



9 - Andy Bichel - One of the biggest hearts in the game and also showed that never say die attitude. Contributed in all areas and as well as being a team player, he was a super talented workhorse.



10 - Mohammad Amir - Everyone saw how good this guy was during his stint with Essex. Unbelievably talented and super skilful with the left arm variety. A slippery bumper that I never enjoyed facing.



11 - Jamie Porter - Absolutely minging to face! So consistent with the ball and never misses the top of off stump, it'll only be a matter of time until he's tearing it up with England.



40 YEARS ON...

Essex had to wait for more than a century before lifting their first piece of silverware, but when that landmark occasion finally arrived in 1979 to blow the dust out of the awaiting trophy cabinet, two titles were won in the same season.

They were crowned County Championship winners with victories in 13 of their 21 Championship matches, completing the campaign with a stunning 77-point margin clear of closest pursuers Worcestershire.

However, just a couple of months before that unforgettable summer, Essex had won the Benson & Hedges Cup and that was to herald a stream of successes for the county who were to continue to enjoy the limelight with a total of 11 trophies between 1979 and 1992.

The breakthrough achievements of those trailblazers came under the stewardship of Keith Fletcher, who is widely acknowledged as the best captain Essex has ever produced. Certainly, he is the most successful, being assured of legendary status by leading the county to every domestic honour starting with the 1979 double.

Admittedly he was fortunate to be in charge at a time when he had magnificent players at his disposal, such as Graham Gooch, Ken McEwan and John Lever, to name just three.

But in addition to the massive contribution Fletcher himself made with the bat, he was a master tactician and motivator who inspired loyalty and respect in equal measure from everyone.

Keith's career spanned 27 seasons until he retired at the end of 1988, and under him Essex won three County Championships, three Sunday League titles, the Benson & Hedges Cup and the NatWest Trophy.

"Our success was built on great talent and tremendous team work," Fletcher says. "Everyone played a significant role and I was proud to have been at the helm.

"I always wanted to prove we had the best team Essex had ever seen and the only way to do that was by winning the title that had eluded our grasp for so long. But I never imagined we would do it so easily. We went on to win a few more trophies over the next few years, and of course, it helped by having a superb team."

A few weeks before they were crowned champions, Fletcher lifted the Benson & Hedges Cup at Lord's after they had beaten Surrey by 35 runs, the county's first major title.

"The atmosphere was electric, and the staggering thing was that there were about 25,000 people there and it seemed that 24,000 were supporting Essex," Fletcher relates. "I must admit I was a little nervous as we tossed up, but I also had the feeling it was going to be our day."

And so, it proved as Gooch demonstrated his immense class and power with a brilliant century that pointed the way to a total of 290 for six from 55 overs.

Surrey made a valiant effort to mount a serious challenge requiring 100 from the final eight overs with seven wickets in hand. But when Fletcher held on to a skier to remove Geoff Howarth for 74, Essex strengthened their grip and victory arrived when the final Surrey wicket fell in the 52nd over when Hugh Wilson was bowled by John Lever.

The hundred scored by Gooch was the first time that any batsman had reached three figures in a B & H Cup final and predictably won him the Man of the Match Gold Award.

Gooch said the game still holds special meaning for the Essex marvel. "It is one of my all-time favourite matches for Essex," he insists. "For me, it is the number one game in our history because it was our first ever trophy and you have to bear in mind that I'd been at the club 6 years beforehand and we were always being reminded by a lot of people outside Essex, and generally, that Essex had never won anything.

"We were runners-up a couple of times in the John Player League but the B&H Cup Final was a special day, not only for the players who had been there a long time such as Keith Fletcher, Ray East, Stuart Turner, David Acfield, John Lever, all those guys, but all the members and supporters who had shown faith for so many years.

"It was also a special day in terms of the game because it was a pretty good game of cricket! We had been gradually building a good side over the previous years but in 1979, it all came together."

And back to Fletcher for the final reflection on the landmark victory. "Surrey weren't our favourite opposition and to beat them to win the Club's first major trophy made it all the more special," he recalls with a huge grin of satisfaction.

The Championship title was to come after 103 years of striving when Essex beat Northamptonshire at Wantage Road towards the end of August. After Stuart Turner had taken five wickets in each innings, the visitors were left a victory target of 229 and it was one they reached with ease, losing just three wickets.

Brian Hardie and Mike Denness put together a century opening stand before the later was bowled for 51. Although Essex lost the wickets of Kenny McEwan and Fletcher, Hardie went on to see his side home with an unbeaten 103. A little while after the victory had been completed came news that nearest challengers Worcestershire had failed to beat Derbyshire, leaving Essex assured of the title with four matches still to be played.

Renowned Essex left-arm seamer, John Lever, recalls that wonderful Championship campaign. "We recorded 13 victories, five of them by an innings, and our nearest rivals Worcestershire managed only seven wins," he relates. "Because of England duties, we were without Graham Gooch for long periods, but we overcame his absence with Kenny McEwan, Mike Denness, Keith Fletcher and Brian Hardie all topping the 1000 runs mark."

