

Show Me The Money



There will be a tough battle out there once hopefully we reach a “NEW NORMAL” that actually no one hazards to guess or state.



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by [Navroze Dinyar Dhondy](#)

Olympics 2020. Cancelled.

Wimbledon cancelled. First time since World War 2.

English Premier League. Suspended indefinitely.

Spanish La Liga. Suspended indefinitely.

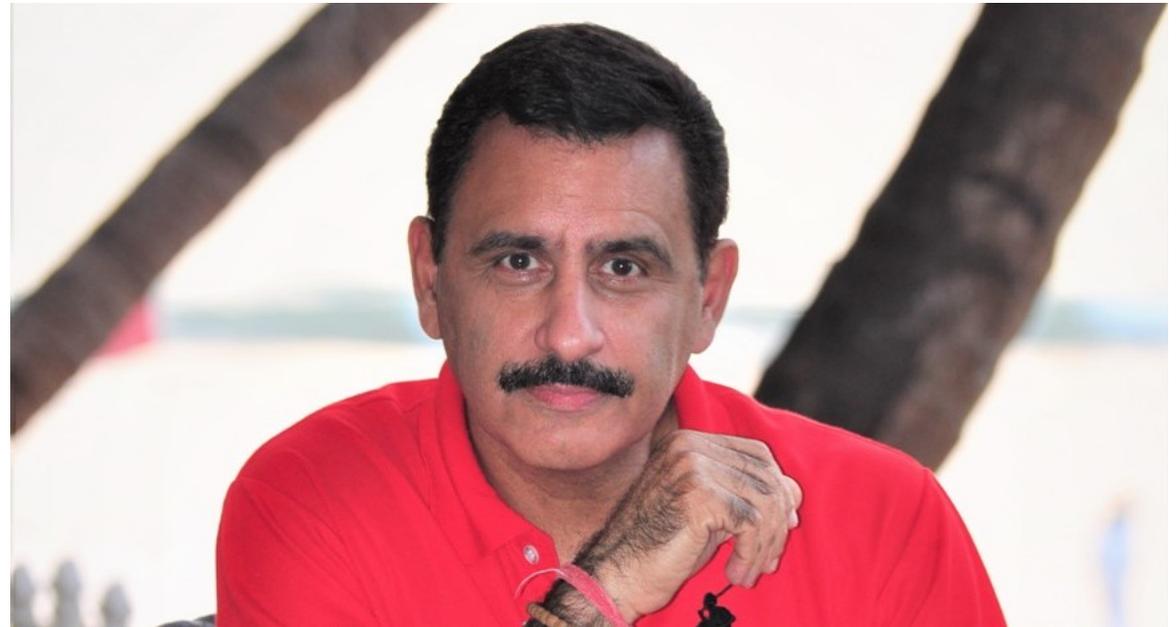
Formula 1. Suspended indefinitely.

Italian Serie A. Suspended indefinitely. First time since World War 2.

Indian Premier League Cricket. Postponed. No schedule announced.

NBA. Suspended indefinitely.

The Open. Golf. Cancelled.



“Show me the money” :Jerry Maguire.

One of the most famous and most oft used comment and quote in sports for the last twenty five years. Yes gentlemen. Show me the money.

Show me where it has gone. And where will it come from.

These are strange times.

No.

These are crazy times.

No one could have imagined such a devastation of a global business called sport.

A complete mauling of it. Annihilation some call it. Brutal murder is how some refer to it.

Money makes the mare go. And money makes sport go. This is one of the most impacted businesses in the world that will take a long time to heal and bounce back to normalcy.

Most top international sports events around the world involve a wonderful potpourri of international superstars. When it comes to football around the top leagues in the world, or tennis grand slams or the ATP players from Italy, Japan, England, Germany, France, Africa, Asia and almost every nook and corner of the world.

In a smaller world footprint sport like cricket which boasts of the IPL, one of the fastest growing leagues in the world players from South Africa, Sri Lanka, Australia, England, West Indies, NZ, Bangladesh, Nepal and even Afghanistan rub shoulders with Indian superstars to create pure magic in a sports arena.

All that seems like a distant dream now.

We are facing one of the biggest challenges that sport has ever faced. And along with that brands that have used sports as a principal driver of their brand values and promises.

There was news that Star Sports had booked more than Rs. 900 crores as early as February, and was targeting Rs. 3000 crores from the IPL this year. Sony Pictures Network India had banked on hundreds of crores of revenue from advertisers who had lined up for the Olympics. There was Formula 1, the English Premier League, La Liga, Serie A, Wimbledon, all in a nonstop series of sporting action that had brands and companies digging deep into their pockets pulling out top dollars to be a part of the action, and see their brands grow. To reach millions and billions of fans. Engage, empathise and evoke.

