



The Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on the World Sports Scene

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Introduction :

The global economic slump triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic could change the entire sports industry in ways thought unthinkable till now. Some sports will be hit harder than others. The economic structure of international cricket is likely to change and lower-ranked nations will face a crunch in funds. “The key revenue generation for sports bodies is through licensing of television broadcast rights. With the stoppage in sporting events, it is likely that most sporting bodies will face financial hits. Indian cricket could be relatively better placed. Smaller countries like West Indies, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka could face challenges if their respective media contracts are not renewed,” sports other than cricket might find it harder to return to normal in India, because they do not have as deep financial pockets.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the effect of Covid-19 on global sports competitions.
2. To study the effect of Covid-19 on income of players.
3. To study the effect of Covid-19 on sports goods manufacturer industries.

Impact of covid-19 pandemic on various sports:

Summer Olympics: The 2020 Summer Olympics and Paralympics were scheduled to take place in Tokyo starting 24 July. Although the Japanese government had taken extra precautions to help minimize the outbreak's impact in the country, qualifying events were being canceled or postponed almost daily. The traditional Olympic flame lighting ceremony in Olympia, Greece, to mark the start of the 2020 Summer Olympics torch relay was held on 12 March without spectators. On 23 March, Canada, Australia, and Great Britain announced that they would withdraw from the Games unless they are postponed for one year. On 24 March 2020, the IOC and Tokyo Organizing Committee announced that the 2020 Summer Olympics and Paralympics would be "rescheduled to a date beyond 2020 but not later than summer 2021", marking the first time in the history of the modern Olympics that an Olympiad has been postponed. The opening ceremonies of the Games were officially postponed to 23 July 2021.

Cricket: Indian cricket saw the series against South Africa abandoned due to the Corona virus and seen the IPL washed out; however, it could still emerge with a bigger role to play going ahead. Cricket is likely to see a return of the Big 3 revenue-sharing model, with the lion's share going to India, England and Australia, a financial model originally devised to tide over the 2008 recession.

Former ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat had told that this would mean a “battle for survival for weaker nations”. “Without enough cash flow, some nations might even



struggle to meet basic expenditure and unless they are provided with support, there could be some casualties.” Even the richest cricket boards are bracing for big losses. Cricket Australia stands to lose \$174 million should the corona virus outbreak derail the high-profile home Test series against India later this year. It now remains to be seen if India will play an extended series instead. There’s also the potential cancellation of the World T20 tournament. The cancellation of the IPL is cost the BCCI, the tournament’s broadcasters and the franchises at least Rs 3,000 crore. “All IPL franchises combined hire around 600 people, which include freelancers and people on the payroll. Without any revenue coming in, their jobs will be impacted. That figure would be approximately Rs 10 crore,” an IPL team executive had told Indian Express. Then there’s the television deal with Star Sports with the board potentially having to return Rs 1,500 crore. This, in turn, will have an effect on the Indian economy as well. The 2015 IPL contributed Rs 1,150 crore to the Indian GDP, the BCCI had revealed.

Football: The Indian Super League (ISL) final was held in an empty stadium in Goa on March 14. The I-League season was halted on March 15, with the Neroca vs Chennai City 2-2 draw becoming the last match of the season. The season was eventually called off with 23 matches left and Mohun Bagan were crowned champions. With many months to go before the start of the next season, Indian clubs have continued making moves on the transfer market during the lockdown.

India’s remaining World Cup qualifiers have been postponed. Matches against Qatar, Afghanistan and Bangladesh were scheduled for the March-April window and there’s little clarity on when they will be played. The postponement of the U-17 Women’s Football World Cup, which was to be hosted in India in November, has also caused some concern, though FIFA has said that new dates will be identified at a more suitable time.

Badminton: The All England Championships, which concluded on March 15, was the last event India’s major Badminton stars participated in. Even then, there had been some voices which had said that the BWF, the world federation for the sport, was putting athletes in danger. Since then, the BWF has postponed or cancelled all events in its calendar for the next few months. The Swiss Open, India Open, Malaysia Open and Singapore Open have been cancelled, so has the Polish Open scheduled for last week of March.

Lawn tennis: India was to take on Latvia in a Fed Cup playoff on April 17-18 but that has been postponed. With events getting cancelled in tennis, there has been a concern that lower-ranked players who depend on competitions will be financially hit. “If you’re not in the top 100, you will struggle,” India’s Sidharth Rawat, who is ranked 438 in the world, had said that he could sustain on his savings till September or October. “After that, I’ll be struggling,” he said. Among the Grand Slams, Wimbledon has been cancelled, while the French Open has been postponed till September 20.

Athletics: Track and field athletes will be in for a hectic time in the summer of 2022, with three major competitions lined up over two months. The World Athletics Championships will be on from July 15-24, quickly followed by the Commonwealth Games (July 27-August 7) and the Asian Games from September 10. Among major events which were scheduled since March, The World indoor championships in Nanjing from



March 13-15 has been postponed to March 19-21, 2021. The Doha Diamond League in Qatar on April 17 has been postponed.