"I always wanted to prove we had the best team Essex had ever seen and the only way to do that was by winning the title that had eluded our grasp for so long."

Although he is too modest to admit it, Lever was a pivotal figure in that historic Essex success. He took 106 wickets that season, 99 of them in the Championship that included five or more in an innings five times.

In two successive matches, he picked up 13 wickets against Leicestershire and Warwickshire and during the month of June he reaped a harvest of 51 wickets. "The climatic conditions helped me," he comments seeking to deflect praise from his destructive deeds. "It was one of those months that was perfect for my type of bowling. The conditions seemed to be in my favour every time I ran up to bowl - the ball swinging nicely in the humid atmosphere."

His new ball pal Norbert Phillip and medium paceman Stuart Turner, with 70 and 57 wickets respectively, also played a massive part as did spinners Ray East and David Acfield with just over 80 wickets between them.

"A major reason for our success was that the batsmen scored so heavily we never had worries about defending totals. And we seemed to catch everything that came our way," Lever recalls.

That glorious season was to point the way to a remarkable run of titles over the next three decades. Essex carried off the Championship again in 1983, 1984, 1986, 1991 and 1992; were NatWest/Provident Trophy winners in 1985, 1997 and 2008; Sunday League titles in 1981, 1984 and 1985; and came away with Pro 40 National League (Division 1) honours in 2005 and 2006.

Now having tasted success again with that incredible championship title in 2017, the hope is that a new era has dawned that will see Essex once more return to the forefront of English domestic cricket.



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Let's Talk Ear, Nose, Throat
and Allergy

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starting at 6pm

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Nose, Throat and Allergy problems

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SIDDLER RETURNS

EXPERIENCED AUSSIE FAST BOWLER
ON HIS RETURN TO CHELMSFORD
AND THE ESSEX 'FAMILY'

Peter Siddler had a great first year at The Cloudfm County Ground. The Australian fast bowler took 40 wickets across all formats during his two stints in 2018, and he's excited about coming back.

Speaking from Melbourne after finishing Australia's ODI series against India, the 34-year-old said: "It was an easy decision for me to make to be honest. I absolutely loved my time with Essex last year, the players and staff gave me a great welcome, and the fans were brilliant.

"When you join a side as an overseas player, it can be a bit intimidating to start with, but with Essex I felt like a member of the family straight away. There's a wealth of talent in that side, and as well as the talent there's a hunger for success which is really important and that really appealed to me.

"I can't wait to get back to Chelmsford and start playing for Essex again to be honest, and I'm really thankful that the Club showed faith in me and wanted me back."

Siddler enjoyed a third-place finish in the Championship last year, but the Australian wants to go one further with Essex this campaign. He commented: "We played some great cricket last year but fell just short in terms of defending the title. This year we'll do our best to be stronger and win silverware again.

"We'll have Alastair Cook back and I'm really excited to play alongside him rather than against him. We've had some great battles in the past when England have played Australia and having someone of that calibre around will be great for the squad and will definitely improve us."

During the turn of the year, Siddler was recalled to the Australia ODI side and played in his first one-day game for his country in eight years and 67 days. This eclipsed the previous record for the longest time between 50-over matches for an Australian, which was held by Tom Zoehrer and stood at six years and 282 days.

Speaking on his selection, Siddler said: "I never thought I'd get the opportunity to play one-day cricket for Australia again. I'd forgotten about it really, so when it was announced that I was in the squad I felt like a young kid getting his first opportunity again.

"I had a great time with the lads and played some decent cricket, so hopefully I'll stay in the selectors minds. Obviously there is a World Cup coming up and I've never been involved with one before, so if I'm called upon for that I'd be absolutely delighted and love to be involved."



Over the last few years, there has been a lot of talk about on-field aggression and whether sledging has become too intense. The ICC has been cracking down on it, and Siddler doesn't get it. He said: "People see it differently if they're not playing.

"Out in the middle, you're in a battle. You're trying to break a partnership, to stop someone making a hundred, to take a wicket for your team. I'll do anything I can to get that wicket, even if that means getting at someone to put them off their game, or to try and distract them. That's just part of the game.

"That's how I learned to play as a kid. I grew up in a little town called Traralgon, which is a few hours drive from Melbourne. I remember the matches I was watching when I was growing up, and even now when I watch old classic matches I think the game hasn't changed in 40 or 50 years. That's why I don't see why there is such a fuss about it changing now."

Peter's parents used to make the drive to the city to watch games at The MCG. "I was a country boy, so it was a real road trip to get there. I remember rocking up at The MCG and watching games as a kid, playing backyard cricket during the lunch and tea break. It's stuff like that, you never forget, and that's really when I fell in love with cricket."

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ESSEX WOMENS XI

Captain Kelly Castle on the plans for 2019



The Essex Women's XI are looking to build on their triumphant 2018 season and have further success in both their Women's County Championship, One-Day and the T20 campaigns.

After a long and demanding season, the first XI finished on a high and secured promotion back to Division Two in the T20 format, whilst also maintaining their place in Division Two in the One-Day competition.

Mady Villiers was outstanding and was quite rightfully rewarded for her form with a place in the England Academy, whilst several other players also earned places in Regional Development Squads. With this in mind, I believe the team is in a good position going into the 2019 season.

