

BCCI contemplates lifting saliva ban in IPL, ball in captains' court

PTI, NEW DELHI: In a move that could have global impact, the BCCI is considering lifting the ban on applying saliva on the ball in the Indian Premier League beginning March 22.

The proposal has been discussed at length internally within the BCCI and will be floated to captains of all IPL teams in a meeting in Mumbai on Thursday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) had banned the age-old practice of applying saliva to shine the ball as a precautionary measure during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, the ICC made the ban permanent.

The IPL too included the ICC ban in its playing conditions in the aftermath of the

DRS TO BE EXTENDED TO HEIGHT AND OFF-SIDE WIDES

The IPL is set to approve the use of DRS for height wides and wides outside the off-stump. "Hawk eye and ball tracking will be used to decide on the height wides and wides outside the off-stump. The team would be allowed to review if the on-field umpire has given a wide ball for height. If that team thinks it was not high enough for a wide, they can take the DRS," the official added.

pandemic but its guidelines are outside the purview of the sport's governing body.

"Using saliva on the ball was part of the essence of the game until COVID hit. Now that we don't have that threat anymore, we feel there is no harm in lifting the ban on saliva in the IPL.

"We understand that it makes a bigger impact in red ball cricket but even if it can help bowlers a bit in the white ball game, it should be allowed in the IPL, which is a trend setting tournament. Let's see what the captains decide tomorrow," a top BCCI official told PTI.

If the ban is revoked in the IPL, the ICC too might be forced to review its stance on the subject.

On the sidelines of the ICC Champions Trophy, senior India pacer Mohammed Shami had spoken about the need to use saliva on the ball in what has become a predominantly batters' game.

The likes of Vernon Philander and Tim Southree had backed Shami's call.

"We keep appealing that we should be allowed to use saliva so that we can bring reverse swing back into the game and it becomes interesting," Shami had said during the 50-over event in Dubai, where India emerged victorious.

As per the existing rules, if it is a first instance of

applying saliva on the ball, the fielding team's captain is summoned and issued a first warning.

"If it is the second instance during an innings, summon the captain of the fielding side and issue a second and final warning to the captain of the fielding side that any further such offence by any member of the team during the innings shall result in that member of the team being fined by BCCI.

"If it is the third or subsequent instance inform the player who has applied saliva to the ball on that occasion that he is subject to a fine, payable to BCCI, of the lesser of 10 lakh or 25% of his match fee," states last year's IPL playing conditions.

BEYOND BOUNDARIES



New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and cricket legend Ross Taylor enjoy street cricket with kids in New Delhi

NCA renamed, but injury management still falls short

PTI, NEW DELHI: The National Cricket Academy has been rechristened to Centre of Excellence (COE) as it found a new home in Bengaluru but it appears to be a case of "old wine in a new bottle", with still no clarity on injury management timelines for specific players.

Whether it is India's No.1 pacer Jasprit Bumrah or country's fastest bowler Mayank Yadav, the COE has maintained an iron curtain regarding the timeline and process of injury management.

There used to be a running joke about the COE for injured players few years back: "You can check-in anytime of the year but you can't leave".

From injury management (by the physios) in COE's Sports Science and

Medical team to rehabilitation and injury prevention (by Strength and Conditioning coach) to return to play (handled by bowling coaches cum biomechanics experts), a player goes through a complicated three-way process.

For any and every injury and subsequent 'Return To Play', there are timelines, which obviously vary from player to player.

But not being able to even provide a rough estimation of a player's return hasn't actually amused anyone related to Indian cricket.

"Over the past year, in most injury and rehabilitation cases, the medical team has simply stated 'clinically fit,' which offers no real clarity on a player's Return to Play. Don't want to name but many players

resume skill training under bowling coach only to still experience discomfort."

"The medical team is always non-committal on Return to Play," a BCCI source privy to developments in COE told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"It is a strange situation where there remains a question mark with regards to proper co-ordination between the various verticals which needs work in tandem to get an elite athlete back on track."

In case of Mayank, he had a six-month lay-off between April and October when he first suffered a side strain. He made his international debut against Bangladesh in October. He last played on October 12 and has been out with lower back stress fracture for last five months.

'Be ready to catch a glimpse of vintage Dhoni'

PTI, BENGALURU: The cricket fans may get to see glimpses of MS Dhoni's brilliance in the upcoming IPL season as the former skipper may bat at No.7 or No. 8 in the batting order and it will allow him to extract maximum results out of minimum deliveries, reckons former India batter Robin Uthappa.

Dhoni, now 43, exhibited his readiness for IPL 2025 while smashing the bowlers around at the Chennai Super Kings net session on Tuesday.

"As far as Mahi is concerned, I think we will get to see glimpses of his brilliance because I have a feeling that he might bat at number 7 or number 8. Very much like last year, and we will see him bat between 12 and 20 balls through the season," said Uthappa.

Only pure all-rounders will survive under Impact Player rule: Hardik

PTI, MUMBAI: Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya on Wednesday said now that the contentious Impact Player rule has been extended by three years, a cricketer has to be a pure all-rounder to find place in the starting eleven.

The rule allows a team to replace a player from their playing XI at a later stage of the match. The teams bring in a batting or bowling specialist as the situation demands.

The BCCI extended the rule to at least the 2027 edition despite reservations from leading Indian players, including Rohit Sharma who said the Impact Player strategy was holding back the development of Indian all-rounders with teams replacing them with an extra batter or bowler during the game.

"In the current scenario,

WITH PANDYA SUSPENDED, SKY TO CAPTAIN MI IN OPENER AGAINST CSK

PTI, MUMBAI: Suryakumar Yadav will captain Mumbai Indians in their opening IPL match against Chennai Super Kings on Sunday as regular skipper Hardik Pandya will be forced to sit out due to a one-match suspension for over-rate offences committed by the team last season. Suryakumar is the national T20 captain and recently led the side to a 4-1 triumph over England at home.



coach Mahela Jaywardene also had his say on the matter.

"It has given a different set of challenges. So we have to adapt and get better. My only concern at that time was that sometimes you have a pure all-rounder and they have a specific role to play but the other all-rounders are taken out of the game because you can get a genuine bowler or batter, that is something we have to see in the long term," reckoned the Sri Lankan great.

Pandya's return to Mumbai Indians last season was not the smoothest as the storied franchise finished last among 10 teams. He was also booed by the home fans. Considering their five IPL titles, Mumbai Indians have had a dry run since 2021.

it becomes difficult if you are not completely a 50-50 all-rounder to find your place. Going forward this can change or will change, we will have to see. But yes, definitely if you want to encourage more all-rounders they will need a fix spot for them to develop over the

years," said Pandya during the season-opening media interaction.

Pandya will miss MI's opening game on Sunday due to one match suspension for over-rate related offences last year. Surya Kumar Yadav will lead the side.

Sitting next to him, head

MARUTI SUZUKI

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