

DISABILITY PREMIER LEAGUE

2024



DPL
DISABILITY
PREMIER LEAGUE



ECB

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CONTENTS

- 4** **Welcome to DPL 2024**
- 6** **Boundary Breakers** All the lowdown on this year's competition
- 8** **Meet the Teams** Your guide to who's who and what they do
- 16** **Coaches' Corner** We chat to the men behind the talent
- 20** **Leading from the Front** The DPL captains gunning for glory
- 24** **Fixtures** Who, what, where and when
- 26** **Eyes on the Prize** A reminder of how Hawks swooped to conquer
- 28** **Best in Show** DPL's greatest hits compilation
- 30** **History Boys** Disability cricket's day in the sun at Lord's
- 32** **Indian Summer (and Winter)** Round-up of Deaf and PD bilateral T20 series
- 36** **Blooming Marvellous** Senior national disabilities manager Edgar Herridge on the continuing growth of disability cricket
- 38** **Get with the Programme** How the disability game changed Jen Sitch's life
- 40** **Knowing the Score** Meet the ladies who run the DPL's dotting agency
- 42** **Forthcoming Attractions** Looking ahead to a bumper 2025 for the disability game
- 44** **Ground Breakers** Saluting the disability pioneers who helped get us here
- 46** **Get Involved!** Essential county contacts

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IAN MARTIN MBE

HEAD OF DISABILITY CRICKET

It's amazing to think we are now delivering the third DPL. It seems such a short time ago that we were planning the pilot event while the country was in the midst of the Covid pandemic.

Naturally, we're starting to think about how the DPL might evolve. How are we measuring up against our original plans? In some areas we're well ahead. Once again Sky Sports will be broadcasting our final live, this time in a double-header with England Men, following double headers in previous years alongside England Women. If somebody had said back in 2020 that the DPL would be granted such a platform so quickly, I'm not sure we'd have believed it.

Another success has been on the commercial front. Kit suppliers Masuri are providing playing attire for all squads in 2024 – thanks for their support and commitment. Similarly, Inkerman Trophies, providers of last year's DPL Trophy and medals have gone further, with player of the match awards this year.

On the flipside, there are areas that need more work, notably developing a Women & Girls DPL.

We have a core group of females playing disability cricket, but need to be mindful about how we continue to grow participation opportunities – it's imperative we find the best opportunity to benefit the disabled game.

The exciting thing for all of us: administrators, coaches and, most importantly, the players, is that we're blazing the trail for the next generation of disabled cricketers. Nothing is more certain than change – our collective job is to leave the game in a better place.

Back to the present. Thank you to Richard Hill, Jane Powell, Neil Bradshaw and Hannah Jowitt for all their help on delivering the tournament. Thanks also to our host venues, without whom we would not be here! Most importantly, thanks to our players and their management teams – that is what the game is all about. Please enjoy the tournament and continue to show the cricketing world that not only do you have an amazing talent – but that impairment is no barrier to performance.





JANE POWELL

PERFORMANCE MANAGER

ENGLAND DISABILITY CRICKET

Every year we sense the excitement building ahead of the next DPL. The coaches have been busy beavering away digesting last season's stats, not only in the domestic D40, but across club records too, to see who has best strike rate with bat and ball, which wicketkeepers are excelling behind the timbers, and who saves them well – and where – in the outfield.

This year has been no exception in that bid to locate the right blend critical for a winning team.

The rivalry is friendly but fierce between the Black Cats, Hawks, Tridents and Pirates, with so many people working hard to ensure DPL 2024 is as close to professional as possible. The performance packs dutifully prepared by our analysts have all the info any coach needs when it comes to assessing their squad picks. You can be sure they will have already determined which match-ups will be key.

Performance has always been the driver for the DPL: it allows us to see players under pressure in a level up from County competition. Pitting the cream of our physical

disability players against the best deaf and learning disability players is an ideal scenario – it also helps identify the standard of newcomers and allows us to see the coaches operate with support to execute their plans.

Backed by medical and sports science, players can concentrate on playing and their own development, both individually and within the team. It's a potent package, one in which everybody can improve.

I am delighted with the competition's progress – our desire to be the number one league in the world for disability cricket is already coming to fruition. I have had numerous enquiries this year from overseas players, asking if they might get an opportunity to play in the future.

As franchise cricket mushrooms in the mainstream game, it would be exciting to see the pan-disability premier league growing further throughout the world, with the ECB leading the way both in innovation and development. Enjoy DPL 2024, it should be a cracker.





BOUNDARY BREAKERS

EYES DOWN, HOLD TIGHT FOR A THRILLING RIDE – IT'S DPL 2024

Twelve T20 games across three weekends, 64 players in four squads, all dreaming of a televised final ahead of an England v Australia IT20 at Cardiff.

The chance to make the cricketing memory of a lifetime for cricketers who live for the game just as much as Jos Buttler or Adil Rashid. Disability cricket has come a long, long way in the past decade, and the DPL, a unique tournament pitching best against best across three impairment groups – Deaf, Learning Disabled (LD) and Physically Disabled (PD) – is pushing that journey forward at pace.

Now into its third full year, here you can see established international talent rubbing shoulders with new and emerging names from the county scene in a mesmerising spectacle of skill and strength.

The respective coaches of the Black Cats, Hawks (2023 winners), Pirates and Tridents (2022's inaugural winners) met

to thrash out their squads via a draft process back in February – each coach could retain six players from last year's squad (two from each impairment group).

The 64-strong playing pool is drawn from three tiers:

TIER 1 Four 'Marquee' players from each of the three national squads

TIER 2 Remaining players from each current national squad

TIER 3 Those assessed at winter training camps through nominations from the county disability game

With squads duly assembled – 13 new faces this year across the board – roles defined, and players prepped, we're ready to roll again. Fingers crossed for sunshine – and may the best team win.

DPL 2024: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IN 60 SECONDS



- Each team – Black Cats, Hawks, Pirates, Tridents – plays each other twice in T20 format across three round-robin Sundays, held between 25 August and 8 September – the top two sides will meet in the final on 13 September at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff
- Each squad contains 16 players – all players must play a minimum of two games
- Twenty percent of the fielding team’s overs must be bowled by each impairment group – that’s a minimum of four overs to come from at least one player from the LD, PD or Deaf pool
- ‘Explosion’ over: unique to the DPL, this is essentially a sixth ‘floating’ powerplay over (five will be bowled at the beginning of each innings) that can be taken anywhere between the sixth and final over, or compulsorily in the 20th
- Players who are deaf, or have hearing loss, must remove their hearing aids or cochlear implants when taking the field – a stipulation in line with requirements for international Deaf cricket

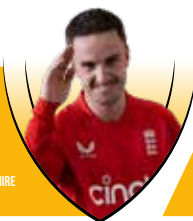


SQUADS



CAPTAIN
DAN REYNALDO

RH ROB
 REYNALDO
34
25.95
HAMPSHIRE
PD



SYED ADIL 'SAMMY' AHMED

RH RLB
 AHMED
21
9.11.99
WARWICKSHIRE
DEAF



KEVIN BAKER

LH WKT
 BAKER
22
17.12.70
SHROPSHIRE
PD



ANGUS BROWN

RH LB
 BROWN
26
28.7.02
SUSSEX
PD



NATHAN CADDELL

RH RFM
 CADDELL
27
22.6.96
WILTSHIRE
DEAF



CAMERON COOPER

RH RM
 COOPER
23
3.8.01
YORKSHIRE
PD



JAMES DIXON

RH RM
 DIXON
33
15.11.86
LANCASHIRE
DEAF



JOE FREESTONE

RH RM
 FREESTONE
38
11.5.01
ESSEX
LD



BATTING: LH (LEFT HAND), RH (RIGHT HAND)
BOWLING: RM (RIGHT-ARM MEDIUM), RF (RIGHT-ARM FAST), RFM (RIGHT-ARM FAST MEDIUM),
ROB (RIGHT-ARM OFF-BREAK), SLA (SLOW LEFT-ARM), LB (LEGBREAK), NB (NON BOWLER)