Today with the finger on the pause button, the sports industry has two options. Either play the rewind button and just see replays, or fast-forward to a whole new way Sports will be hosted and telecast.

Over the last few weeks there has been a carnage where top football club CEOs have announced they would take no salary for months, footballers fees have been slashed. "Barcelona football club's players will take a 70 percent pay cut and make an extra contribution on top during the enforced La Liga break so that the club's other employees can earn their full salaries during the coronavirus crisis" captain Lionel Messi said. Imagine if FCB can be hit what must be the impact on smaller clubs around the world.

A number of football teams in Europe are staring at bankruptcy, and many sports administrators are chewing their nails as the sports rights calendar comes up with not too many out there to grab them.

So what do marketeers do.

Sports has for over the decades been seen as a great cement between brands and fans: In most cases it's a tangible benefit associated with the sponsorship and partnership.

It has the amazing ability to reach targeted audiences and build sustainable relationships with them.

There is a genuine opportunity to create long-term brand value and relationship.

It has the potential to be leveraged with additional resource investment that helps multiply the overall value from the association and the sport.

It mostly provides a positive exposure for the brand.

Keeping all this in mind, millions of dollars were kept aside for the partnerships with the Olympics, Formula1, the IPL, the Premier League, La Liga, Wimbledon, The Open, and so many other sporting events. Large, substantial budgets kept for brands that span mobile phones to detergents, from automobiles to finance companies, from tyres to whisky and beer.

Yes the IPL has been a huge draw for brands since 2008. And there are still diehards and hopefuls including global cricketers like Jos Butler who believes that the "Massive IPL should be squeezed into the schedule" this year despite the packed cricket calendar around the world.

12 long years have seen the lure of the lucre for teams, players and brands. There have been partnerships from 20 lakhs to 20 crores, and no one can ever dispute what the event does for the brands coming on board. Of course there are some amazing wasters, who have really no idea of how to use this platform or leverage it, placing logos that look like "khichdi" on a jersey.

Some of them imagine that the magic will happen just by plonking the logo on the garment, helmet or perimeter boards without even understanding that they are pouring money down the drain. But then that's a topic for another discussion.

Right now the question is that with little or no LIVE sport around the world at least till September 2020, what will the marketeers do with all the monies they had stashed aside for these sponsorships, and events?

Well crystal gazing isn't my forte or my penchant, but the way the next one year looks, I feel that a lot of brands and companies will put that bag of dough deep into their vaults. Possibly the CEO and CFO won't let them touch it with a barge pole for quite some time. The certainty of this uncertainty is for everyone to see.

Yes some of the budgets will just disappear because of the way the world has unfolded over the last few months and the next few months too. Some of it would be channelised for trade incentives.

Some would go to the classic GEC channels and News Channels and some would love to play their own game of 'wait-n-watch'

There will be a tough battle out there once hopefully we reach a "NEW NORMAL" that actually no one hazards to guess or state.

Yet being the optimist I believe that Sports will come back with a bang in 9 months' time.

In the last quarter there could be the Pro Kabaddi League, The ICC T20 World Cup in Australia and the clutch of Boxing, Wrestling, Tennis and other sport that could be lined up for brands to invest in.

I was discussing this with my dear friend and legendary Tennis player Leander Paes, and he said something very profound. "The hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic have had a ripple effect on all aspects of life. These are challenging times. Being a sportsperson and an optimist, I believe that sports will make a bigger and more impactful comeback once this is over. Sports is not just recreation but a way of life. The courts, stadiums and sporting arenas will see larger numbers than ever before and new innovative ways of viewing sport will also be seen. For now we have to be patient, stay at home and definitely stay fit. "

I tend to strongly agree with Leander, and look forward to packed stadiums and auditoriums, where LIVE action once again dominates the sports world and the TV screens.

I still remember my first experience of a F1 race. It was September 2009. The street circuit of Singapore was a revelation. No matter how many races I had witnessed on TV this was the real thing, and the roar of the engines, the gleaming, colourful cars zipping around the bends made it memorable forever.

Possibly sports will tweak itself along the way. The elaborate Hugs and High-fives will give way to a more subdued celebration. The post-match handshakes may give way to elbow bumps and ankle-shakes.

From ancient hunting, to the gladiators, to the Olympics, to modern sport, human beings have always celebrated the victory of strength, stamina, and mind games, and that won't change in a hurry.

Sport has a way of connecting people, cultures, ideologies, and countries.

There is nothing better.

And I hope we can “Show them the money” as soon as possible my dear friends.

Because if we don't a who ecosystem will just go under and die.

Something I am sure no one wats to see.

So Let The Games Begin!

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[Olympics 2020](#)

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