Archery: The World Cup in Guatemala City from April 20-26 has been canceled, as has been the World Cup in Shanghai from May 4-10.

Boxing: The Asia-Oceania Olympic qualifiers, which were moved from Wuhan, China, to Amman, Jordan, were held from March 3-11. The Indian contingent came up with a record-breaking showing in Jordan. On their return to the country, they were screened at the Delhi airport and then became the first bunch of Indian athletes to go into quarantine in the aftermath of the coronavirus outbreak. The World Cup in Cologne, Germany from June 17-20 has been cancelled.

Shooting: The World Cup in New Delhi from March 15-26 has been postponed to June 2-9. The Olympic test event in Tokyo from April 16-26 has been cancelled.

Table Tennis: The World team championships in Busan, South Korea, has been postponed from May 22-29 to June 21-28. The Asian Olympic qualifying tournament in Bangkok from April 6-12 has been postponed.

Weightlifting: The Asian championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from April 16-25 has been postponed.

Wrestling: The Asian championships were held in New Delhi from February 20-23, though China, North Korea, Turkmenistan teams withdrew. The Asian Olympic qualifying event from March 27-29 in Xi'an, China has been postponed. Like in many Olympic sports, this has put the qualification scenario for the next edition of the Games in turmoil.

Hockey: Even before the pandemic, hockey had a hand-to-mouth existence in most nations, with the exception of India, Netherlands and Australia to some extent. But as this report pointed out, with top of the top nations struggling, combined with the current fragile situation of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) and an uncertain future, it is feared that the sport could be headed for a tumultuous period. The tour that the India women's team was to undertake of China from March 14-25 has been cancelled.

Olympic sports are divided into five categories, and each international federation receives money from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) depending on their audience and size, with those in top-most bracket receiving around \$40 million and the lowest getting \$7 million. With the postponement of the Games, the IOC is likely to freeze these payments. This, in turn, is set to affect the ecosystem of several sports in India. "It (the financial slump) will hit us. The question is how big will it hit us," International Hockey Federation (FIH) CEO Theyry Weil had told this. Top Indian athletes across sports are unlikely to be hit financially, with the Sports Ministry having promised that their out-of-pocket allowances, monthly stipends and their training-and-competition expenditure will not be hit. However, spending will be cut on infrastructure projects.

Impact of covid-19 pandemic on sportsman:

Indian wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Karthik said lack of activity due to the coronavirus-forced lockdown has put the body in a "zombie mode" and it will take at least four weeks for players to achieve match-fitness. Karthik said the cricketers will have to gradually increase the intensity after resuming training. "I think the transition will be very tough. I think at least a minimum of four weeks, you need to start slowly, first it will be



quality and then slowly increase the quantity and then the intensity," Players from rural and some urban areas have dropped out of practice and participation in the various tournaments due to the covid-19. The daily life of some players depends on the prize money of various domestic tournaments like Volleyball, Kho-Kho, Cricket, Kabaddi ext. All these competitions have been canceled due to covid-19. So it is time for such players to starve.

Impact of covid-19 pandemic on sports goods industry:

A complete shutdown is the last thing a business or industry would ever expect to deal with. Situation becomes grim when operations are stalled at the peak of business season. While all business enterprises are reeling under the loss of opportunities and financial impact as the world has come to a standstill, sports goods industry in India is among the worst hit. On ground March-April is the time when a new crop of aspiring sportspersons joins sports academies. This is the new consumer base that adds to the year on year business growth of sports business industry. Both the opportunities are lost. Add to that the clampdown on all exports and higher cost of raw material due to shortage of supplies. Impact on the industry's growth will be hard to mitigate.

How sports will return

"We will have to live with the threat of the corona virus," said Manish Desai, partner in Deloitte India warned that sports might never return fully to the way it was before 2020. It could also see the death of smaller sporting leagues and sports. Big sporting brands such as IPL, Manchester United and NBA will survive, said Simon Chadwick, director of the Centre for Eurasian Sport Industry at Lyon-based Emlyon Business School. "Smaller clubs, the smaller teams, the smaller organizations, the smallest sports, are saying we're not in a position to sustain," he said.

The first step towards initiating a return to normal will be for the respective sporting bodies to sit with the government and chart out their road maps, Desai said. He said there were two ways in which the return to normalcy will play out. The first is that fans are allowed back and that social distancing norms are maintained in stadiums. Medical experts have said the plan to do 'mass testing' of players and officials on the sidelines of tournaments is impractical at this stage and therefore so is a return to sports. The other is that sports be held in empty stadiums for the foreseeable future, with a focus on improving the viewing experience for the fan. "More analysis which appears on the screen, using Artificial Intelligence to customize fans' experience are some of the changes we could see in broadcasting," he said.

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