**HEAD
COACH
MARK
SMALLWOOD**



**ASSISTANT
COACH
LAUREN
ROWLES**



**JONNY
GALE**



**GREG
McKENZIE**



RH ROB
GALE
28
21.7.94
SURREY
LD

LH LM
McKENZIE
30
9.3.99
HAMPSHIRE
PD

**KIERAN
McKINNEY**



**JAMES
O'CONNOR**



LH LOB
McKINNEY
37
16.10.82
CHESHIRE
LD

RH ROB
O'CONNOR
29
27.8.96
YORKSHIRE
DEAF

**OWEN
PIPER**



**JOSH
PRICE**



RH NB
PIPER
32
8.12.02
SUSSEX
LD

RH SLA
PRICE
31
20.10.90
SURREY
DEAF

**BEN
WILLIAMS**



**TAYLER
YOUNG**



RH ROB
WILLIAMS
35
9.2.06
HAMPSHIRE
LD

RH RM
YOUNG
39
16.5.95
SURREY
LD

 **BATTER**  **WK/BATTER**  **BOWLER**  **ALL ROUNDER**



SQUADS



CAPTAIN ALEX HAMMOND

RH ROB
HAMMOND
89
28.3.95
HAMPSHIRE
PD



KEVIN COOPER

RH ROB
COOPER
82
10.10.92
ISLE OF WIGHT
LD



ZAGHAM FARHAN

RH ROB
FARHAN
83
28.8.04
CHESHIRE
LD



CONNOR FLAUNTY

RH RFM
FLAUNTY
85
21.8.08
NORTHANTS
LD



CALLUM FLYNN

RH RM
FLYNN
84
12.3.95
LANCASHIRE
PD



JAMIE GOODWIN

LH RM
GOODWIN
86
5.7.93
DERBYSHIRE
PD



GEORGE GREENWAY

RH RFM
GREENWAY
87
11.3.96
DEVON
DEAF



HUGO HAMMOND

RH WKT
HAMMOND
88
11.5.01
HAMPSHIRE
PD



BATTING: LH (LEFT HAND), RH (RIGHT HAND)

BOWLING: RM (RIGHT-ARM MEDIUM), RF (RIGHT-ARM FAST), RFM (RIGHT-ARM FAST MEDIUM),
ROB (RIGHT-ARM OFF-BREAK), SLA (SLOW LEFT-ARM), LB (LEGBREAK), NB (NON BOWLER)

HEAD
COACH
JAMES
WOJDA



ASSISTANT
COACH
JARED
WARNER



ROB
HEWITT



RONNIE
JACKSON



RH RLB

5.6.94
YORKSHIRE
LD



HEWITT
92

RH RFM

9.2.99
ESSEX
LD



JACKSON
90

BEN
MASON



FAROOQ
MOHAMMAD



LH LLB

23.6.04
MIDDLESEX
LD



MASON
91

RH RFM

10.1.80
MIDDLESEX
DEAF



MOHAMMAD
93

OWEN
MORRIS



JACK
PERRY



RH ROB

20.8.05
YORKSHIRE
LD



MORRIS
76

RH WKT

21.2.00
CHESHIRE
LD



PERRY
99

ALFIE
PYLE



HENRY
WAINMAN



RH RFM

28.7.02
SUSSEX
LD



PYLE
77

RH SLA

18.8.94
YORKSHIRE
DEAF



WAINMAN
81



BATTER

WK/BATTER

BOWLER

ALL ROUNDER

SQUADS

PIRATES



CAPTAIN
ANTHONY CLAPHAM



RH RM
CLAPHAM
16
21.3.90
SURREY
PD

HENRY ABEL



LH LFM
ABEL
17
14.7.00
HAMPSHIRE
LD

DAN BOWSER



LH SLA
BOWSER
11
11.3.88
DEVON
LD

JAI CHARAN



RH RM
CHARAN
1
28.11.98
MIDDLESEX
LD

STEPHEN GEORGE



RH RM
GEORGE
10
9.8.84
DEVON
DEAF

DAN HAMM



RH LOB
HAMM
14
5.11.94
CHESHIRE
PD

ALEX JERVIS



RH RM
JERVIS
4
16.6.87
YORKSHIRE
LD

MONTY MCKENZIE



RH ROB
MCKENZIE
18
3.10.96
HAMPSHIRE
PD

BATTING: LH (LEFT HAND), RH (RIGHT HAND)

BOWLING: RM (RIGHT-ARM MEDIUM), RF (RIGHT-ARM FAST), RFM (RIGHT-ARM FAST MEDIUM),
ROB (RIGHT-ARM OFF-BREAK), SLA (SLOW LEFT-ARM), LB (LEGBREAK), NB (NON BOWLER)



**HEAD
COACH
PAUL
ALLEN**



**ASSISTANT
COACH
BEN
SILVER**



**TOM
MESKELL**



**JOE
MOSS**



RH RLB
MESKELL
12
4.6.95
LANCASHIRE
LD

RH RFM
MOSS
15
18.12.00
ESSEX
LD

**JAKE
OAKES**



**BRENDON
PARR**



RH RM
OAKES
5
10.5.95
MIDDLESEX
DEAF

RH RM
PARR
20
27.6.92
DEVON
PD

**FRED
BRIDGES**



**ADNAN
GHANI**



LH LOB
BRIDGES
9
13.12.90
SUSSEX
PD

RH RF
GHANI
3
9.5.1984
YORKSHIRE
DEAF

**LIAM
THOMAS**



**JORDAN
WILLIAMS**



LH WKT
THOMAS
13
7.2.94
YORKSHIRE
PD

LH RM
WILLIAMS
7
6.7.92
LANCASHIRE
PD



 **BATTER**  **WK/BATTER**  **BOWLER**  **ALL ROUNDER**

TRIDENTS

SQUADS



CAPTAIN

LIAM O'BRIEN

RH RFM



O'BRIEN
54

26.3.99
SUSSEX
PD



MATT BAILEY

LH LFM



BAILEY
69

29.6.00
SHROPSHIRE
DEAF



KYLE CLAYTON

RH RFM



CLAYTON
57

9.11.91
YORKSHIRE
PD



JORDYN DORE

RH LFM



DORE
62

22.8.00
HAMPSHIRE
LD



CHRIS EDWARDS

RH RM



EDWARDS
67

2.3.93
CHESHIRE
LD



WILL FLYNN

RH ROB



FLYNN
55

4.4.00
HAMPSHIRE
PD



DANIEL GEE

RH RFM



GEE
59

20.6.04
SUSSEX
LD



JOEL HARRIS

RH RM



HARRIS
61

6.8.94
LANCASHIRE
DEAF



BATTING: LH (LEFT HAND), RH (RIGHT HAND)

BOWLING: RM (RIGHT-ARM MEDIUM), RF (RIGHT-ARM FAST), RFM (RIGHT-ARM FAST MEDIUM), ROB (RIGHT-ARM OFF-BREAK), SLA (SLOW LEFT-ARM), LB (LEGBREAK), NB (NON BOWLER)

**HEAD
COACH
DUNCAN
GREEN**



**ASSISTANT
COACH
JASON
WEAVER**



**LUKE
JAMES**



**ALFIE
JEEVES**



JAMES
66

24.4.95
LANCASHIRE
LD



JEEVES
65

2.1.09
ESSEX
LD

**SAMMY
KUMAR**



**JAMES
NORDIN**



KUMAR
60

30.5.03
MIDDLESEX
PD



NORDIN
64

6.4.00
MIDDLESEX
PD

**LUKE
RILEY**



**KESTER
SAINSBURY**



RILEY
68

19.12.01
YORKSHIRE
DEAF



SAINSBURY
58

5.4.03
MIDDLESEX
LD

**BEN
SUTTON**



**UMESH
VALJEE**



SUTTON
56

11.11.02
WORCESTERSHIRE
PD



VALJEE
63

30.9.69
MIDDLESEX
DEAF



BATTER WK/BATTER WK/ALL ROUNDER BOWLER ALL ROUNDER



SQUAD GOALS

// Paul Allen outlines his plans



OUR RETURNING COACHES' QUARTET – MARK SMALLWOOD (BLACK CATS), JAMES WOJDA (HAWKS), PAUL ALLEN (PIRATES) AND DUNCAN GREEN (TRIDENTS) – SHARE THEIR HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR 2024



Q What keeps you coming back to DPL?

