



How much will Covid-19 impact BCB's coffers?

BISHWAJIT ROY

Like most other sports, all on-field activities in cricket have been suspended the world over due to the coronavirus pandemic. Nobody knows how long this crisis is going to last and nobody knows how rescheduled would be the fixtures once cricket returns after the pandemic. But one thing that everybody can understand is that the commercial considerations will dictate planning in a post-pandemic world where powerful boards will try to minimise losses from high-value media deals as they stand to make more money from cricket at home than from the share of ICC revenue.

There has been huge financial concerns regarding cricket's probable absence over the subsequent six months, and the Times of India even ran a report with a headline: Covid effect: ICC member boards running 'serious risk' of financial bankruptcy.

"Simply put, other than India and to an extent England, the rest of the cricket world will be on a hand-to-mouth existence if this scenario continues," India's leading newspaper reported,

Chowdhury when his attention was drawn regarding the bleak scenario.

"We are lucky that our expenses are not as much and we also have a very healthy reserve. So, you can say we are in a comfortable zone compared to many other countries. Yes, we could face serious consequences if we have a revenue generating event like IPL. On the other hand, our next two home series are not big ones in terms of financial benefit as the revenue depends on the TV production



rights. So, we will get time and there will be no significant immediate impact on us," he continued.

"But many things will depend on future business situation after the pandemic. We have to rely on the big business houses for different sponsorships; how their business is running is important for us," he added.

The BCB CEO also informed that chief executives of Test playing nations will attend a tele-conference next week to discuss the impact of the Covid-19 on the Future Tours Programme (FTP).

Foremost on the agenda will be the inaugural World Test Championship (WTC), with its final scheduled for June next year, but the fate of the championship is now in doubt. The two-year cycle began after the 2019 ODI World Cup, with each team scheduled to play six Test series--three at home and three away. The postponements have left the championship cycle in tatters.

The first ODI league was set to begin in May and serve as a qualifying pathway to the 2023 World Cup, but that too will be deferred. "Basically, the member countries will discuss over the future schedules and ODI league is important as there is question of World Cup qualification," said Nizamuddin.

It is a grim reality and no doubt the biggest question for many boards in post-pandemic world would be: where will these boards earn from?

"Definitely there will be a financial setback due to this [coronavirus]. However, we do not have a lot of revenue generating events in the near future and hence the BCB will be less affected compared to other boards. I think the BCB is in a bit more comfortable position in this regard,"

adding that Bangladesh cricket, in any other case a sustainable property, will sit with no broadcaster and sponsors as soon as their current deal runs out by the end of April.

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Two-year extension for Day, Watkiss

Uncertainty over contract of youth coaches

ANISUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) wants Jamie Day to scout expatriate footballers from the United Kingdom in a bid to strengthening the national team, with the game's local governing body having already decided in principle to renew the contract with the English coach for the next two years.

Day was initially signed in May 2018 for a one-year contract, and following a fairly successful tenure, his contract was extended by another year, which would expire on May 15. Satisfied with his performance, the BFF is currently in discussion about handing him and his assistant Stuart Watkiss another two years' contract.

"The agreement with Day is almost the same as before but this time we are going to renew it for two years. We are still discussing details of some clauses slowly as we don't know when football activities will resume after the corona pandemic. Due to the uncertainty of football activities, both parties believe to give each other space to complete unfinished businesses, which is the remaining fixtures of Qatar World Cup Qualifiers and upcoming SAFF



Championship," BFF vice-president Tabith Awal told The Daily Star over phone.

Tabith, who is also vice-chairman of the National Teams Committee, informed that they are adding a clause in Day's new contract, which would be for him to scout expatriate talents from the UK to strengthen the national team.

"Though former coach Lodewijk de Kruif wanted to scout expatriate footballers from Europe, we could not do it properly. Jamal Bhuiyan is our only expatriate footballer. This time we believe Day, as a British coach, can play a good role in scouting

expatriate players from UK. So, we have kept this thing in his job description in the draft contract," Tabith said, adding that this time they want the coach to be stationed in Bangladesh for longer periods to avoid controversy regarding his lengthy stays in UK.

With all football activities halted, the BFF has proposed the contract to come into effect three months after it is signed.

"We want to keep the contract flexible but realistic. We want to sign the new contract before the current contract expires. We have decided in principle to keep some clauses

flexible such as when he starts to get salary, when he will come, when he will leave because FIFA and AFC are also supposed to deliver some rulings regarding the national team's coaching staff and we can adjust those rulings in the existing contract," Tabith said, adding that they have proposed that the contract would come into effect four to six weeks before the resumption of World Cup Qualifiers.

Day admitted to being in discussion about the new contract, which he said is similar to the last one.

"BFF proposed August and I understand the situation. We still have a few issues to agree on before the two-year agreement is signed," the coach told The Daily Star.

BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag also informed that contracts with two youth team coaches -- Bob Ryles and Andrew Peter -- are supposed to expire on April 26 and that both coaches, who are currently in England, wanted to know about their fate.

"We haven't replied them yet as we have to discuss the matter with the high-ups in the coming days. After the discussion, we will let them know about our decision on whether we will renew the contracts or not," Shohag said.



Renowned as a party animal, Neymar has seen his social interaction opportunities seriously compromised by coronavirus pandemic. The PSG star, now confined in his home in Brazil, however, is making sure neither his fitness nor his social skills get rusty, posting a picture on Instagram with the message: "Are you also one of those who trains with an eye on cell phones?"

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

CONMEBOL WC qualifying in September

AFP, Asuncion

South American qualifying for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, delayed by the coronavirus pandemic, will begin in September, the region's governing body CONMEBOL said on Friday.

