

Joining Blackheath Cricket Club – guidance for new players

1. Why should I join Blackheath?

Blackheath is one of the leading cricket clubs in London. We seek to enable all our members to play the appropriate level of cricket for their ability, while enjoying the social and cricketing benefits of being part of a large club, such as excellent practice facilities, access to quality coaches, and a critical mass of people socialising in the bar on a Saturday night!

For younger cricketers, Blackheath Juniors have invested in providing high quality professional coaching to maximise the development of our Colts. The Adult section of the Club take our commitment to the future of the game equally seriously. We work closely with Blackheath Juniors to diligently place young players into the appropriate adult XIs as they reach their mid-teens, and to monitor their progress.

Whatever your age or ability, with six Kent League XIs, a Development XI, and various friendly matches throughout the summer, we offer opportunities to play cricket at all levels. As well as ensuring that you get a game of cricket at the right level for your current ability, the number of teams also enables players to be promoted to higher XIs as their ability improves.

2. Who should I contact to get started?

Your first port of call should be the Membership Secretary, Pete Deal (WhatsApp - 07828 533497). Please include some details about your cricket – e.g. your full name, whether you are a bat/bowler/keeper and your previous club.

Pete will:

- Add you to the “New Players” WhatsApp group, so that we can keep you informed.
- Put you in touch with one or more of the team captains, according to your playing level.
- Advise you when the next club nets are, so that you can come along and practice.
- Help connect you to the club’s websites so that you can apply to play in matches.
- Collect the necessary details to register you for to play in the Kent League.

Pete has been at the club for some years, including as a captain, so is well placed to guide you through the joining process and to help you find the right level.

3. I want to join the club – how can I do this?

The first step is to download the **Pitchero Club** app onto your phone and to become a member on the Pitchero website - <https://www.pitchero.com/clubs/blackheathcricketclub>. This is the main tool that we use to run the club on a day-to-day basis, so without it, you will find it very difficult to be selected for any matches!

Pitchero will ask for some basic details. Make sure you give **your main mobile number** (where you can be contacted if necessary) and **an active email address that you regularly check** – this is where notice of your selection for matches will be sent! Similarly, you need to give **an accurate date of birth** so that we can register you for the League.

If you are signing up on your phone, the next screens will enable you to find Blackheath CC. Select “cricket” and then type in Blackheath to select the right club.

Pitchero will ask you to “apply for club roles”. Please select “Player” if you are intending to play cricket at the club, and apply to the appropriate XIs which correspond to your ability. A good guide is to apply to the XI of the captain that Pete Deal has put you in touch with, plus perhaps the teams above and below, plus the Friendly XI.

Please do not apply to the 1st XI unless you have been asked to do so by Charlie Speller – if you are good enough, we will soon pick up on it when you rock up at nets and start smashing it about...

On applying to any XI, you will be asked to provide “membership information” including address, country of birth, and date of entry into the UK. You will also get a confirmation email to your email address – please click the button in the email to confirm your email address is live.

Within a few hours, you will get notification via the Pitchero app that your application(s) have been approved. Congratulations on joining the club!

4. How can I get picked for matches?

To be selected for matches, you need to declare your availability via the Pitchero Club app or website.

Via the app

On the bottom bar of the app, select the calendar icon. This will bring up “My Schedule” – a list of all the matches (and training sessions) that are relevant to your squad/XIs.

Go through the list and set availability for each date by clicking “Set Availability” and selecting “Available” (or “Not Available”, as the case may be).

Via the website

Log in to the Blackheath Pitchero website, go to “Your Account” on the top right hand side, and click on “Your Account”. At the next page, select “Schedule” at the top. This will bring up a list of all the matches (and training sessions) that are relevant to your squad/XIs, separated out on a month-by-month basis.

Go through the list (clicking top left to advance to future months) and set availability for each date by clicking “Set Availability” and selecting “Available” (or “Not Available”, as the case may be).