Duncan Green (DG): Simple.

The passion and enthusiasm of everyone involved – it's a privilege to be part of it. I've been lucky enough to work with players, coaches and support staff who share a vision, passion and drive for development, which makes working in this environment a pleasure. Making a positive impact in unlocking and achieving the full potential of so many people's lives is both motivational

and empowering – I've built relationships and bonds that go far beyond cricket.

Paul Allen (PA):

Having been involved in deaf and disability cricket for 22 years, the progress – and the lasting impact being made – is truly inspiring and something I cherish. This role allows me to be part of something bigger than the sport itself – demonstrating that cricket is a game for everyone, regardless of physical or sensory challenges. The camaraderie

// Top: Duncan Green
Bottom: Mark Smallwood with Dan Reynaldo

and shared vision within our coaching quartet makes this journey even more fulfilling. We've developed a unique synergy and understanding that enhances our approach and makes our sessions not only educational, but also incredibly enjoyable for the players. Every step forward is a testament to what we can achieve together.

Mark Smallwood (MS): The environment, the opportunity to continue to work with the same coaches over the winter with a different cohort of players, shaping an environment to hopefully create success is really exciting. I enjoy working with these guys; we all offer different skills and insights, but as a quartet it works really well.

James Wojda (JW): As part of the pilot year and seeing the

growth of the competition since, I feel I still have lots to offer in playing my small part in that continuing rise. Leading the Hawks to success last year was a career highlight, but the driving force for me is the culture and positivity within the environment.

Q Player to watch in DPL 2024?

DG: Plenty of established national team players and DPL regulars will no doubt have a massive impact. For Tridents, Liam O'Brien and Chris Edwards (Tridents) are proven matchwinners. But I'm also looking forward to seeing how the new arrivals go. Owen Piper & Ben Williams have added depth to the Black Cats' batting, Kevin Cooper (Hawks) and Joe Moss (Pirates) can influence games through their power-hitting, and Luke

James (Tridents) is a highly skilled wicketkeeper/batter.

JW: The obvious answer is Callum Flynn – a standout across the three years – I think there's still a lot to come from him. A new arrival who impressed over the winter was Luke James, a keeper-batter. I'm excited to see how he expresses his natural flair.

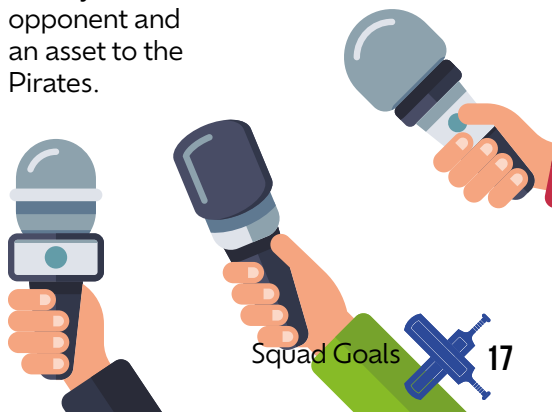
PA: Outside of the international players, Joe Moss – playing his D40 cricket for Essex – is a young, exciting, natural prospect with immense potential. Skilled with bat and ball, his ability to adapt to different situations will make him a formidable opponent and an asset to the Pirates.

I'm confident Joe will have a fantastic debut tournament.

MS: Angus Brown – got the first DPL hundred last year – hopefully he can recreate that form. Gus can manage different situations, be it through using his power and ability to find the boundary, or manipulating the ball and running teams ragged. Brendon Parr has taken the DPL – and now England PD – in his stride. He's exciting to watch with his powerful striking, hopefully not against us!

Q Do you have a standout DPL memory?

DG: The camaraderie. It makes no difference which



DPL or national squad the players are in. All are fully aware of each other's needs and support each other thoughtfully when facing adversity – from training camps to tournament. It's what makes the programme so special. Regardless of who triumphs overall, the players understand the tournament, and what it means, is bigger than themselves.

JW: In terms of outcomes, winning in 2023, and losing just once in the group stages was incredible. So many positive moments – but seeing players grow and performing on the main stage live on Sky Sports is right up there.

PA: Many! Finals stand out on a personal level, but the entire experience is incredible, from planning winter training sessions to the final game. One of the most-rewarding parts is getting to know the players, coaches, and support team. Trying to help create a unique, fulfilling environment, seeing players grow, resonates deeply and sums up what DPL is all about. It's a pleasure to be involved in something so impactful and inspiring.

MS: Plenty that are cricket-related but seeing everyone back together after not seeing each other for a while

– talking about the days you've had and seeing the community that the DPL is creating is something special.

Q Which of your players' skills would you most like?

DG: Liam O'Brien's decision-making capabilities. Watching him bat it seems like he has a response to any problem: he makes quick, smart and calculated decisions in a fraction of a second. This ability makes him a threat to any bowler. As he's regularly shown, he can take a game away from the opposition in an instant.

JW: Callum Flynn – a dominant batter in all formats, with the skill to clear the ropes in high-pressured moments, and the knowledge when to rotate and rebuild.

PA: I'd love to have had their opportunities

to play in such a fantastic tournament. There's nothing better than applying your skills against the best in the country and, in some cases, the world. The experience, competition, and camaraderie these players enjoy is invaluable. It's inspiring to see how this platform helps them grow and showcases their talents at such a high level.

MS: All the boys are really talented with different skill sets – it's hard to pinpoint one. Sorry for sitting on the fence!

Q What is the DPL doing for the disability game?

DG: It has become the flagship of domestic disability cricket, with a positive effect on the landscape, inside and outside of this country. The shared drive of everyone involved to make cricket as visible



and accessible as possible for those with impairments has changed lives. We've seen it first hand at winter training camps; the standard of those coming through the county system is proof of that. In turn, that raises standards and expectations – and creates healthy competition – for the national squads.

JW: It has had a huge impact. Players who had retired have returned; it has been a performance pathway for young cricketers. Most importantly, cricketers with disabilities now have a real platform to showcase their talent. Sky Sports' coverage has raised awareness of the levels of ability, which still have room to grow. As a coaching group, we've become close friends off the field, while very competitive on it. I can't wait to

go again – 2024 is going to be bigger and better.

MS: The DPL is creating more opportunities for players and coaches to work in great environments that are growing year on year. It is creating a clear pathway and showcasing the skill levels of all involved, showing people that anything is possible, and that cricket is a game for all.

PA: The DPL is revolutionising the disability game by providing a platform where talent and passion shine, regardless of physical or sensory challenges. For players, it offers an unparalleled opportunity to compete at a high level and show that disability is no barrier to excellence. As coaches, the DPL is equally transformative – it challenges us to think creatively, adapt, and

continually learn from the players and each other. But being part of the DPL is not just about the game; it's about contributing to a movement that celebrates diversity, resilience, and the unifying power of sport. It's an honour to be involved in something making such a significant impact on individuals and the broader community.