"For the moment, the start fixed by (FIFA) for its celebration is September 4-8 in the format already established," said CONMEBOL.

All 10 teams are due to play each other home and away in a round robin format. That amounts to 18 matches, far more than most other continental federations organise.

The first two rounds need to be rearranged but CONMEBOL said any new dates would have to be ratified by FIFA.

Class of '82 to combat coronavirus

REUTERS, Undated

They were rivals on the field in one of the greatest World Cup matches of all time but the former stars of Brazil and Italy have come together off it to help the South American nation fight the new coronavirus.

Italy beat Brazil 3-2 in the 1982 World Cup with three goals from Paolo Rossi helping the Azzurri knock out a Brazil team that featured Zico, Socrates, Junior and Leandro.

Brazilian midfielder Paulo Roberto Falcao has raised more than 4.5 million reais (\$859,270) with the help of his former teammates who recorded a video asking people to donate to help fight the spread of the coronavirus in Brazil's densely populated favelas. Now, players on the Italy team that beat them have recorded their own video.

Falcao, who played with AS Roma, asked his close friend and former team mate Bruno Conti to get the Italian players to each record a message.

Paulo Rossi, Giuseppe Bergomi and Claudio Gentile were among those who agreed to help.

"Italy and Brazil: rivals on the field but united against the coronavirus," said defender Franco Causio.

The players from both sides have remained close since the 1982 World Cup.

De Bruyne unsure of virus

AFP, London

Kevin De Bruyne is recovering from an illness, but the Manchester City star says he is not sure if he had coronavirus.

De Bruyne and his family felt ill for around two weeks, but the Belgian international did not find out whether or not it was the virus.

"I am doing well, to be honest," De Bruyne told Sky Sports on Friday.

"The first two weeks my family was sick so it was a little bit like up and down, but now they are all healthy.

"We don't know if we had it (coronavirus) or not but I think we're doing well now."

With De Bruyne recovered, the midfielder is trying to keep as fit as he can while adhering to social distancing rules.

The Premier League is suspended indefinitely because of the pandemic, but there remains a chance play will resume this season.

"Well, the first two weeks was a little bit weird because I don't know what's going on," De Bruyne said.

"Then I managed to get a treadmill. I was swimming a little bit because I'm lucky to have a pool downstairs.

"I was doing a couple of lengths but now mostly I'm doing a run and I would say every other day I would choose between swimming and doing some exercise, so I'm keeping fairly good for what we can on our own, I guess."

Asked if City are sending through information and drills, he said: "They send us like a fairly big programme."



Plenty of time but not much or at least nothing new to do -- this is the reality for most sports fanatics around the globe who are now confined indoors due to the coronavirus pandemic. But sports enthusiasts find a way to stay connected with the game they love. Such avid sports lovers were seen in the Azampur area in Uttara carrying a board of carrom, a very popular indoor game in the country, as the outdoor games have now been halted for more than a month.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Djokovic and Murray reveal their biggest tennis regrets

REUTERS

Live tennis action is a fading memory during the coronavirus shutdown but 20,000 fans tuned in to watch old rivals Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray chew the fat on Instagram on Friday.

Sitting on their sofas at home, the duo spent an entertaining hour reminiscing about some of the classics in their 36-match series, painful losses and even came up with the perfect tennis player.

The knockabout banter offered some candid reflections on their glittering careers -- both on hold as tennis awaits the end of the pandemic which has claimed more than 150,000 lives globally.

Asked which losses hurt the most, both selected matches against each other.

"For me it was the French Open final against you in 2016," Murray, who has also finished runner-up at the Australian Open five times, said. "Obviously I would have loved to win the Australian Open or the French Open but I think as a challenge for me, because clay was such a tough surface for me throughout my career, that would have been for me my biggest achievement."

The Serb hit back from losing the first set to outplay Murray in that Paris showdown, completing his career Grand Slam in the process.

World number one Djokovic has never won the Olympic gold medal though, a feat Murray achieved in 2012 and 2016.

Djokovic said his semi-final defeats against Murray and Rafa Nadal in the 2012 and 2008 Olympics were two of his toughest losses -- together with his defeat by Juan Martin del Potro in



the first round of the 2016 Rio Games.

"Maybe that match against you in London, or the semi-final against Rafa in Beijing (in 2008)," Djokovic, who won the bronze medal in Beijing said. "In Rio I felt really good but two days before the match I felt my wrist. It started to be more painful. It's no excuse, I got injections, but I felt sad that I wasn't at my best and could work my way in the tournament."

"If I could change any outcomes would be Rio and London."

Three-time Grand Slam champion Murray, trying to salvage his career after hip surgery at the start of 2019, admitted he wished he had enjoyed his successes more.

"After the issues I've had the last few years, I sometimes do wish I had enjoyed those moments more. When you see the end coming you think... I should have enjoyed the wins or even the losses that were great matches." Asked to come up with the perfect

player if they could combine strokes from different players, both picked each other for having the best service returns.

"If I won a free point off my first serve against you I was celebrating like I won a set," Djokovic, who owns 17 Grand Slam titles, said of his fellow 32-year-old.

Both said they would swap for the serves of John Isner or Nick Kyrgios, while Murray said Nadal's forehand was the toughest and Djokovic picked Roger Federer's.

Unsurprisingly they were in agreement on which player is mentally the toughest -- Nadal.

"It's like going on court to face Gladiator," Djokovic said.

Asked by a fan what they would have done rather than tennis, Djokovic picked being a scientist.

For Murray? "Right now it would be cool to be a doctor because you realize what's important in times like this."