



Monday September 3 2007

Essex Batting Coach and Club Ambassador Graham Gooch announced today (Monday September 3) that he is to sponsor the Essex Cricket Academy.

Gooch will provide funds of £30,000 a year for the next three years to support the Graham Gooch Essex Cricket Academy (to be reviewed after one year).

The former Essex and England batsman told the Essex CCC website:

“With the money raised on my successful World Cup cruise in February I have been looking to support the future of Essex cricket in an enhanced way (in addition to my Scholarship Scheme that sends players abroad over the winter).

“The Academy is the first place where future talents are unearthed. I see Academy players taking their first step towards professional cricket when they are selected to go on it, graduating from there to Academy Professional and then finally to Professional status.

“By making this contribution I am giving the sponsors and supporters of my Scholarship functions some visibility in terms of what I do with the proceeds.

“I see this as being my way of putting something back into the game and of making a difference.”

Gooch will present his first cheque for £30,000 to Essex Chairman Nigel Hilliard, Director of Cricket Operations Alan Lilley and Chief Executive David East during the interval of today’s NatWest Pro40 game between Essex Eagles and Gloucestershire Gladiators.

Academy Director John Childs told the Essex CCC website:

“This is a tremendous boost to the Academy. Graham has already supported the young players in going to Mumbai to the World Cricket Academy and we know his heart is with the future of the Club. This will give the Academy players more opportunities in the years to come so we are delighted.”

Notes:

The Graham Gooch Scholarship Scheme raises funds to send young Essex players abroad for the winter to develop their game.

Varun Chopra and Tom Westley (both Academy graduates) will be travelling to Perth this winter (Chopra from the end of October to mid-February and Westley from the end of October until December).

Essex and England internationals Alastair Cook and Ravinder Bopara are among those to have previously benefited from the Scholarship Scheme.

The Essex Cricket Academy began in 2003 with Peter Such as the first Academy Director, being succeeded by John Childs at the start of the 2005 season.

Nine Academy players have represented the Essex first-team after being part of the Academy set-up (Alastair Cook, Varun Chopra, Mervyn Westfield, Jahid Ahmed, Tony Palladino, Zoheb Sharif, Tom Westley, Maurice Chambers and Adam Wheater).

In addition, Alastair Cook was the first cricketer to graduate from the ECB-run Academy system to play for England at senior level.