// James Wojda

LEADING FROM THE FRONT



Left to right: Liam O'Brien, Alex Hammond, Anthony Clapham and Dan Reynaldo

DPL CAPTAINS 2024 – DAN REYNALDO (BLACK CATS), ALEX HAMMOND (HAWKS), ANTHONY CLAPHAM (PIRATES) AND LIAM O'BRIEN (TRIDENTS) – TALK SQUADS, THE CHALLENGES OF SKIPPING AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

Q All of you bar Dan have done the job before and know what to expect. How are your squads looking?

DR: I'm the new boy – I stood in a couple of times for Angus Brown, but it feels like the right time. My cricket's in a good place and I'm excited by the challenge. We got off to a flier last year with Gus scoring the first DPL ton, but it tapered off and I think we were lacking

in the batting department. Greg McKenzie will hopefully bolster the top order, and we've a good, exciting youngster to watch in Ben Williams.

AC: Ben will be one to watch. We tried to get him as well! Hopefully, it'll be third time lucky after two final defeats. Our batting was so, so strong last year but we didn't really know how best to use it, and our bowling lacked firepower. We've

retained Monty McKenzie and brought in Jordan Williams, which is a huge addition. We're happy and confident and, hopefully, still have a lot of firepower up top.

AH: I'm really pleased. I think we've retained all the players we wanted – I'd like to say we're favourites again. I'm sure the others will probably say the same, but if we play as we can and stick to our plans, there's no reason we can't be successful again.

L'OB: If Hawks don't win it, they've bottled it! (laughs). It feels that the teams this year are more deliberate – picking the best fits, as opposed to the best players. I think people have been clever with retention – going for complete squads, rather than: 'this is a batting, or bowling team'. There's more individual identity, if you like. For example, we needed a keeper – our priority was picking the best one available from the highest tier.

Q What's the hardest thing to stay on top of as captain in these games?

AC: Communication – whether that's trying to get a deaf guy's attention down at deep fine leg or managing some of the LD guys. You have to be mindful in the way you try and get that message across.

AH: There's probably a reason four PD lads are captains – with respect,

that's probably because of the communication. That's critical. People want to bat top four, or bowl four overs every game and obviously with the rules, we've got to give different people a go – and everybody's got to play twice. It's really hard managing those expectations.

DR: It is almost like managing – the personalities within these teams may be used to doing something

different with their counties or club and then come into this environment, where they might need to slot in somewhere completely different. Managing that aspect, as well as on-field communication, is important.

Q What highlights been across the DPL's time so far?

DR: Gus Brown's hundred last year was pretty

special – equally, O'B's innings at Wokingham in 2022. And seeing some of the young players we've all watched on the county circuit over the years coming through and putting in decent performances, that's really nice to see under that new pressure.

AC: I'd love to say two finals and playing on Sky, but obviously losing both... I'll just have to win the toss next time. Jai Charan, an LD

THERE'S GOT TO BE HUNDREDS OF DISABILITY CRICKETERS PLAYING CLUB CRICKET STILL WITH NO CLUE THIS IS GOING ON. HOW CAN WE GET THAT REACH AS WIDE AS POSSIBLE?



ALEX HAMMOND
Hawks

player, fairly new to disability cricket, got a couple of wickets against Hawks to help us win a game in 2022. He bowled at a crucial time, and seeing his reaction, and his dad's, is something I'll never forget. Liam and Alex have obviously had a chance to enjoy winning the DPL, hopefully it'll be us this year. Either way, ECB have done an amazing job creating this platform to perform on the biggest stage and having this year's final before England men's IT20 with Australia – there isn't a bigger game in cricket.

L'OB: It sounds obvious but winning the final in 2022 was incredible. I hate losing, so went into the whole thing really focused and didn't really let myself enjoy it. It was only looking back I realised how special it was.

Watching the final and not being in it last year helped me appreciate the tournament a bit more. I got into disability sport because I couldn't go professional, and never thought



/// Liam O'Brien

I would get that opportunity – such a bucket-list day. And we didn't feel out of place – the standard was really good, it felt right that we were there.

AH: Winning it was great. If I'm honest, I wasn't 100 percent sure initially the tournament was going to work, and perhaps didn't buy into it fully. But last year, winning it,

doing interviews, and dealing with that side of it – that whole experience was so different, and hopefully something we can get more

opportunities with. Hopefully at some point there will be an international Deaf or PD game live on TV.

Q Where do you see the DPL – and the disability game – in five years' time?

AH: There's got to be hundreds of disability cricketers playing club cricket still with no clue this is going on. How can we get that reach as wide as possible? I know none of us here would class ourselves as disabled – it's about trying to break down that barrier. We're not playing in a disability team because we see ourselves as disabled – we see ourselves, and each other, as cricketers first and foremost. We just happen to have a disability. I'd love to find another 10,15, 20 cricketers to push the standard higher, potentially have smaller DPL squads, of say 13-



I DIDN'T HAVE ANYBODY TO LOOK UP TO WITH MY DISABILITY – I'D LOVE TO BE THAT PERSON FOR SOMEONE.

ANTHONY CLAPHAM

Pirates

14, to try and raise that standard. Then I'd love an out-and-out draft where you register, say 120 players – then four coaches pick their squads – similar to any draft in any other sport.

L'OB: Maybe the DPL will eventually become more like a franchise thing, along the lines of North, South, East, West – something to give it a clearer identity than team names, something that people can identify with, and have a team they support. If

I'm watching any single sport, I look for familiarity... 'I'm from England – I'll support Great Britain, even if I don't watch usually netball!

I certainly think it's helped bring the England teams closer. I root for the Deaf and the LD teams a lot more now, because I respect and appreciate the players more.

AC: We all want to make this as professional as possible – maybe we'll be salaried

DPL players! And if there's going to be double headers with women's and men's franchises teams, why wouldn't we be added to that as well? So you have a disability game in the morning, women's game in the afternoon, men's game in the evening. That'd be cool. And the ECB has given us so much. I'd love to pay that back. I didn't have anybody to look up to with my disability – I'd love to be that person for someone.

DR: Blimey. Follow that! We're seeing our international cricket become increasingly professional and I think that's only going to filter down into the DPL. I appreciate it's a slow burn, but I think those small tweaks will take the game to the next level. There have to be more people out there that want to play, how do we get them involved? The only way to do it is going out and meeting people, travelling around, and getting faces out there.

IT'S SHOWTIME...

**FOUR TEAMS,
THREE ROUND-ROBIN
WEEKENDS,
FIVE VENUES — ONE
FINAL. HERE'S YOUR
AT-A-GLANCE-GUIDE
TO DPL 2024**

FINAL

FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

**SOPHIA GARDENS, GLAMORGAN
COUNTY CRICKET CLUB,
PONTCANNA, CARDIFF CF11 9XR**

(ahead of England
Men v Australia
Men's second IT20)

 **12:00**
TBC v TBC

24

It's Showtime...


WEEK 1

OUNDLÉ SCHOOL & OUNDLE TOWN CC SUNDAY 25 AUGUST

 OUNDLE SCHOOL, CHURCH ST, OUNDLE,
PETERBOROUGH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
PE8 4EE

OUNDLÉ TOWN CRICKET CLUB,
MILTON ROAD, OUNDLE, PETERBOROUGH,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PE8 4AG

 OUNDLETOWN.PLAYCRICKET.COM
OUNDLÉ.SCHOOL.ORG.UK

 One weekend - two venues - ten
minutes apart. Oundle Town CC -
believed to be Northamptonshire's
oldest cricket club (formed in 1826)
and Oundle School get DPL 2024
underway.