A few members of the team are also continuing their development in Australia throughout the winter, extending their playing opportunities and gaining valuable experience with the bat and the ball against top-class players.

A key player to watch out for this year is Dutch international Sterre Kalis, who was named in the ICC

Women's Global Development Squad and is currently playing state cricket in Australia. Her international experience will no doubt be a huge advantage for us and hopefully, she will be able to help the team push for the top places in both formats.

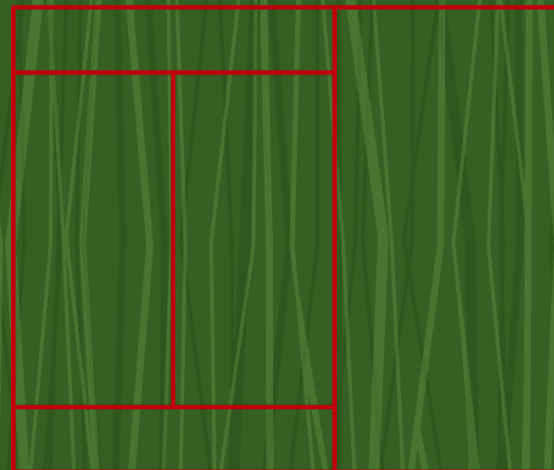
The team are also delighted to welcome the new signings of both Beth Harmer (Norfolk) and Catherine Dalton (Middlesex). We felt a lack of runs cost us on occasions last year, and both Beth and Catherine are lethal with the bat, so hopefully, their talents will help turn potential narrow losses into narrow victories.

Furthermore, we've also had a change in captaincy for the 2019 season, with Kelly Castle taking over the role in both formats. Kelly said: "I'm really looking forward to the challenge and for the girls to show how talented they are.

"At the minute, everyone is fighting for their place as the skill and depth in the squad is incredibly high, and with that in mind, the upcoming season should be a good one with the players we have in this side."

"Our season gets underway with a tough fixture against Middlesex, and things don't get much easier as a match against Berkshire follows.

"The challenges for us this year will be to uphold our strong batting performances in every game possible and to transfer all the hard work from pre-season into the competitive matches in both formats."





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Eagles Set to Soar in Yellow for 2019

The 2019 Vitality Blast campaign will see the Eagles revert back to the classic yellow strip, which became synonymous with the team in the early 2000's.

This year marks 20 years since the Essex Eagles' inception. The Club took on a new identity for the National League in 1999 with the likes of Paul Prichard, Stuart Law and Mark Ilott playing under the stewardship of captain, Ronnie Irani.

The title was adopted due the county's regimental roots. In 1812, Wellington's troops were at war with the French army in Portugal, and soldiers from the Essex Regiment ventured into hand to hand combat with them in Salamanca. The Essex Regiment captured the prized "Salamanca Eagle" from the French and subsequently it formed part of the Regimental colours until its amalgamation in 1958 to form the Anglian Regiment. Chelmsford Borough Council now holds the Salamanca Eagle in trust at the Essex Regiment Museum in Moulsham Street.

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Specsavers County Championship

MAY

Tuesday 14 - Friday 17		Nottinghamshire	11am	8am	6am-10pm
Monday 27 - Thursday 30		Kent	11am	8am	6am-10pm

JUNE

Sunday 16 - Wednesday 19		Hampshire	11am	8am	6am-6pm (Sun) 6am-10pm (Mon-Wed)
Sunday 23 - Wednesday 26		Somerset	11am	8am	6am-6pm (Sun) 6am-10pm (Mon-Wed)

JULY

Sunday 07 - Wednesday 10		Yorkshire	11am	8am	6am-6pm (Sun) 6am-10pm (Mon-Wed)
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SEPTEMBER

Tuesday 10 - Friday 13		Warwickshire	10:30am	7:30am	6am-10pm
Monday 16 - Thursday 19		Surrey	10:30am	7:30am	6am-10pm



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APRIL

Friday 19		Middlesex	11am	8am	6am-10pm
Sunday 28		Hampshire	11am	8am	6am-8pm
Tuesday 30		Sussex Sharks	11am	8am	6am-10pm

MAY

Tuesday 07		Gloucestershire	1pm	11am	6am-11pm
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50 OVER CRICKET

Vitality Blast

JULY

Friday 19		Surrey	7pm	4pm	6am-11pm
Saturday 27		Gloucestershire	7pm	4pm	6am-11pm

AUGUST

Thursday 01		Hampshire	7pm	4pm	6am-11pm
Wednesday 07		Somerset	7pm	4pm	6am-11pm
Wednesday 14		Middlesex	7pm	4pm	6am-11pm
Friday 16		Glamorgan	7pm	4pm	6am-11pm
Friday 30		Kent Spitfires	6:30pm	3:30pm	6am-11pm



20 OVER CRICKET

England Women

JUNE

Thursday 13		Windies Women Royal London One-Day International	2pm	11am	6am-11pm
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JULY

Friday 26		Australia Women Vitality International T20	7:15pm	4:15pm	6am-11pm
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