

# PCB Highlights

## 1 November – 31 December

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition



## PCB brings Test cricket back to Pakistan

The purist and most traditional format of the gentleman's game returned to Pakistan after more than 10 years when Sri Lanka played the ICC World Test Championship fixtures in Rawalpindi and Karachi in December. For this team to put the March 2009 tragedy behind it and return twice in a space of three months was a strong and powerful statement to the world about their confidence and trust in Pakistan's security agencies and the support to the Pakistan Cricket Board in its efforts and endeavours for the complete and uninterrupted restoration of international cricket in the country.

The Sri Lanka cricket team was excellent – both on and off the field – and returned home not only after making more friends and followers than ever, but also after proving to be outstanding ambassadors of their country. They were gracious in defeat and generous in praising the hospitality and security offered to them during their Test tour.

“Now I do regret not coming for the shorter formats. At that time it was a really hard decision to take because I had heard and read lots of things about Pakistan on news and social media - not positive things. But the guys who came here before gave really good comments and that's why all the seniors decided to go and play a good Test series. Now I think I should have come and played the one-dayers,” Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth Karunaratne said.

“I can say that for me it feels really safe. The guys who are giving us security, they are giving us not just 100 per cent but more than 100 per cent. That's why we feel really good. We went out for dinners as well. I can say that Pakistan is now safe for cricket,” he added.

The tour was also a success of the PCB's cricket diplomacy. In this Future Tours Programme commitment, Sri Lanka were originally scheduled to visit Pakistan for Tests in September/October, before returning for white-ball cricket in December. But, the PCB, as part of their strategy to provide them with an opportunity to access ground realities, swapped the matches.

And although Rawalpindi Test was affected by weather, the eventual outcome resulted in cricket being the ultimate winner!

As expected, The Return was warmly welcomed by the die-hard cricket fans. In Rawalpindi, even rain and chilly conditions couldn't stop the followers from thronging the Pindi Cricket Stadium. Their support and patience was thoroughly rewarded when Abid Ali and Babar Azam stroked classy centuries on a bright and sunny final day in a drawn fixture.

In Karachi, Pakistan came back from an 80-run deficit to register a memorable 263 runs victory with centuries from Abid Ali, Azhar Ali, Babar Azam, Shan Masood, and five-fers from Naseem Shah and Shaheen Afridi. Approximately, 75,000 spectators turned up at the National Stadium over four days to watch their stars in action.

Abid was declared player of the series. In Rawalpindi, he had also become the first batsman in history to hit centuries on ODI and Test debuts. Babar also cemented his place among the finest when he peaked to the sixth spot in the ICC Test Player Rankings to support his No.1 and No.3 rankings in T20Is and ODIs, respectively. Undoubtedly, the Pakistan cricket fans saw live in action a mega star in the making.

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## Respecting the stars of yesteryears

Actions speak louder than words! The Pakistan Cricket Board had publically stated it respected, valued and recognised cricketers who had served Pakistan cricket meritoriously. And this was on display in the just-concluded ICC World Test Championship fixtures against Sri Lanka.

It all began in Rawalpindi when the PCB invited Javed Miandad and Bandula Warnapura to attend the captains' photo-shoot with the series trophy and watch the first Test in Pakistan in more than a decade. The two stalwarts had captained their respective sides in the first-ever Test between the two countries at the National Stadium in March 1982.

During lunch break on day one, the PCB Chairman Mr Ehsan Mani made special presentations to the two greats in acknowledgement of their achievements.

Also to visit the Pindi Cricket Stadium on day one was one of Pakistan's greatest sons – Majid Khan. This was the former captain's first appearance at a cricket match after a long time. Majid watched the last two sessions of play and spent time with his former team-mate Javed and PCB Chairman Ehsan Mani.

Also to attend day one of the Test were British High Commissioner - Designate, Mr Christian Turner, and Australian Charge d'Affairs, Mr Brek Batley,

When action moved to Karachi, the PCB honoured local heroes Saleem Yousuf and Rashid Khan during day three of the Test. Saleem and Rashid, along with Saleem Malik and Tahir Naqqash, had made their Test debuts in the March 1982 Test against Sri Lanka at the National Stadium with the former accounting for seven Sri Lanka batsmen behind the stumps and latter scoring 59 runs besides taking three wickets.

Zaheer Abbas, one of Pakistan's greatest batsmen, was the star attraction during the last day's play which lasted only 16 minutes. Befittingly, Zaheer presented a special memento to Abid in recognition of him becoming the first batsman to score centuries on ODI and Test debuts.