FIXTURES

 **10:30AM**

OUNDLÉ SCHOOL

OUNDLÉ TOWN CC

BLACK CATS

HAWKS

TRIDENTS

PIRATES

 **2:30PM**

OUNDLÉ SCHOOL

OUNDLÉ TOWN CC

TRIDENTS
HAWKS

PIRATES
BLACK CATS




WEEK 2

NESTON CC SUNDAY 1 SEPTEMBER

 **NESTON CRICKET CLUB, PARKGATE CLUB-HOUSE, STATION ROAD, PARKGATE, CHESHIRE CH64 6QJ**

 **THENESTONCLUB.CO.UK**

 Home to Neston CC at the heart of the Wirral peninsula, Neston will host the middle round-robin weekend. The club is no stranger to DPL, having hosted a gripping climax to the group stages in 2022.




WEEK 3

NCPC LOUGHBOROUGH SUNDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

 **NATIONAL CRICKET PERFORMANCE CENTRE, LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY CAMPUS LE11 3TU**

 **LBORO.AC.UK/SPORT/FACILITIES/SPORTS-FACILITIES/CRICKET-CENTRE**

 Home to ECB's National Cricket Performance Centre since 2003, two first-class grounds - Brockington and the immediately adjacent Haselgrave - complement state-of-the-art facilities on the Loughborough University campus, which include climate-controlled nets and six indoor artificial wickets.

 **10:30AM**

PITCH 1
HAWKS
v
BLACK CATS

PITCH 2
TRIDENTS
v
PIRATES

 **10:30AM**

PITCH 1
HAWKS
v
TRIDENTS

PITCH 2
BLACK CATS
v
PIRATES

 **2:30PM**

PITCH 1
TRIDENTS
v
BLACK CATS

PITCH 2
PIRATES
v
HAWKS

 **2:30PM**

PITCH 1
BLACK CATS
v
HAWKS

PITCH 2
PIRATES
v
TRIDENTS

EYES ON THE PRIZE

THE BATTLE IS ON TO TAKE THE HAWKS' DPL CROWN – HERE'S A REMINDER OF HOW THEY WON IT...

Year on year, it grows. Hawks' victory in 2023's DPL final on a sun-baked, mid-week September afternoon at Derby, came at a comparative canter with 15 balls remaining.

Yet the consummate ease with which Callum Flynn and George Greenway – skippers of England PD and Deaf respectively – took the game away from Pirates during an unbroken, fuss-free fourth-wicket stand of 92 was another reminder of the DPL quality hallmark: serious players, playing serious cricket.

One had to feel for Jake Oakes, slight of frame, but with hand-eye co-ordination to marvel at. Oakes' 32 off the last over included five sixes – including one that sailed over the hospitality tent – hoisting Pirates, for whom the elegant Dan Bowser hit 62, to 156-6. A competitive total. Or so it was thought. Hawks, having



*Callum Flynn
of the Hawks*



looked on covetously after missing out on a final berth when hotly fancied 12 months earlier, would not be denied again. Flynn, in particular, was at his classical best, his 83 making him 2023's leading DPL run-getter.

Behind the headlines and numbers across the three round-robin weekends in Cheshire, Surrey and Leicestershire that led to Derby were stories, so many stories. Pirates' half-man, half-mountain Brendon Parr, who discovered the disability game after a motorcycle accident that left him wheelchair-bound for a year, topped the overall batting averages and jetted off to India with England's PD side; Hawks' veteran keeper Kev Baker, club-cricket lifer and sepsis survivor, who effectively died three times in one night, took a marvellous one-handed final grab for the Sky cameras.

Parr, Baker – and all 64 players who made the draft cut – know plenty about clinging on to what you have.

DPL 2023 was another vital staging post for a game that has been gradually inching ever nearer the mainstream – this year's final at Cardiff has been achieved through years of patient work, often by largely unseen pioneers. There was another small slice of history in 2023, with the first DPL ton: the 360-degree wrists of 21-year-old England PD batter Angus Brown employed to devastating effect across just 52 balls (nine 4s, five 6s, strike rate 192.31) as Black Cats made light of a daunting 190 target against Tridents with three balls and six wickets to spare at Neston CC. 2024 will surely prove fine vintage. Hawks, so impressive in 2023 with one defeat in six group games, will have their eyes on retaining the prize, but the competition will be fierce.



BEST IN SHOW

AS WE HEAD INTO DPL 2024, WE RAISE OUR CAPS TO THOSE WHO'VE SET SUCH AN IMPRESSIVE TONE SO FAR, FROM BATTING BLUDGEONERS TO SAVVY SEAMERS AND SPINNERS...

MOST RUNS

Liam O'Brien

619

YEAR BY YEAR

Callum Flynn 2023 245

Anthony Clapham 2022 271

Liam O'Brien 2021 183

HIGHEST SCORE

Angus Brown

100*

*52 balls

Black Cats v Tridents, Neston, 20.8.23

HIGHEST BATTING AVERAGE

(minimum three innings)

Brendon Parr

69.33

(208 runs from seven innings)

HIGHEST STRIKE RATE

(minimum five innings)

Angus Brown

155.26

(354 runs from 228 balls)

50s/100s **OVERALL** 33/1

2023 11/1 2022 14/0 2021 8/0

MOST 50s Anthony Clapham

5

MOST RUNS IN AN OVER

Jake Oakes

PIRATES v HAWKS

DPL final, Incora County Ground, Derby, 6.9.23 – 32 (6,6,2,6,6,6)

Liam O'Brien

TRIDENTS v BLACK CATS

at Wokingham CC, 4.9.22. – 32 (4,4,4,2, nb+6, 6,6)



THE JOY OF SIX

Liam O'Brien

32

Anthony Clapham

23

HIGHEST SCORE

TRIDENTS **211-4** v BLACK CATS

Wokingham CC, 4.9.22

LOWEST SCORE

HAWKS **82A0** v BLACK CATS

Brockington, National Cricket Performance Centre, Loughborough University, 3.9.23

HIGHEST CHASE

BLACK CATS **190-4** v TRIDENTS

Neston CC, 20.8.23

LEADING WICKET-TAKERS

Ben Sutton

James Dixon

Farooq Mohammad

20

YEAR BY YEAR

Owen Morris,
Monty McKenzie

2023

10

Farooq Mohammad

2022

12

Alex Jervis

2021

9

BEST BOWLING

James Dixon

6-20

TRIDENTS v BLACK CATS

Neston CC, 11.9.22

James Nordin

5-27

BLACK CATS v PIRATES

Wokingham CC, 4.9.22

BEST BOWLING AVERAGE

(minimum five wickets)

Umar Khan

11.83

(six wickets from 14.2 overs)

BEST ECONOMY RATE

(minimum five wickets)

James Dixon

4.62

(60.4 overs, 280 runs)

BEST STRIKE RATE

(minimum five wickets)

Jai Charan

12.75

(12 wickets, 22.1 overs)

MOST CATCHES

KEEPERS

Elliot Brown

6

Liam Thomas

FIELDERS

Alex Hammond

7

Gregor McKenzie

RING THE

BELLS



ECB Chair's Disability XI

DAY IN THE SUN AS DISABILITY GAME BREAKS NEW GROUND AT LORD'S

History was a long time in the making. As Richard Hill, one of the disability game's great stalwarts, rang the Lord's bell to herald the first game played by disabled cricketers on the main square, there was a moment for all to reflect on the journeys made, both personally and collectively.

