

## Stokes returns as England Captain for Pakistan tour amid Venue Uncertainty

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Ben Stokes is set to lead England in their three-Test series against Pakistan, starting in October.

Stokes returns after missing the 2-1 series win against Sri Lanka due to a hamstring injury. Opener

Zak Crawley, who also missed the Sri Lanka series with a broken finger, has been named in the squad.

Brydon Carse, the 29-year-old fast bowler, could make his Test debut following a three-month ban for historical betting breaches. Carse replaces Mark Wood, sidelined due to an elbow injury.

Another potential debutant, Jordan Cox, also makes the squad.

England's spin options include Jack Leach and Rehan Ahmed, both of whom played pivotal roles in the 3-0 series whitewash against Pakistan in 2022. Shoaib Bashir joins them as another spin option.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is facing logistical challenges for the series, initially scheduled for Multan, Karachi, and Rawalpindi. Ongoing renovations for the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy and the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting in Islamabad may lead to venue changes. Some matches could be shifted to Rawalpindi, or even the UAE or Sri Lanka.

The first Test is slated for October 7 in Multan, with the possibility of a reshuffled schedule.

**England Squad:** Ben Stokes (captain), Rehan Ahmed, Gus Atkinson, Shoaib Bashir, Harry Brook, Brydon Carse, Jordan Cox, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Josh Hull, Jack Leach, Ollie Pope, Matthew Potts, Joe Root, Jamie Smith, Olly Stone, Chris Woakes.