Also to grace the Karachi Test were former captains Wasim Bari and Moin Khan, ex-Test opener Sadiq Mohammad, Test spinner Tauseef Ahmed and international batsmen Mahmood Hamid and Ghulam Ali, and a host of other first-class cricketers.

“They are heroes of Pakistan cricket and role models for all aspiring cricketers. We intend to recognise their outstanding contribution and achievements, by recognising their services to Pakistan and cricket whenever and wherever practically possible,” said Mr Ehsan Mani.



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## MCC confirms first Pakistan visit in 48 years

World's oldest, most respected and influential cricket club, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) has confirmed a tour to Lahore for the limited-overs matches in the lead up to the HBL Pakistan Super League 2020. The side will be captained by their President and Sri Lanka stalwart Kumar Sangakkara.

The last MCC visit to Pakistan was in 1972-73. Their game against the then North-West Frontier Province Governor's XI at Peshawar was abandoned without a ball bowled. They beat the President's XI by four wickets at Pindi Club Ground.

The tour was confirmed following PCB Chief Executive Wasim Khan's impressive and compelling presentation to the MCC World Cricket Committee in London in August on Pakistan being as safe and secure as any other cricket playing country.

While the MCC have already named Sangakkara as the captain, the player names will be released at some stage in January along with the series schedule.

Kumar Sangakkara, the MCC President, said: "It is hugely important to support cricket in countries such as Pakistan, and the PCB has done a tremendous job in rebuilding the international cricketing landscape since the tragic events of 2009.

"I am excited to be captaining MCC on the tour to Pakistan. With international cricket having returned for the first time in a decade, it is wonderful the Club is doing its part to strengthen cricket in Pakistan and I look forward to being part of the trip."



## PCB eyes ICC events in 2023-31 cycle

The Pakistan Cricket Board has started preparations and planning for international cricket in the 2023 to 2031 event cycle. In this relation, PCB Chief Executive Wasim Khan visited Australia in November and had positive discussions with his counterpart Kevin Roberts.

One of the major outcomes from his visit to Cricket Australia offices was the decision to tweak the schedule of their tour to Pakistan in 2022.

In line with the PCB's strategy and emphasis on Test cricket, it was agreed the original two Test and three T20I series will be amended to three Tests and one T20I. It was further agreed the two countries will play three Test series in the next event cycle.

In addition to this, it was also agreed in Melbourne that the PCB will try to schedule Pakistan Shaheens (previously known as Pakistan A) bilateral annual series tour to and/or against Australia. Similar discussions are ongoing with England, New Zealand and South Africa with an aim of providing further exposure against tough opponents that, in turn, will result in raising world-beating sides.

With the PCB in the process of upgrading High Performance Centres with latest and more scientific coaching and training programmes, Wasim Khan also visited Cricket Australia's Centre of Excellence in Brisbane.

In Sydney, he had discussions with New South Wales Cricket Association and discussed options and proposals on scholarship programmes.

On a separate note, the PCB has started eyeing the ICC's event cycle from 2023-31. In this regard, it has expressed interest in staging, at least, one ICC event. In extension to this objective, ICC Chief Executive Manu Sawhney is expected to visit Lahore at the end of January for preliminary discussions. Pakistan was last awarded an ICC event in 2008, which was subsequently staged in South Africa due to teams' refusal to tour Pakistan.

PCB Chief Executive Wasim Khan said: "It is important that we not only understand our standing and stature in international cricket but also use it to enhance our profile and credibility. Outcomes with CA officials and the ICC's visit to Lahore to discuss the possibility of Pakistan staging a global event is part of our drive to take us to the next level."

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## Revamped first-class cricket at its brilliant best

Pakistan's domestic season commenced, on 14 September, with the first-class Quaid-e-Azam Trophy tournament which featured the First XI sides of the six Cricket Associations.

For the first time in Pakistan's history, the concept of no-toss was introduced in first-class cricket to strike the right balance between two competing sides and the 30 group-matches were played on the basis of home and away. In another first, as many as 10 matches were streamed live on the PCB's YouTube channel, while the final was telecasted on Ten Sports and PTV Sports.

To bridge the gap between first-class and Test cricket, Kookaburra balls were used in all first class matches as Pakistan national men's team plays all home Tests with that brand. A major chunk of international cricket is also played with the Kookaburras.

Another salient feature of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy first-class competition was the hosting of four matches in Quetta's Bugti Stadium. This was the first time in 11 years the beautiful city of Quetta was the venue of top grade cricket featuring some of the leading cricketers.