A lifetime of cricket, of pushing against barriers of assumption, indifference, or both, finding a team, finding a league, in some cases even finding yourself. And now this. But not just this. The promise of so much more.

Across the old ground, which had given itself up to disability cricket for the day, youngsters scampered across the nursery ground

in sessions put on by the Lord's Taverners. Cameras whirred, shutters clicked. Guests Ben Foakes and Nathan Lyon, men who know that despite the heat and dust, Test cricket remains the same game, were having the time of their lives.

After England's Visually Impaired Team opened up with a 10-over contest on the main square, it was the turn of a strong England



pan-disability select XI, comprising three national skippers, Callum Flynn (PD), George Greenway (Deaf) and Chris Edwards (Learning Disabled) to take on a handy MCC side. Games with MCC XIs might be nothing new – but not here. There was business to be done: a point to prove.

MCC's 215-7 from 40 overs might have appeared challenging, at least to the uninitiated. Against anyone else it could well have been more – the devilish fielding that characterises this set-up was once more at its best here. Despite losing Angus Brown early, Dan Bowser and Ronnie Jackson ticked along nicely, before the latter cut loose en route to a fine-half century containing six fours and a six.

At 136-4 in the 26th after skipper Callum Flynn's departure, MCC might have harboured thoughts of victory. In came Liam O'Brien, with other ideas. Given fine support from Josh Price (19*), O'Brien eased through the gears, finishing on 46 from 37 balls. The end came swiftly, with the ground bathed, fittingly, in glorious sunshine. Even a miserable summer had decided to have a day out.

This time the accompanying soundtrack was not raindrops rattling the roof of the Lord's grandstand, but bouncing bombs from the bat of O'Brien. As Richard Hill had said in a quiet moment, it felt less like the end of a journey getting here, more like the start of a new one.



MCC 215-7 (Schlemmer 94)
ECB PAN-DISABILITY XI 217-5 (38)
 Jackson 50, O'Brien 46*, Bowser 45



PASSAGE TO INDIA

2024 ENDED A FIVE-YEAR WAIT FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTION FOR ENGLAND'S PHYSICAL DISABILITY SIDE

Five years on the sidelines. England's senior men side had won – and lost – a World Cup in the time since the country's physical disability squad last faced serious action together.

Back in 2019, Callum Flynn's side had been edged out by India in the final of the PD World Series in Worcester. In January they headed to the subcontinent and a chance for revenge.

Though England lost the five-match T20 series 3-2, there was much for skipper Callum Flynn and his team to reflect on – not least the value of calling correctly at the toss. Win the toss, win the game is an oft-heard expression in India: here it was no different – every result went the way of the coin-toss victors.

Victory and defeat are treated with equal respect in this cricketing world, and Flynn's abiding memory is of the outstanding treatment received from the Indian side, representing the Differently Abled Cricket Council of India (DCCI).

"It was unbelievable," said Flynn, who passed 1,000 international runs on the tour. "People really couldn't have done anymore for us – we were treated like kings and queens; they love their cricket so much and the facilities were brilliant."



Facilities don't come much better than Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium. The largest cricket ground in the world, venue for Australia's World Cup final defeat of India in November, was a glorious backdrop for four of the five games. England signed off in style against Vikrant Keni's charges, with victory by 22 runs – curiously the same winning margin they recorded in the third game, to keep the series alive. Having posted 152-6, thanks to Flynn's 53, with good support from Liam O'Brien (45) and Alex Hammond (38), a fine spell of 3-23 from left-arm spinner Danny Hamm in the final outing of a 14-year international career and 2-13 from Flynn restricted India to 130-7.

Hopes are high the teams can meet again soon, with the mood music positive from the hosts.

India coach Rohit Jhalani heralded the series as a seismic moment in the fight to gain disability cricket greater recognition. "We have witnessed a historical change in India after the 1983 World Cup, and somehow I am looking at this series in that sense," he said.

With England at the forefront of the game's expansion through international tours



and groundbreaking initiatives such as the DPL, the horizon is bright. And for Flynn and company, these memories will last a lifetime. "It was so great to put on the shirt again," he said. "They'd brought around a thousand kids in to watch the games. We sang the national anthems with them – everyone had goosebumps – it sounded like 100,000."

WIN THE TOSS, BE THE BOSS!

All five games were won by the side batting first

GAME 1	India won by 49 runs
GAME 2	India won by 35 runs
GAME 3	England won by 22 runs
GAME 4	India won by 19 runs
GAME 5	England won by 22 runs



INDIA UNDETERRED BY ENGLAND'S PRICE TAG

VISITORS WIN FIRST BILATERAL DISABILITY SERIES IN ENGLAND SINCE 2019



England Deaf were left to reflect on what might have been as an impressive India took June's IT20 series.

With the seven-game contest delicately poised at 2-2, a three-game winning streak secured a 5-2 victory for Virender Singh's side. The visitors clinched the series against George Greenway's charges – played across 10 days at five Midlands venues – with arguably their finest all-round display, a 55-run win at Astwood Bank CC in Worcestershire in game six.

Having taken a 3-2 lead in the day's first of two back-to-back encounters after a convincing eight-wicket success in pursuit of England's 134, India piled on the pressure. Asked to bat, they amassed

194-5, thanks to half-centuries from Akash Singh (57) and Sai Akash (52).

Despite reaching the midway point at 89-2, the hosts were squeezed to 139-9, Josh Price's 67 accounting for almost half the reply. Skipper Singh played his part with the ball, taking 3-12 as the hosts struggled for fluency amid mounting pressure.

While there was disappointment for England – not least with the six-wicket reverse that brought the series to a close – there was still plenty

to savour. Josh Price, a hero of 2022's stirring Ashes win in Australia, once more



underlined his value. It was his sparkling 69 not out that had drawn the hosts, chasing 152, level at Northampton. And it was Price to the fore again (67 from 50 balls) as England saved their best with the bat til last, posting 163-4. India, however, were not to be denied. Abishek Singh's unbeaten 42-ball 68, backed by great support in a stand of 95 with keeper Umar Ashraf (56 from 38) saw them home with four balls to spare.

Abishek's winning hit, a sliced edge for four off James Dixon, sparked jubilant scenes at Uptonsteel County Ground, the batter engulfed by delirious team-mates. This last match, with India wobbling at 46-3, was another reminder of how evenly matched the teams had been. The critical difference was India's ability to hold their nerve in those key moments.

England's National Disability Performance manager Jane Powell was philosophical in defeat.

I'M OBVIOUSLY DISAPPOINTED FOR THE TEAM, BUT INDIA THOROUGHLY DESERVED THEIR SERIES WIN.

THE LEVEL OF TALENT AND SKILL DISPLAYED THROUGHOUT HAS BLOWN ME AWAY. BOTH TEAMS HAVE SHOWN JUST HOW BRILLIANT AND ENGAGING ELITE DEAF CRICKET CAN BE.

THEY HAVE SOME QUALITY PLAYERS, AND WE HAVE MUCH TO LEARN FROM THE WAY THEY GO ABOUT THEIR CRICKET. REST ASSURED, WE HAVE TAKEN A LOT ON BOARD, AND WILL COME BACK EVEN STRONGER.

Josh Price (265 runs at 44.16) was England's man of the series, with Sai Akash (271 runs at 45.16) taking the honours for India.



THE BREAKDOWN

GAME 1	England win by 2 runs (DLS)	GAME 5	India win by 8 wickets
GAME 2	India win by 23 runs	GAME 6	India win by 55 runs
GAME 3	India win by 7 wickets	GAME 7	India win by 6 wickets
GAME 4	England win by 6 wickets		



BLOOMING MARVELLOUS

EDGAR HERRIDGE EXPLAINS HOW INCREASED EXPOSURE AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL BRINGS RESULTS – ON AND OFF THE PITCH

The DPL is working wonders for growing the disability game's reach. But away from the headlines, out in the shires and outposts, a committed cast are beavering quietly away, finessing that cricketing journey from its earliest steps. 'Pathway' may be the buzzword, but it does little to flesh out the bones of a quiet revolution bringing cricket to more and more

people – in many cases those who would once have felt the game out of their reach.

