

Topic of the week for discussion: 23rd to 29th May 2013

Topic: Spot Gate: The 3 Spoil Sport

The Delhi Police Thursday arrested three bowlers of IPL team Rajasthan Royals, including India pacer S Sreesanth, and 11 bookies and claimed they had busted a major spot-fixing racket in the T20 tournament in which the bowlers allegedly conceded a minimum number of runs in a pre-decided over in exchange for money. Haryana Off-spinner Ajit Chandila and Mumbai left-arm spinner Ankeet Chavan are the other two bowlers who were arrested with Sreesanth in Mumbai after Wednesday's match between Rajasthan Royals and Mumbai Indians. They were brought to the capital later on Thursday and all 14 were remanded in police custody for five days. The Kerala pacer was accompanied by a woman in an SUV outside Carter Road Mumbai. He tried to threaten the police officials who went to arrest him saying he had connections with the Chief Ministers of Maharashtra and Kerala.

In various TV interviews on Thursday, former IPL commissioner Modi had slammed the BCCI and its lack of governance for the spot-fixing scandal. Modi said he had warned the IPL about match-fixing but the bosses did nothing. Contradicting Lalit Modi's claim that the Indian Premier League governing council (read the Board of Control for Cricket in India) and the International Cricket Council were caught napping in the spot-fixing case, former Indian Test all-rounder Ravi Shastri feels there are enough precautions in place

"It's the tail-end of the tournament and it's really very shocking that neither the ICC nor the IPL management got wind of it (spot-fixing)," Modi said, adding that he had sent the IPL COO Sunder Raman an email from an English journalist, who suspected at least five matches this season were allegedly fixed. Modi criticized the BCCI "for sleeping" over the threat. Shastri, who was a Modi confidant when the cash-rich T20 championship was launched in 2008, now differs with the former IPL boss. Writing in his newspaper column, Shastri said: "I insist with a hand on my heart that this edition has been brilliant. The quality of cricket has been top-class. Enough preventive measures have been put in place." BCCI president N. Srinivasan too had emphasized on Thursday that the Board had taken necessary steps to curb betting.

"We have an anti-corruption code and an anti-doping code. We have advised state units on steps to be taken. So the involvement of a Test player (Sreesanth) is shocking," Srinivasan said. Modi has attacked Srinivasan, calling him a 'monster' who runs global cricket from Chennai. Modi and Srinivasan have been at loggerheads ever since the 49-year-old former IPL chairman was suspended in April 2010 for financial irregularities. "During my time there were no reports of spot-fixing, match-fixing in IPL. The tournament was clean," said Modi. Saying the IPL took all precautions to guard against match-fixing, Modi said the spot-fixing incidents reflected poorly on the system of governance.

Topic
Introduction

Now Shastri has defended the IPL and its franchises, saying "two or three black sheep can't or shouldn't take the smile off their (Rajasthan Royals) faces."The former Test star says: "Zero tolerance is the buzz word among the franchises and the IPL's Governing Council. I, being part of the Governing Council, know fully well how integrity is completely non-negotiable, be it in spirit or action."Unlike Modi's allegation of being sloppy, Shastri also praised the BCCI for quickly suspending the players on the basis of police reports

Action taken so far:

The contract of the three tainted players, arrested under spot-fixing charges in the ongoing IPL, was terminated by beleaguered Rajasthan Royals."Based on the information provided by the authorities, the contracts of all three players have been suspended pending enquiry," Rajasthan Royals chairman Ranjit Barthakur said in a statement. We have already filed a complaint with the Delhi Police against all three players earlier on Monday," he added.

Earlier in the day, Chief of BCCI's anti-corruption unit, Ravi Sawani, held a meeting with the top Delhi police officials in connection with the spot-fixing scandal. Spot-fixing and match fixing would fall in the category of criminal offences under the new law being contemplated by the government, Law Minister Kapil Sibal said here today.

Sibal has emphasized that there was a need for a separate law to deal with the menace of fixing in cricket as the Indian Penal Code (IPC) does not recognize match fixing and spot fixing as offences. "That law is being contemplated and when broad contours of the law are ready, and this will be done in collaboration with the sports ministry, then sports ministry will carry it to Parliament."

Why BCCI doesn't react:

1. Millions have been invested in infrastructure-building and players' salaries to produce world class cricket.
2. There are too many stakeholders - from franchisees to sponsors and all the people who are employed for the period of the league
3. Fans' interest is huge and doesn't seem to be diminishing - as proved by the full houses that most venues have been witnessing in the ongoing league
4. The tournament gives a platform for young first-class players to perform in front of large, vociferous crowds and TV cameras
5. The BCCI's image and standing in the world of cricket will take a severe hit if it shuts down what is now its flagship property

Read further:

<http://www.niticentral.com/2013/05/20/ipl-spot-fixing-rajasthan-royals-to-file-fir-against-disgraced-trio-ranji-player-manish-arrested-79608.html>

<http://sports.ndtv.com/indian-premier-league-2013/news/207897-ipl-2013-spot-fixing-ravi-shastri-disagrees-with-lalit-modi-says-enough-checks-in-place>

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/ipl-spotfixing-saga-sreesanth-laptop-money-laundering-bookies-bcci/1/272225.html>