As expected, the reforms led to competitive and riveting cricketing action that helped regain fans' interest in the longer format of the game. The batsmen and bowlers got equal opportunities. The average first innings score jumped from 263 in the last season to 422 and the spinners were back in the picture as the matches went into the last days.

The tournament was split into two halves to provide more context to domestic cricket and reflect Pakistan's international commitments. As anticipated, Central Punjab, the hot favourites, won the tournament by beating Northern in the final, played at Karachi's National Stadium from December 27-30, by margin of an innings and 16 runs.

Balochistan's Imran Butt was the highest run-getter with 934 runs in nine matches and Northern captain Nauman Ali led the bowling charts with 54 wickets in 10 matches. Central Punjab's Kamran Akmal accounted for most batsmen behind the stumps with 41 dismissals.

Simultaneously, three-day non first-class Quaid-e-Azam Trophy was played amongst the Second XI sides of the six Cricket Associations. Like, the first-class tournament, this tournament was also split and came with an opportunity for players to graduate to the first-class tournament with the First XI sides allowed to induct players from their Second XI sides.

Southern Punjab won the tournament on the basis of the first innings lead in the final against Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, played at SBP Complex, Karachi.

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## Busy period for women cricketers

The profile of women's cricket grew immensely last year and the last quarter of 2019 saw PCB take new initiatives for the promotion of the game.

For the first time in history, Pakistan's national women's team played at Pakistan's home of cricket – Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium – when they hosted Bangladesh women for three T20Is and two ODIs. Pakistan whitewashed the visitors in the shorter format, while the one-day series was levelled 1-1.

In a bid to develop an U19 pool of cricketers ahead of the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup 2021, the PCB carried out U18 trials in November in which over 900 girls participated following which a four-team T20 series by the name of Skills2Shine U18 Women's Cricket T20 Championship was organised in Lahore.

The final played between Western Warriors and Northern Renegades was played at the Gaddafi Stadium in which the former came out victorious by eight wickets.

To encourage more girls to take up the sport, the PCB joined hands with Uber to promote the game in schools and colleges across 14 cities namely Abbottabad, Bahawalpur, Charsadda, Haripur, Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Mardan, Multan, Muzaffargarh, Nowshera, Peshawar, Quetta and Rawalpindi through its Cric4Us Programme. The six-month partnership will benefit more than 1,500 players

Pakistan national women's team played England women in Malaysia in three ODIs, round seven of the ICC Women's Championship, and three T20Is. Though, the end result did not go in the national side's favour, the team showed massive improvement in all three facets of the game.

With the continued growth of the women's cricket in Pakistan, the results reflected on international circuit as all-rounder Nida Dar was included in the ICC's Women's T20 team of the year.



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## Bringing the HBL PSL 2020 to Pakistan

In line with the vision and commitment, the PCB worked with all its stakeholders to firm up plans for the successful staging of the entire HBL Pakistan Super League 2020 in Pakistan. They held constructive and productive meetings with all stakeholders, assuring them that no stone will be left unturned in making this an event to remember.

In turn, the franchise owners and commercial partners also promised their complete support as the relationship continued to grow stronger. On 3 December, the activation to determine the pick order for the first round of the Draft took, which was subsequently announced on 4 November. With the confirmation of the pick order, the registration, transfer and retention window officially opened as teams negotiated for exciting trade possibilities.

During the month-long registration, transfer and retention window, as many as 425 foreign cricketers expressed their commitment to play the entire competition in Pakistan. This was yet another endorsement of PCB's decision to hold all PSL matches in Pakistan.

An impressive HBL Pakistan Super League 2020 Player Draft 2019 took place at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore on Friday, 6 December. Of the 425, the following 36 foreign stars will be action from 20 February to 22 March:

**Islamabad United:** Dale Steyn, Colin Ingram (both South Africa and platinum), Colin Munro (New Zealand, diamond), Luke Ronchi (New Zealand, gold), Phil Salt (England, silver) and Rassie van der Dussen (South Africa, gold)

**Karachi Kings:** Alex Hales (England, platinum), Chris Jordan (England, diamond), Cameron Delport (South Africa, gold), Liam Plunkett (England, gold), Dan Lawrence (England, silver) and Ali Khan (USA, silver)

**Lahore Qalandars:** Chris Lynn (Australia, platinum), Lendl Simmons (West Indies, diamond), David Wiese (South Africa, diamond), Samit Patel (England, gold), Seekkuge Prasanna (Sri Lanka, silver) and Ben Dunk (Australia, silver)