As senior national disabilities manager Edgar Herridge is responsible for helping stitch that sporting patchwork together. To Edgar – and many others like him – it is as much a calling as a 9-5 gig.

Speaking on the move via hands-free, he is en route to coaching at his own club, Long Sutton CC in Somerset, where he remains hands-on with their All Stars programme.

It's been quite a year for disability cricket, not least at school level where, in partnership with Lord's Taverners, the target of taking the game to 400 SEND schools was not only met, but extended by 50 per cent. That's 600 in all – 19,000 students.

Then there were the tales of Alfie Pyle and Ben Mason, first graduates of the Taverners' Super 1s scheme to pull on England shirts. While the stories of Pyle – 2023 Disability Cricketer of the Year – and Mason are heartwarming, they're the tip of the iceberg for those whose lives can be changed by the game, regardless of ability. That's a huge driver for Herridge.

“People might read this, reflecting on the DPL players they're going to be seeing on the pitch today, but their involvement reflects their engagement with that pathway,” he says. “It's like going for a walk. Some stop off and smell the flowers on the way, at different points of the journey.”

It's a neat analogy and Herridge's commitment to ensuring the right cricket fit is fierce.

He has been in post since 2019, since when the 70,000-strong tally of those classing themselves as disabled recreational cricketers has doubled. Far from admiring the view, he knows there's “an awfully long way to go – disabled

people are still massively underserved in the sporting pantheon.” The continuing challenge, as he sees it, is equity of provision – “making sure anyone in England and Wales could pop down the road and find their local opportunity to play cricket, and also making sure, regardless of disability or long-term health condition, that things they, or people, might perceive as a barriers – aren't. You can still absolutely enjoy this game in the right format – the one that's right for you.”

“The pathway suggests linear progression to an end goal,” he adds. “For a small percentage the end path might be an England cap, or representing one of the DPL teams, but for an awful lot of players that might not be their goal, or where their road ends – I'm always keen to make sure sport isn't just a physical activity, it's a social event.”

There is now a dedicated disability officer in every county – a mushroom growth in the past five years from 12 to 38. Next is the target of 160 ‘disability champion’ clubs by the end of 2024; an increase that will feed the post-school/Super 1s entry point. Rest assured: this is one levelling-up campaign that fits the bill.

**“SPORT ISN'T JUST A
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
– IT'S A SOCIAL EVENT”**

GET WITH THE PROGRAMME

HOW JEN SITCH SWITCHED PLANS FOR A NEW LIFE IN CRICKET

Jen Sitch has long realised cricket's life-changing powers. Raising sons who loved the game, while overseeing admin for Dorridge CC's junior section, offered ample evidence of that.

But a moment earlier this summer was another reminder that the game seems to have mapped out a path for her, too. Casting around Worcester Tourist Information Centre in her role as liaison for the visiting Indian Deaf party, her attention was drawn to Diglis Basin, a regeneration project on the Worcester and Birmingham canal. In her previous working life as a planning consultant, she'd been involved in the project's initial stages. Now, here she was – that working world long forgotten – the past butting firmly into the present.

It wasn't for the first time. Sitch's journey to the DPL began with a chance meeting. When out grabbing a coffee,



she bumped into an old coaching contact from Dorridge, who bemoaned the lack of time to keep on top of paperwork. Having already scaled back her professional duties, she offered her services. A couple of months later, she got an email asking if she'd be interested in 20 hours a week. "That was eight years ago," she recalls. "My office was the changing-rooms at Knowle and Dorridge CC – very cold – and quite smelly," she laughs. "It was quite an experience."

It was a welcome relief from the stresses and strains of being a director of her firm.

"I just loved it," she says. "I love being around cricket – that sense of team and



community you get through sport – you see the whole spectrum, I suppose.” Another casual remark by a colleague, taking a busman’s holiday to work with England’s visually impaired coaching team was met with a further ‘if you need any help, give me a shout’ offers. Though nothing came of that, an opportunity came up to work with England’s Physical Disability squad in March 2023.

Jen applied and was successful. A year later she was in India with the PD lads on the trip of a lifetime – and

a photo album full of memories. Last month she started a role as assistant operations manager at Loughborough’s National Cricket Performance Centre.

But her focus for now is the DPL, the disability game’s domestic highlight and an event she wouldn’t miss for the world. “You just become so invested in it – you want the best for the players, to see them make the most of the opportunities and to support them as much as you can, because it’s such a

valuable programme,” she says. “Everyone one in it is so special – and everyone comes together. It becomes more than just work – it’s the power of it.”

It’s a conversation often had by those on the circuit. There will be long days and late nights ahead over the coming three weeks, whether that be smoothing out logistical glitches, or offering practical and moral support to the players, but it

holds no fear. Whenever Sitch needs a boost, she looks at those cherished India photos. “Don’t get me wrong,” she laughs. “It’s not that I

don’t love my kids and my dog, but...”

So there’s no going back to planning consultancy? “I enjoyed that job – it was rewarding in a different way,” she says. “But what I love about this work is that it’s about people and interaction – it has changed my life.”

Diglis Basin might have been part of the flow, but for Jen Sitch, this is different water under a very different bridge.

YOU JUST BECOME SO INVESTED IN IT – YOU WANT THE BEST FOR THE PLAYERS, TO SEE THEM MAKE THE MOST OF THE OPPORTUNITIES





KNOWING THE SCORE

MEET THE LADIES WHOSE HELP KEEPING THE DPL SCOREBOARD TICKING HAS BECOME A LABOUR OF LOVE

Sandra Mason vividly remembers the day cricket changed her life.

“Mum, mum, there’s nobody to score, do you want to do it?” her son asked. “I thought: ‘Oh no, I don’t know a thing about cricket.’”

I ended up doing it and really liked it, so I carried on.” That under-nines pairs game was the gateway to an unexpected life in cricket – these days Sandra is Cheshire’s CSO (chief scoring officer).

Alongside her fellow DPL scorers Thelma Eden and Sarah Norell – Lottie

Chatfield is an absent member of the fab-four female scoring quartet – the trio make for engaging company.

Half an hour flies by in an animated Zoom call that clearly illustrates their love of what they do – and the critical importance of a role so regularly overlooked in the game. But – and this is something all are keen to stress – disability cricket in particular, with its vivid backdrop of inclusivity and positivity, has been a gift to

THOSE FAMILIAR WITH THIS LANDSCAPE WILL CONCUR - ONCE BITTEN, FOREVER SMITTEN.

them all. It's another reminder of how the game – and, in particular, this game – has something for all.

Sarah's story – Warwickshire's acting county scorers officer and a regular in disability and mainstream scoring circles for 20 years now – was perhaps more predictable, if no-less eventful.

The daughter of a cricket-mad mother, she attended her first game at Edgbaston aged three months, and from initially scoring for fun aged seven – 'mum taught me to keep me quiet' – she became prolific. She recalls finishing an A-level before heading straight off to score an ICC game for Fiji in which her father was officiating. Like Sandra's story, Thelma's route into scoring was something of a sliding-doors moment.

Her then-husband warned her: "you need to know I play cricket". With Sundays in her youth fondly remembered watching the John Player League on television, but unimpressed by the notion that making the teas was an expectation, when the club scorer left Thelma swapped the buffet for the book.

