

Implementing Improvements in IPL (I cube of Twenty20 Cricket) Abhaya Sharma, India, May 11 2009 11:12 AM IST

The following suggestions are voiced here for a possible implementation in the next stage of the IPL in the year 2010. Organisers could experiment with some of the improvements such as team bonus points at the end of the league phase of the tournament. Yet before that IO would like to incorporate the major changes in the format: The numbers of the conditions can be seen as having different numbers. They could probably be thought of as amendment notes. For example, amendment 2 specifies the restrictions on number of overseas players.

A. Team Compositions

1. A team of 14 must be announced in such a way that no foreign team has more than 2 players on the list. A team however could have as many overseas players within that rule, however the playing XI – the ones who can bat and bowl should not have more than one player from a country other than India or the host country e.g. South Africa in present case, A team could have a maximum of 2 players from the host country. (I assume IPL would be hosted more than once in a year and in several different countries!)
2. A team if having players from five or more different countries (in 14 players for the game) could use one from each country making away with the present restriction of the four overseas players in its playing eleven . I see this as an opportunity for not only players from lesser cricketing countries like Bangladesh, Ireland, Kenya, etc. and a boost to some upcoming countries like Holland, Bermuda, Canada, UAE, Scotland etc.
3. A team should not have more than 20 players on its roll at any given time i.e. for a particular IPL tournament. It can however buy additional players that would not be allowed to play as a list of 20 players should be announced one week before the start of the tournament. There can not be more than two players from any country in the list of 20.
4. Injured players would not be replaced unless the injury qualifies for a replacement in strict medical sense.. a hamstring pull would not qualify as a reason for seeking replacement where as a shoulder dislocation or a fracture should qualify for the same.

B. Playing Conditions

5. 1. A team should announce 14 players before a match starts. The 14 should all field in either first or the second half of the game. One half of a game ideally being construed as comprising of 10 overs. Ideally 3 substitute fielders should come on to the field at the end of first half i.e. 10 overs, if one of them has already substituted for an injured player earlier he could only be replaced after 10 overs from the point of his induction i.e. by the replaced player. The injured player thus can not make an entry before he has been rested for 10 overs.

6. 2. The teams should be forced to have two proper power plays one each of three consecutive overs on either halves of the play (One half should be understood as comprising of 10 overs). Ideally the first three overs of each half. There could also be one additional over that the batting team could ask at any point of the innings for similar field restriction by captain informing the umpires over headphones of the time. The third special Power play can not be immediately after either of the proper power plays as also it can not be the last over of the innings.
7. The strategic break should be reduced to just 5 minutes with possible reduction of each minute for an injury time reduction in the first half. The teams should induct three fresh fielding substitutes at this stage.
8. 4. Two bowlers in a team should be allowed a maximum of five overs for two of its best bowlers in each half. If one of the 5 over bowler has not been used in the first half the team could then use only one bowler for a five over spell. The bowler who might bowl the first five over spell must be specified by the captain at the start of the game. The second bowler could be chosen from any of its bowlers as the captain might feel more confident and comfortable with.
9. There should not be a provision for a runner in a game, a player who is not able to continue to bat should retire hurt and return only if required by his team in the later stages of the innings. I suggest this for players to maintain higher fitness standard.
10. The runs conceded by ways of extras (like wide, bye, legbyes, freehit scores) should not be added to the bowlers or batsman's account (the freehit runs should be added to extras!). Yes a no ball should be counted as one run conceded by the bowler and the over with a no ball would not qualify for a maiden over.

C. Bonus Points in a Match

There has been a voice of concern that teams performing extraordinarily in a match should be awarded bonus points.. A win should earn a team 2 points from a game and bonus points may be added for one or more conditions being achieved by a team. Here a team can earn more than one bonus point and even a losing team might just earn a bonus point for some great performance.. this is important as it would nullify the impact on their standings on simply losing a game which they might have lost very narrowly. Here are my suggestions for one bonus point each for the teams satisfying any one or more criteria below: (adequately speaking these should apply only to the games which have seen a minimum of 15 overs by each team!)

11. A team batting first that wins a game by a margin of 50 or more runs (inclusive, 49 run win does not qualify your team for bonus. i.e is cruel yet it has to be like that bonus should not come easily)
12. A team batting second that wins by 9 or more wickets
13. A team that wins with 30 or more balls to spare (the rule applies to either team whether batting first or batting second)
14. A batsman who scores 90 or more runs for his team earns a bonus (available even in rain or light- shortened matches as well)
15. A Bowler takes 5 or more wickets for his team earns a bonus for his team (available even in rain or light- shortened matches as well)

16. A team posting a score of 200 or more runs earns a bonus for its team (both teams could each score this bonus thus nullifying the impact of a close defeat)
17. A team having used 7 or more bowlers in an innings, it could be counterproductive if the seventh bowler goes for more runs that could cost the team a game.
18. A bowler sending down a maiden over earns a bonus for each maiden. This should have seldom been possible and it should deter the batsman to being overcautious against the bowlers.
19. A team earns a bonus for scoring 30 or more runs in an over (inclusive of extras)
20. A team earns a bonus if it gets three batsman out in three consecutive balls, wickets could be spread between two bowlers and also include run-out.

D. Super Bonus Points at the end of League Phase: To be counted in deciding the four semi-finalists. The teams qualify for further 2 point bonus if they satisfy any one of the conditions. Multiple bonus points are available

21. Two bonus points are to be given to a team who uses the maximum of its 20 players in the final XI of one or the other league match.
22. Two points to be awarded to the team that has maximum runs per over in the tournament
23. Two bonus points to the team that has conceded the least runs per over in the tournament.
24. Two bonus points to a team that has five or more consecutive wins in the tournament. To be awarded only once.
25. Two bonus points for a team that has captured maximum opposition wickets.

Here comes a surprising negative bonus. I don't know if it could lead to better team planning and management and curb the betting syndicates. These negative bonus points could come harsh on non-performing teams. I suggest a negative bonus of 3 points for each of the following conditions.

26. A team fails to win even one fifth of the games in the league phase
27. A team that has lost five continuous games
28. A team that has never been able to bowl any opposition out in a game. That is little harsh, yet I retain this to encourage bowlers and fielders
29. A team that fails to register even a single total of 160 plus runs in the tournament (in a 20 over game)
30. If a team fails to take more than 3 wickets per match in the tournament.