**Multan Sultans:** Moeen Ali (England, platinum), Rilee Rossouw, Imran Tahir (both South Africa and diamond), Ravi Bopara (England, diamond), James Vince (England, gold) and Fabien Allen (West Indies, silver)

**Peshawar Zalmi:** Kieron Pollard (West Indies, platinum), Tom Banton (England, diamond), Liam Dawson (England, gold), Daren Sammy (West Indies, gold), Liam Livingstone (England, gold) and Dwaine Pretorius (South Africa, silver)

**Quetta Gladiators:** Jason Roy (England, platinum), Ben Cutting, Shane Watson (both Australia and diamond), Fawad Ahmed (Australia, gold), Tymal Mills (England, silver) and Keemo Paul (West Indies, silver)

At the time of developing this newsletter, the HBL PSL 2020 schedule had been announced and, as expected, there was tremendous excitement amongst the fans and followers, with HBL PSL trending in the top-five on social media.

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## PCB continues to invest in youngsters

The highlight for Pakistan in pathways cricket was undoubtedly the victory in the Asian Cricket Council Emerging Cup 2019 played in Bangladesh in November. The Saud Shakeel-led Pakistan remained unbeaten in the tournament and capped-off their impressive run with a resounding 77-run win over hosts Bangladesh in the final.

Rohail topped the tournament batting charts by scoring 302 runs with the help of one century and two half-centuries at 75.50. Opener Haider Ali, who along with Rohail will also represent Pakistan in the ICC U19 World Cup, scored 218 runs with the help of one century.

Right-arm fast-bowler Mohammad Hasnain was the second highest wicket-taker in the tournament with 13 wickets at 10.84. He took a six-wicket haul against Sri Lanka. All-rounder Khushdil Shah took 9 wickets.

Bangladesh U16 toured Pakistan for three 50-overs and two three-day matches in October-November. The hosts won the three-day series 1-0 and the 50-over series 2-0.

Ibrar Afzal Khan and Mohammad Shehzad impressed with the bat for Pakistan in both one-day and three-day matches with Ali Asfand topped the one-day and three-day series bowling charts with six and 12 wickets respectively.

On the domestic front, Sindh beat Northern by seven wickets to win the National U19 three-day tournament 2019-20 in the final, played in Sheikhpura. Sindh also won the National U19 one-day tournament beating Balochistan by 123 runs in the final also played in Sheikhpura

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were crowned champions of the PCB-Pepsi National U16 three-day tournament as they recorded a comprehensive win by an innings and 55 runs over Northern in the final played in Faisalabad. The one-day tournament final was abandoned due to bad weather in Faisalabad with both finalists (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Central Punjab) sharing the trophy.



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### Major announcements

- On 22 November, Mr Subhan Ahmad stepped down as the Pakistan Cricket Board's Chief Operating Officer (COO) after nine years in the role.
- On 22 November, the 56th PCB's Board of Governors meeting took place in Lahore. Outcomes of the meeting are available [here](#)
- On 3 December, the PCB announced it will make an additional two-month ex-gratia payment i.e. until 19 December 2019 to the curators previously employed by the 16 regions, following which the ground owners themselves will make a decision pertaining to their future employment at the respective grounds.
- On 5 December, Junaid Zia was appointed as General Manager – Domestic Cricket Operations following a recruitment process. Junaid, 35, featured in four One-Day Internationals in the 2003-04 season after having represented Pakistan U19 in the ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 2002.
- On 6 December, Pakistan squad for the ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 2020 was announced. Rohail Nazir was retained as captain, while Haider Ali was appointed as vice-captain for the event to take place in South Africa from 17 January to 9 February.
- On 6 December, Ali Zia stepped down as Senior General Manager – Academies with immediate effect after 12 years in the role.
- On 8 December, Mudassar Nazar confirmed he will not be seeking an extension to his contract when it expires on 31 May 2020. He had joined the PCB as Director – Academies on 1 June 2016 on a three-year contract, which was extended to another one year earlier this year.
- On 12 December, Mushtaq Ahmed was confirmed as spin bowling consultant and will work 120 days in a year at the National Cricket Academy with the U16, U19 and other domestic bowlers.
- On 24 December, Shoaib Naveed was appointed as Project Executive, HBL PSL. Shoaib's last assignment was with Islamabad United, where he was the Chief Operating Officer. He has a Masters in Sports Industry Management from Georgetown University and has previously worked with the NFLPA, Washington Wizards and Capitals.