Please note that it is your responsibility as a player to declare your availability. If you don't, you won't be chased, and teams will very likely be selected without you in them!

Therefore it is prudent to set your availability well in advance. If you know your plans, there is nothing to stop you declaring availability for the whole season, and many members do so. You can always update your availability at a later date in the event of an injury etc.

5. How does selection work, and what level will I play at?

Blackheath is committed to selecting teams on merit, without allowing favouritism or cliques, and with the intention to win as many games of cricket as possible each season. The club puts a lot of effort into ensuring that newcomers and young players are integrated into the club and have opportunities to progress if they perform on the pitch.

Even if you have a good record at your previous club, captains will probably want to see you play several times in the nets and in some pre-season matches before selecting you for the top 2-3 teams in league matches.

The Pitchero app allows you to declare your availability (YES, NO or MAYBE) for a given date. **This should be done at least 6 days in advance – i.e. if you want to be selected on Saturday, your availability should be posted before you go to bed on Sunday.** (The 1s and 2s are likely to be selected on Monday morning, and the 3s on Monday afternoon.)

Once you have declared your availability, weekly selection is the responsibility of each team's captain. If you miss out on selection for one team, you will almost always be selected in the XI below.

The club is fortunate to enjoy genuine strength in depth, which means that selection is highly competitive. This also means that the club's middle XIs (3s-4s) are filled with capable club cricketers playing at a decent standard – the majority of whom could easily perform their primary role in the team above. **Once they have made themselves available, every member is expected to play wherever selected.**

For new players: if you are initially disappointed with the XI that you are selected for, do not despair! It is very normal at Blackheath for new players to move up and down the teams quickly as we find the right level for you, so the fact that you might make your debut in (for example) the 4s does not imply that you will not play for the 2s in a few weeks.

Strong performances at the lower level will obviously increase your chances of being promoted to a higher XI, and every year we see multiple examples of this.

Alternatively, you may come to agree that the XI where you have been selected is a decent standard, and find that you are well placed where you are.

6. What is the cost of playing cricket at Blackheath?

Most clubs require members to pay a lump sum membership subscription plus match fees for every match. We have found this to be inefficient and rather inflexible. We offer two methods of paying for your cricket at Blackheath, and you can choose which one is better for you, according to your plans for the season.

Both methods should be paid via the Pitchero “shop”. On the app, this can be reached by clicking the shopping cart icon found at the bottom right.

Season Ticket – allows you to play as much adult cricket as you like – including pre-season matches, Kent League matches, Sunday friendlies, and the Development League – there are no additional fees levied on a match-by-match basis. This means that the more cricket you play, the better value for money you get from your membership.

The cost of the season ticket varies according to (i) the team that you are likely to play for; and (ii) whether you are an adult, a student (u21 or in full-time education) or an u18. This can be paid for either in a lump sum, or in a series of payments which splits the cost over a few months. **Please see the Pitchero shop for full details.**

This is likely to be the best and most cost-efficient option for members who intend to play reasonably regularly.

Pay As You Go – while we prefer members to buy season tickets, we know that some people have jobs (or other commitments) which mean they are not available every Saturday. The PAYG system is designed to ensure that such members can participate fully in club life, without having to pay a large membership fee.

You can choose this option on the Pitchero shop by selecting “2023 Pay As You Go membership”, which costs £30. This entitles you to use the club’s facilities, such as the clubhouse, bar and the practice nets.

Of course, it does not cover the cost of playing matches, so you will be charged separately for each match that you play in, as follows:

1st XI to 4th XI	£32
5th XI, 6th XI and Sundays	£25
Students	£20

This is a worthwhile option if you know from the outset that you are only going to be able to play a limited amount. For example, if you are a university student in London and know that you will be returning home in July, PAYG may well be the best option. However, if you play 14 or more games (out of the 21 week season), the Season Ticket will be the better option for you.