"I thought, 'I can count to six, it can't be that hard,'" she recalls. An era of coloured pens and stopwatches duly

gave way to scoring exams, laptops, county age-group games for Staffordshire, but the joy of scoring remains.

"I found it – and still do – quite a stress buster," she says. Thelma has been a regular scorer for England Disability sides for a decade plus – having first encountered the PD side when scoring for Staffordshire U18s. "I was absolutely blown away by these guys – just amazing. And it was obvious they were a great bunch of guys." Thelma offered her services if a scorer was needed. It was. A decade on, she's still here. Beyond the satisfaction of doing the job well, whether that on the domestic pathway, or with England's impairment groups, there's the additional joy of friendship and camaraderie. More simply, what Thelma calls "the gob smacking awesomeness of the people".

Those familiar with this landscape will concur – once bitten, forever smitten. "It's made me realise a lot of disability is [based on] the social model of disability – in that the problem is with society and not the individual," adds Sarah. "I don't assume somebody can't do something anymore. I assume they can, and I'm more surprised when they can't – it's sort of twisted my perspective."

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS



DOMESTIC DUTIES OVER, THOUGHTS TURN TO AN INTERNATIONAL WINTER...

The DPL will bring the curtain down on the 2024 domestic season, but there's no let-up this winter in a busy international disability programme. England's visually impaired side, captained by Ed Hossell (*pictured above*), head out to Australia in November to contest the 'Blind Ashes'. No quarter will be asked or given across three ODI matches

and five T20s in Brisbane – including two sets of back-to-back games – across a tough 10-day schedule.

Every England captain dreams of leading a side Down Under, and for the long-serving Hossell – November marks the 10th anniversary of his international debut – the trip is long overdue.

Few were hit harder by Covid than England's VI set-up, with Australia's trip to England scuppered in the summer of 2020. International action – besides last year's World Blind Games in Birmingham has been in short supply, with the last tour 2019's trip to the UAE to play Pakistan.

There are extremely happy memories of England's last visit to Australia – England won 4-1 to regain the Ashes in 2016. Two of the heroes of that tour, the-then skipper Matt Dean (*pictured right*) and Luke Sugg will be looking to replicate the three centuries and four fifties made between them. Dean, such a leading light in the international blind game across two decades – averaged a remarkable 123 in that series – and became the first man to officially pass 10,000 runs in the sport in May 2023. VI Head coach Tom Lister, assisted by Gareth Davies and John Cook, will hope Dean, very much the James Anderson of the VI side at 41 – and the rest of their charges – are raring to make up for lost time.

England's Physical Disability side will be heading out – fingers crossed – to compete in a long-awaited World Cup in India in January, hoping to avenge defeat by the visitors at the final hurdle at Worcester in 2019.

For up-to-date details and news on all England's disability sides, visit www.ecb.co.uk/england/disability

BLIND ASHES SCHEDULE

Sunday 17 November ODI
Tuesday 19 November ODI
Thursday 21 November ODI
Saturday 23 November 2 x T20
Monday 25 November 2 x T20
Tuesday 26 November T20



GROUND BREAKERS

A CELEBRATION OF THOSE WHO HELPED DISABILITY CRICKET EVOLVE, FROM POST-WAR BEGINNINGS TO INTERNATIONAL TOURS AND TV COVERAGE

1946

Blind cricket is played in the UK for the first time, offering soldiers who suffered visual injuries during the Second World War the chance to play in a specially designed format

1992

The inaugural England Deaf international series – England face Australia in a five-test Ashes encounter

1998

England – captained by Dave Samuels – field the first international blind/visually impaired team against India in New Delhi at the first blind World Cup

1991

Formation of the British Association for Cricketers with Disabilities (BACD). A voluntary-led registered charity, the BACD develops the UK's first 'county' level disability-specific cricket competition

1994

Foundation of the Cricket Federation for People with Disabilities (CFPD). Another voluntary-led initiative, it offers opportunities for disabled people to participate at prestigious indoor venues, including Lord's, Headingley and the Oval

1999

Lancashire are winners of the first structured domestic disability cricket league. It consists of just six teams, playing with a composite ball



2007

England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) employ the first full-timer with responsibility for the development of disability cricket in the UK.

Ian Martin – now an MBE – becomes National Disability Cricket Manager

2021

Deaf players (and those with significant hearing loss) are introduced to domestic competitions. They join PD and LD peers in forming the first pan-disability domestic cricket offer

2005

England field a Learning Disability (LD) side for the first time in a tri-series with Australia and South Africa down under

2010

England officially announce the formation of a new Physical Disability (PD) squad

2023

The International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) delivered the World Blind Games in Birmingham, with ECB asked to develop a cricket tournament as part of a programme featuring around 20 sports. England field both a men's and ladies' side – the latter is another first

2006

A two-tier domestic system arrives with the introduction of a hard-ball game. 2024's county set-up now boasts more than 60 teams

2012

England PD head to Dubai for their first international action: a six-match bilateral series with Pakistan

2024

An ECB Chairman's Disability XI play an MCC XI on the main square at Lords Cricket ground in July – the first disability game played at the home of cricket, it represents another significant milestone in the evolution of the disabled game

2006

A Super4s event takes place at Loughborough – the first representative competition for players with a physical disability – effectively, the forerunner of today's DPL!

2022

Following a successful pilot, the Disability Premier League (DPL) is launched. With players from three impairment groups (PD, LD and Deaf), it is the first of its kind in the world. Tridents beat Pirates in the first disability cricket match aired live on television via Sky Sports



GET INVOLVED

THERE ARE 40 CRICKET BOARDS ACROSS ENGLAND AND WALES – TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THEIR DISABILITY CRICKET, CHECK OUT THE LINKS BELOW:

BEDFORDSHIRE www.cricketeast.co.uk

BERKSHIRE www.berkshirecricketfoundation.org

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE www.buckscricket.co.uk

CAMBRIDGESHIRE www.cambscricket.co.uk

CHESHIRE www.cheshirecricketboard.co.uk

CORNWALL www.cornwallcricket.co.uk

CRICKET WALES www.cricketwales.org.uk

CUMBRIA www.cumbria-cricket.co.uk

DERBYSHIRE www.dcfcricket.com

DEVON www.devoncricket.co.uk

DORSET www.dorsetcricketboard.co.uk

DURHAM www.durhamcricket.co.uk

ESSEX www.essexcricket.org.uk

GLAMORGAN www.glamorgancricket.com

GLOUCESTERSHIRE www.gloscricket.co.uk

HAMPSHIRE www.ageasbowl.com

HEREFORDSHIRE www.herefordshirecricket.co.uk

HERTFORDSHIRE www.hertfordshire.org

HUNTINGDONSHIRE www.cricketeast.co.uk

ISLE OF WIGHT www.isleofwightcricket.co.uk





KENT

www.kentcricket.co.uk

LANCASHIRE

www.cricket.lancashirecricket.co.uk

LEICESTERSHIRE

www.leicestershireccc.co.uk

LINCOLNSHIRE

www.lincscricket.co.uk

MIDDLESEX

www.middlesexccc.com

NORFOLK

www.norfolkcricket.co.uk

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

www.nccc.co.uk

NORTHUMBERLAND

www.ncb.play-cricket.com

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

www.trentbridge.co.uk

OXFORDSHIRE

www.oxfordshire.cricknet

SHROPSHIRE

www.shropshirecricketboard.co.uk

SOMERSET

www.somersetcountycc.co.uk

STAFFORDSHIRE

www.staffordshirecricket.co.uk

SUFFOLK

www.suffolkcricket.org

SURREY

www.surreycricketfoundation.org

SUSSEX

www.sussexcricket.co.uk

WARWICKSHIRE

www.warwickshirecricketboard.co.uk

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