The Future of IPL 2020

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What’s the main priority of the BCCI, through which they can bring back cricket in India? – Without a doubt, the Indian Premier League, and with media reports suggesting that the BCCI is keen on getting IPL 2020 underway in the September – November window, India cricket fans finally have news to cherish!

The IPL, even behind closed doors, will be a treat for the cricket fans (though seeing them live at the stadiums would have been the cherry on the cake!), and will generate enormous revenues via broadcasting that will help the BCCI, after 2 – 3 months of dormancy in the pandemic, with no real cricket matches being played.

The most likely window for the IPL to take place is the window for the T20 World Cup, which is scheduled for October – November. When we factor in that IPL 2020 revenue was projected to be 70% higher compared to ICC WT20 revenues, and the huge significance of the IPL on the economy of the game, it presents itself with a very strong suit of being scheduled this year with the postponement of the WT20.

Thus, in an ideal world the IPL will take place during the period of the WT20 this year, and the ICC event scheduled in 2021 in India could be shifted to Australia as it is in the same window and India could host the event in 2022 by creating a suitable window. This will give adequate time for economic recovery and also not overcrowd the calendar. However, India’s scheduled international commitments will also have to be taken into account which includes the Asia Cup and the England’s Tour of India in September.

For the players in the T20 circuit, the times are highly uncertain, with various questions boiling up with no clear answers. Will overseas players be allowed to travel and participate in the T20 leagues? Will their salaries be reduced as a result of the pandemic? The franchises of the IPL themselves have been divided over participation in the tournament without their overseas players – with the Chennai Super Kings being against the idea of playing without their foreign players, while the Rajasthan Royals being open to a shortened tournament with only Indian players.

Another roadblock that the BCCI could face is the excessive travelling that the players would need to do, especially during away games. There have been suggestions that the IPL can be in a truncated format and all the games can be played in one neutral venue, but there has been no official statements regarding this.

There are various challenges that the BCCI and the entire cricketing community as a whole needs to tackle, such as implementing quarantine procedures and facilities as well as player safety and precautionary measures to be set in place to ensure a bio secure playing environment, while hosting a multi-national event. There are many doubts that have shrouded cricket and many questions that will need to be answered, and these will need to be overcome with proper planning to support the future of the sport.