# England Cricket Team is leaner and fitter than ever before, study reveals

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The England Men's Cricket Team is leaner and fitter than ever before, a University of Essex and St Mary's University study has revealed.

Researchers led by Dr. Jamie Tallent were granted unprecedented access by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to explore how the England Men's physical profile changed from 2014-2020.

This period covered the build-up to the 2019 ICC Men's World Cup triumph, which saw the side beat New Zealand in a grueling seven-hour match that ended in a dramatic Super Over at Lord's. The paper was published in the *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching* as the team prepared for a tough test series against India.

Using data from 52 senior players—who all took part in at least one Test, One-Day or Twenty20 internationally sanctioned match, their physique, power and speed were monitored across a seven-year period.

Amongst the discoveries was a drop in body fat—but despite the decline in body fat, body mass did not fall, as it is believed players had developed more lean muscle.

By monitoring the skin-fold thickness, the research found players have 18 percent less body fat than at the start of the study.

The study also found fitness levels had substantially increased.

In a yo-yo test which measures cardiovascular capability, the distance the players were able to run increased by 19 percent.

As part of the study Dr. Tallent, from the university's School of Sport, Rehabilitation, and Exercise Sciences, also looked at strength capacity tests.

There was an increase in pull strength capacity that was targeted by the physical performance and medical teams across this time period.

It also emerged that the push-to-pull strength of international cricketers is more balanced, which may help to reduce injury risk.

Dr. Tallent says that "for the first time we have evidence of improvement in the athleticism of the England Men's Cricket Team."

"With the investment in Sport Science and Medicine provision by the ECB, it is great to see that this is having a real benefit on physical fitness of the England Cricket Team."

"It was a real privilege to work closely with some of the world's best players and find out what makes them perform at the highest level."

"We have scientifically examined one of the reasons how England managed to pull off the dramatic World Cup victory, which in no small part was due to their incredible conditioning."

"It is clear that the physical requirement to be an international cricketer are extremely high and this looks to continue to develop."

Now Dr. Tallent and his team will be extending the study to the women's team where they will be looking at the match demands of international cricket. The study is hoped to further support the optimizing of the physical preparation of cricketers to maximize performance in international matches.

Rob Ahmun, ECB National Lead Strength and Conditioning Coach, says that "it's been a pleasure to have Dr. Tallent and his colleagues assist the ECB with this project. The physical demands of the game have increased considerably in recent years and it's important that players are able to not only cope but thrive under the physical pressures of playing international cricket."

**More information:** P Scott et al, Evolution of anthropometric and physical performance characteristics of international male cricketers from 2014 to 2020 in a World Cup winning nation, *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching* (2022). DOI: 10.1177/17479541221105455