****New Player Offer****

While we are confident you’ll enjoy your time at Blackheath, we know that buying a Season Ticket may seem like a major commitment to a club that you don’t yet know. Therefore, our offer to all newcomers is that, if you are not satisfied with your experience of Blackheath and wish to leave the club during your first season, we will release your league registration and refund the appropriate proportion of your season ticket (based on number of games played).

For other members, refunds on season tickets are only available in exceptional circumstances, in the discretion of the club’s Chairman or Treasurer.

7. What happens after games? What is the social scene like?

The Rectory Field has a professionally run licensed bar with Sky Sports, a pool table, a darts board, and with plenty of seating both inside and outside. This facility is available to members on weekday evenings as well as at the weekend.

One of the great advantages of playing in a large club is that – as well as experiencing the dramas of your own match first-hand – you get to hear the details of various other matches once you return to the club. Therefore, whether playing home or away, we do expect members to return to the Rectory Field after the match for at least one beverage.

Many members find that they are able to comfortably exceed the one beverage expectation and it is not uncommon to find groups of members still enjoying pizza and jugs of beer on the veranda in the early hours of the morning.

Certain teams have developed their own traditions for celebrating victories or honouring individual achievements, such as “One-in-Whites”, “Winner’s Magnums”, and the “Captain’s Jug”. One tradition that is generally observed across the club is the expectation that players who make 50s or take 4-fer (or better) should buy their teammates a jug of beer.

8. Who are the people who I need to know? How can I get hold of them?

Day to day communication tends to be via WhatsApp amongst team/squad groups, so it is easy to get hold of your captain and your immediate teammates. Other than that, the following people are heavily involved in the running of the club and would be able to either answer any question that you have, or point you in the direction of someone who can.

Position	Name	Mobile
Chairman	Vic Kandampully	07508 810264
Treasurer	Richard Ward	07958 985523
Membership Secretary	Peter Deal	07828 533497
Club Captain	Charlie Speller	07910 720907

WhatsApp is preferred, especially during office hours. Please be conscious that we all have day jobs and may not be able to pick up the phone / reply to you immediately.

9. Where do we play?

Blackheath has our main home ground at the Rectory, plus two further venues, as follows:

