

# Cricket

By: Javid Lateef

# The Great Indian Cricket Mela



This article has come about as a direct result of a conversation I had with the esteemed editors of this magazine a few weeks ago. The query .... what is this ICL/IPL stuff that is going on? I shall try and shed as much light on this issue as I possibly can.

I will go in chronological order here, so we shall start with the ICL (Indian Cricket League). This 20/20 format, which started off with 6 teams in 2007 was the brainchild of *Subhash Chandra*, the owner of Zee television. He had bid for the tele-cast rights for the 2003 World Cup, and even though his was the highest bid, the BCCI did not grant him the rights. There were several other incidents and to create cricket content for Zee, he resorted to starting the ICL.

The BCCI took great offense to this (how dare anyone but them make money off of cricket!) and made the ICL a 'rebel' organization which did not have any authorized sanction to create a league. This resulted in all players, Indian or foreign, who play in this league being banned from playing any kind of representative cricket (this is being contested right now by the ICL) ever again. It has been a struggle by the ICL to get the show off the ground as none of the grounds were made available to them, and they play all their games in a stadium in Chandigarh. The prize money for the winners is \$1 million, making it the richest purse in Indian domestic cricket.



*Apart from the salaries that the players will get, the winning team, after a 59 match schedule, will win a purse of \$3 million.*

*Kapil Dev and Tony Grieg are two of the old-timers that are behind the scenes here, and it is largely due to their efforts that ICL exists right now. It has also attracted some great International talent, namely, Inzamam-Ul-Haq, Brian Lara, Shane Bond and Jason Gillespie. In 2008, 2 new teams were added, The Lahore Badshahs (comprised entirely of Pakistani players) and the Ahmedabad Rockets. This makes it 8 teams in the ICL. The Chennai Superstars won the inaugural 2007 tourney. Now, the IPL (Indian Premier League). Lalit Modi, the vice-president of the*

BCCI, is the brains behind this operation. Whereas the ICL was a single entity owned franchise, the IPL cricket circus has been divided into 8 franchise owners, who have shelled out enormous amounts of money. Here are a few examples: *Vijay Mallya* ( \$111.6 Million)- Bangalore franchise *Shah Rukh Khan* ( \$75 Million)- Kolkata franchise *Mukesh Ambani* ( \$111.9 Million)- Mumbai franchise *Preity Zinta* and *Ness Wadia* are the owners of the Chandigarh franchise and *Juhi Chawla* and husband have a stake in the Kolkata franchise too.

Now we get to the players and I will try and explain this as simply as I can. *Tendulkar, Ganguly, Dravid* and *Yuvraj* were given 'icon' status, meaning they have to represent the city they are from. There was a player auction on February 20th and each franchise could bid for a maximum of 8 international players and of course, domestic players. The Chennai franchise bought *Dhoni* for \$1.5 million and *Andrew Symonds* went to the Hyderabad franchise for \$1.3 million. *Ishant Sharma, Rohit Sharma* and *Manoj Tiwary* together fetched around \$3 million. *Shane Warne* and *Glenn McGrath* went for \$450,000 and \$300,000 respectively. All the other internationals were pretty much auctioned off at the \$300-500K range and the Under-19 players,

who won the world cup, can play, but they just get a stipend that is agreed upon by the board. The coaches for all the franchises include *Tom Moody, Martin Crowe, Kepler Wessels* and the Indian fielding coach, *Robin Singh* will coach Hyderabad.

The biggest difference between both leagues is that none of the players have to sacrifice their first class careers, as the IPL is an official board sanctioned event. I had mentioned earlier that the ICL had the richest purse, but the IPL has upped the ante. The BCCI has made close to \$2 billion from the sale of the TV rights! Apart from the salaries that the players will get, the winning team, after a 59 match schedule, will win a purse of \$3 million.

It's a whole cricket economy out there folks and one can only hope that this kind of money in the hands of these young cricketers does not corrupt them.

On that note ... signing off for now.

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