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**The Re-Creation of Cricket in Nineteenth-Century  
England: The Press and County Cricket**

Sporting news was essential to the popularization of county cricket in England as it promoted and publicized the game from the 1860s on. This paper examines how cricket news developed into a sporting commodity beginning in the 1860s and re-created the game by inventing the county championship. By examining the key sporting newspapers, as well as some of the most innovative and popular general newspapers of the late nineteenth century, this paper illustrates that two developments were crucial to the transformation of the game – the cricketing career of W. G. Grace and the invention of the county championship. Bell's Life in London and the Sporting Chronicle, the Sporting Life, and the

Sportsman all played a vital role in the popularization of these aspects of nineteenth-century cricket.

The press and its reports on the cricketing prowess of W. G. Grace helped to create the preeminent figure in the history of cricket. During his playing days, Grace's exploits, in the form of statistics, filled the columns of the press and stoked interest in the game. From 1875 onward, each day of play for Grace meant new batting records which the press eagerly recounted down to his retirement in 1908 at the age of sixty. The rise of Grace coincided with the invention of the county championship by the press. With his participation for the Gloucester County Cricket Club beginning in the 1860s, Grace helped to foster competition between the county clubs. The contests riveted the public's attention and provided Grace with a stage to showcase his cricketing prowess. The press covered the contests between the county clubs and invented the second development, the county championship. While the conventional view of the county championship holds that that it began in 1873, my investigation of sporting newspapers from the 1860s and 1870s places the birth of the championship at an earlier date.

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