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England news

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Compton in England Lions squad



GEORGE DOBELL





Nick Compton returns to the England set-up as a result of his prolific form for Somerset © Getty Images

Nick Compton has been rewarded for his prolific start to the season with a recall to the Lions side. Compton has not been involved in the England set-up since early 2007 but, after 685 first-class runs and three centuries in the first few weeks of the 2012 season, he has forced his way back into contention.

While Compton might not be the most eye-catching batsman on the county circuit, he has a sound defensive technique, leaves the ball well and has the patience to play long innings. Such qualities are not common among developing top-order batsmen and have provided Compton, who is 29 in June, with a chance to follow his

grandfather Denis into the England Test team.

Compton is one of a 12-man squad named to face West Indies in a four-day fixture at Northampton commencing Thursday May 10. The squad will be captained by James Taylor, 22, who moved to Nottinghamshire from Leicestershire over the winter, and also includes Samit Patel and nine of the squad that toured Bangladesh or Sri Lanka with England Lions over the winter.

The only player in the squad uncapped at Lions level is Kent allrounder [Matt Coles](#), who spent the winter on the Potential England Performance Programme in Loughborough and Chennai before being added to the Lions squad for the final stages of their Sri Lanka tour. With 21 first-class wickets already, Coles is currently the second-highest wicket-taker in the 2012 first-class season. He also recently made his maiden first-class century, an unbeaten 103 against Yorkshire.

There is also a recall for Michael Carberry. At 31 years of age, Carberry is relatively old by comparison with recent Lions selections. Back to health and fitness following a blood clot on his lung, he is still seen as a viable alternative for an

opening position should injury strike Andrew Strauss or Alastair Cook and could yet add to the odd Test cap he earned in March 2010.

Northamptonshire's Jack Brooks, 27, is also included in a squad that marks an attempt from the selectors to balance a desire to see the best young players with a view to long-term selection, with a need to ensure there are suitable replacements available should injury strike in the shorter term.

England Lions squad

James Taylor (Nottinghamshire) (capt); Jonny Bairstow (Yorkshire); Jack Brooks (Northamptonshire); Michael Carberry (Hampshire); Matt Coles (Kent); Nick Compton (Somerset); Jade Dernbach (Surrey); Simon Kerrigan (Lancashire); Stuart Meaker (Surrey); Samit Patel (Nottinghamshire); Joe Root (Yorkshire); Ben Stokes (Durham)

The absence of Graeme Onions and Ravi Bopara from the squad, both of whom have been in fine early season form, is a firm indication that the pair

are in contention for a place in the 13-man Test squad to take on West Indies on May 17.

There is also no place in the Lions squad for Steven Davies - Jonny Bairstow will keep wicket - Varun Chopra or Luke Wells, with Joe Root winning the top-order selection battle.

Geoff Miller, the national selector, said: "Many of the players included in this squad have worked hard on our overseas tours and training camps over the winter or have shown good early season form. West Indies will no doubt be challenging opposition and this fixture will present an opportunity for players to show that they are capable of taking the next step and representing England at Test level in the future."

While the absence of Chopra may fuel suggestions that Ashely Giles, the England selector and Warwickshire director of cricket, has used his influence to ensure his county side are not weakened, it is worth noting that Warwickshire do not have a game during the Lions fixture.

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