Rectory Field

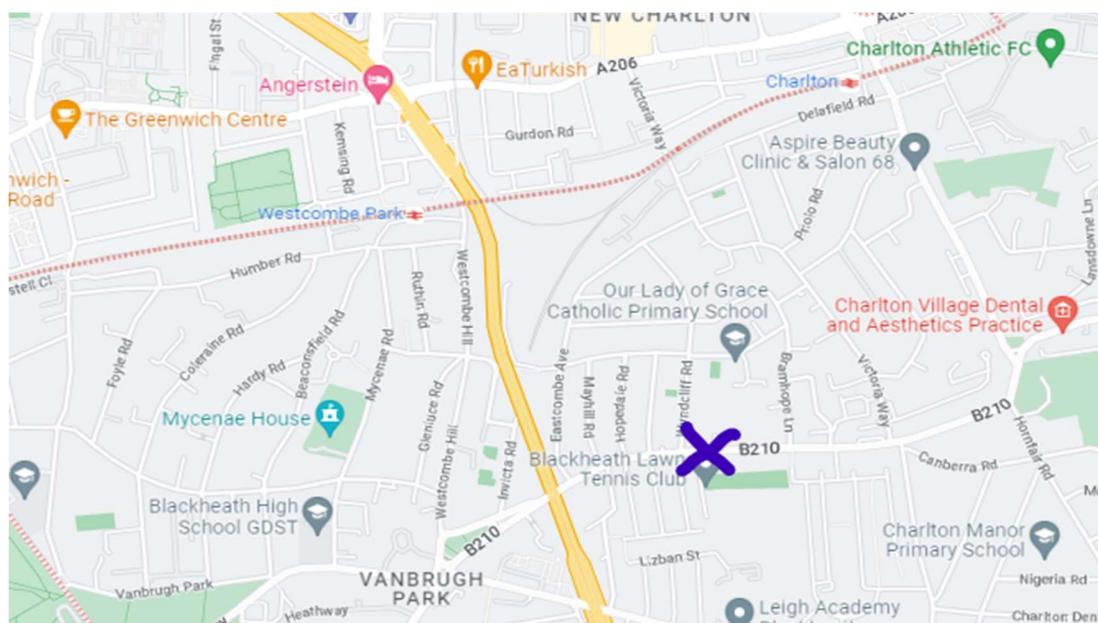


The club's main base is the Rectory Field, which is accessed from Charlton Road. Walk past the tennis courts and you will find the ground on your left. There is plenty of parking.

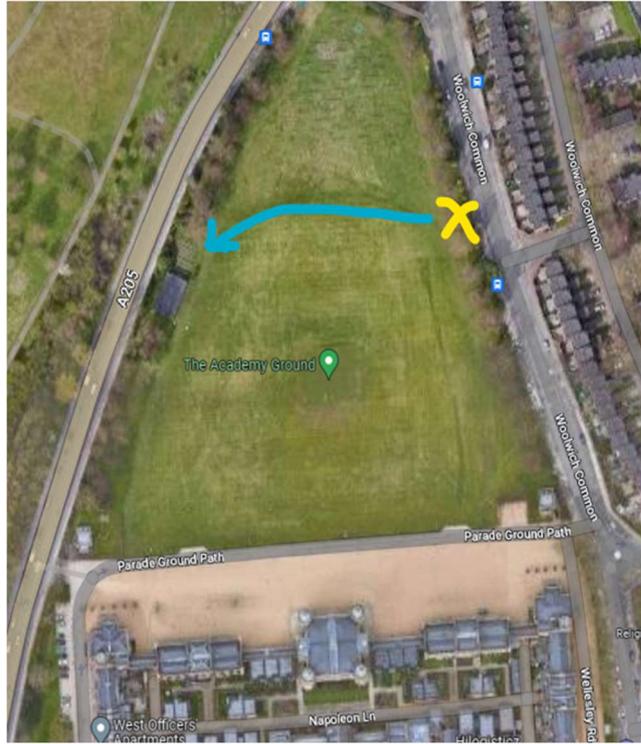
The Rectory is the home ground for the 1st XI and 2nd XI, but most members will have the opportunity to play at the Rectory in a friendly match at some point during the season.

The Rectory is also the venue for all club training sessions in the summer, and for most friendly and Development League home matches. We enjoy excellent training facilities at our brand new nets, a changing and shower block, and a vibrant social scene from our clubhouse with a fully licensed and professionally run bar.

Rectory Field, Charlton Road, London, SE7 7EZ



The Academy Ground



The Academy Ground, in the grounds of the old Royal Military Academy, is home to the club's 3rd XI and 4th XI. The ground was originally used as a sport facility for cadets training to be officers in the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers, and cricket was played on the site from at least 1860, making it one of the oldest cricket fields in the UK. The ground was redeveloped by the club in 2013, and a modern pavilion was completed in 2014.

The ground is a couple of miles from the Rectory. Access is from the road called "Woolwich Common", where there is plenty of free parking. A gate gives pedestrian access to the ground for players.

The Royal Military Academy, Woolwich Common, SE18 4AS



Charlton Park



The 5th and 6th XIs play in Charlton Park, which is less than a mile from the Rectory and which is therefore walkable in about 15 minutes if you are minded. Alternatively, it is well served by buses along Charlton Park Road.

The ground is located at the western edge of the park, between Charlton Park Road and Canberra Road. There is public parking available in the park, or you may be able to park on Canberra Road (check signage).

Charlton Park is justly famous for the superb teas produced by Mimi and her team in the Old Cottage Coffee Shop café, which is a long-standing supporter of Blackheath cricket.

Charlton Park Ln, London SE7 8UB