

Wiltshire County Cricket League and Wiltshire Cricket Limited Joint Statement regarding return of Wiltshire County Cricket League:

Many thanks to all clubs that completed the Wiltshire County Cricket League Covid-19 survey. This survey has provided the league with an excellent early indication of club situations and challenges with regards a return to Cricket this summer. Since the completion of this survey, the ECB has also released its roadmap for the return of recreational Cricket and following the release of ECB's statement last night we are hopeful that the ECB, following government guidance, will be able to progress to Step 4 of this roadmap, known as 'adapted game play', this summer. Once we get to this point it is the view of the Cricket Board and of the League that Cricket's administrators should play an active role in facilitating and providing Cricket for those clubs and teams that want it, thus ensuring that we maximise any window we get for matchplay this summer. With this in mind, the Wiltshire County Cricket League is pleased to confirm that it will be ready to react to a move to step 4 of ECB's roadmap by providing a competitive matchplay and competition structure. The current thinking is that this would be a standalone competition structure for 2020 that aims to provide meaningful competition but outside of the normal divisional structure and with no consequence on promotion and relegation for the 2021 season. With regards that structure, please note:

- That the league will not restart until the Government and then ECB state that it is safe and legal to do so. Please note that the main things that need to happen before the ECB will move to this point are:
 - The Government permits team sports matches to take place, and,
 - There is a Government increase in bubble size for exercise to a point that allows a game of Cricket to be played.
- That as part of any plan to restart cricket, the ECB will have to provide details of a wide range of factors, including but not limited to social distancing requirements, hygiene factors and adapted game play requirements. This information will have to be provided by the ECB as part of any guidance on restarting cricket, and the league will not be able to restart until that guidance has been received. It is our understanding that this guidance will come through in the form of a detailed guidance document relating to 'Step 4 Adapted Gameplay' of ECB's roadmap.
- That no team or club will be penalised if they are unable to take part in the 2020 season, or if they do not wish to do so.
 - On this note, both the Cricket Board and League understand that some clubs/teams may not want to be play in an organised competition during 2020 but may wish to play some friendlies. This is absolutely fine and both the League and Board will be keen to support clubs in finding the friendly fixtures that they would like
- That the league will give at least 14 days' notice of any start date. Once the league receives both the required guidance and the go ahead for competitive matchplay to restart, it will need to use those 14 days to:
 - Ask clubs to make a final decision on whether they want to compete in an organised competition structure in 2020 (appreciating that some clubs' decisions may be influenced by the detail of step 4 adapted game play)
 - Produce a competition structure and fixture schedule for the teams/clubs that have opted in
 - Notify clubs of their new fixture schedule with at least five days' notice from their first fixture

We hope that by providing this statement it shows the positive intent of the Wiltshire County Cricket League to provide meaningful Cricket this summer for those clubs and teams that want it. Additionally, both the League and the Cricket Board fully respect the position of clubs who may not wish to compete in an organised competition structure and we will work together to support those clubs that simply want something a little less formal. We also hope that by providing this statement at this point it makes it clear the step by step process that will be followed to get us to a start point for league cricket. With that in mind we would be encouraging clubs to use this time now to do whatever they can to begin getting their facilities ready for Cricket so that they are ready to begin playing cricket at 14 days' notice. This includes both the playing facilities but also off field facilities. For example, Sport England have produced some great examples of posters and signage that can be used by recreational sports clubs to help promote good hygiene messages. These resources can be downloaded here; <https://www.sportengland.org/hygiene>. For those clubs that highlighted in the Covid-19 survey that they may have issues with providing facilities for Cricket this summer, the league is aware of these issues and will make contact with clubs on an individual basis to discuss those issues.