

Report

Out of 104 countries that are a part of the ICC, or the International Cricket Council, only players from 8 countries top its leaderboards. At first glance, it is natural to think that of course only certain teams will appear on the leaderboard, as that is what the primary objective of a leaderboard is: to highlight the best amongst all. However, oftentimes teams are excluded from participation on purpose in order to control the leaderboard. This happens for a variety of reasons, the most common of which is a monetary one. The math is simple: ICC supports the teams that generate the most revenue. Drawing upon the works of Wigmore, Wilkins as well as credible organizations like Bleacher Report, this paper aims to prove the existence of this partiality in ICC's match-making system and examine its implications to determine the future of cricket, internationally.

From the histogram, try to remember some of the team names of the players who scored the highest runs. These players are some of the world's most experienced ones and it is not merely because of luck that they have gotten the chance to play so many games. It is actually because the teams that they play for make the highest money in the league for the ICC. For starters, Ganesh (2009) from Bleacher Report found, "since 1998, South Africa, Australia, England and Pakistan have toured India for Test series thrice. Sri Lanka and West Indies have visited just once and Bangladesh, India's neighbour, never" (para. 3). Unsurprisingly, all three of Australia, England and Pakistan have players that are in the list of players in the histogram above. "This shows how skewed the touring trends have been. Thus, we see more Australia-England and India-Australia tours and fewer tours involving countries such as Zimbabwe and Bangladesh" (Ganesh, 2003, para. 5). This is the main reason as to why players from lesser-known teams never make these leaderboards.

In order to prove that the ICC actually hosts more games amongst already experienced teams, the pi-chart was generated. The teams that make up the pi-chart have players in the 'Top 10 Batsmen' list displayed as a histogram previously. As evident, all of their respective teams have had roughly equal opportunities to play against one another. This gives all these teams an even bigger edge over the inexperienced ones. This gives all these teams an even bigger edge over the inexperienced ones. Furthermore, matches involving experienced and novice teams are canceled on a regular basis for a variety of reasons. For instance, consider this announcement: "Although there is optimism that at least some of the players will return to their team, there is still a possibility that the ICC will suspend Zimbabwe before the first Test against Australia this weekend" (Wilkins, 2004, p. 1). On the other hand, "the Board of Control for Cricket in India claims to generate over 70 percent of the ICC's revenue and yet the BCCI has not moved to democratize the ICC, but tried to entrench its power" (Wigmore, 2015, p. 14). As a result, India played 13.45 percent of all matches between the 8 teams. Therefore, "India is now the imperial master of cricket, with England and Australia toeing the line for personal gain" (Wigmore, 2015, p. 14). Meanwhile, for novice teams, the following types of headlines are presented:

Headed by ICC Director Julian Hunte, chairman of the West Indies Cricket Board, the task force said Zimbabwe Cricket needs to be "upgraded" for the country [to] rejoin test play. The panel said that before Zimbabwe's cricket side can rejoin test play it must have satisfied reasonable performance criteria in first-class and other multi-day matches.

Zimbabwe was also urged to update administrative structures and processes. The national cricket establishment was encouraged to develop an ongoing partnership with the ICC and its member services department to track Zimbabwe's performance against a strategic plan. (Voice of America News, 2009, paras. 2-4)

The second pie-chart showcases how the top 8 teams in the ICC, collectively played 45.75 percent of all matches. It also shows the exact percentage of each of those 8 teams. As evident, all of these 8 teams make up nearly half of all matches while the rest is left for the many other teams in the league. This proves that the players from these 8 teams have the opportunity to learn way more from matches than others. There are issues that erupt with this situation. As Ganesh (2009) mentions:

I see two challenges before the ICC and cricket as a game: 1) If ten Full Members cannot compete with each other at regular intervals, then how can the game globalise? ...

Cricket is getting concentrated amongst fewer nations. ... 2) Consider this: as per the ICC's website, Bermuda, Canada and the USA were accorded Associate Member status in the 1960s. And yet, they're not much better off after 40 years of being 'Associates'.

... When will these Associate Members compete in the Test arena? When will cricket penetrate different regions and get participation at the highest levels? (paras. 7-11)

The ICC asserts that it has done a lot for the game's advancement and worldwide reach.

Although a few are significant and admirable, they are plainly insufficient (Ganesh, 2009, para. 12).

Ultimately, it is apparent that not all 'Top Players' or 'Top Teams' lists are truly trustworthy or accurately represent the real winners. As a result, the ICC should seek methods to be more inclusive and genuinely help the world's growing cricket community. This is not to imply that games between already dominant franchises should be discontinued. Instead, the ICC should prioritize scheduling additional matches for teams with players that do not get enough opportunities to showcase their skills.

References

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