

RAAI

RESEARCH AND
ANALYSIS INSIGHTS

NUGGETS

A N A C C O R D I N I T I A T I V E

Popularity of non-cricket outdoor sports among 16 – 20 year old Indians

Page1

Popularity of non-cricket outdoor sports among 16 – 20 year old Indians

Page3

Youth interest in various sports

Page4

Favourite non-cricket sport for viewing

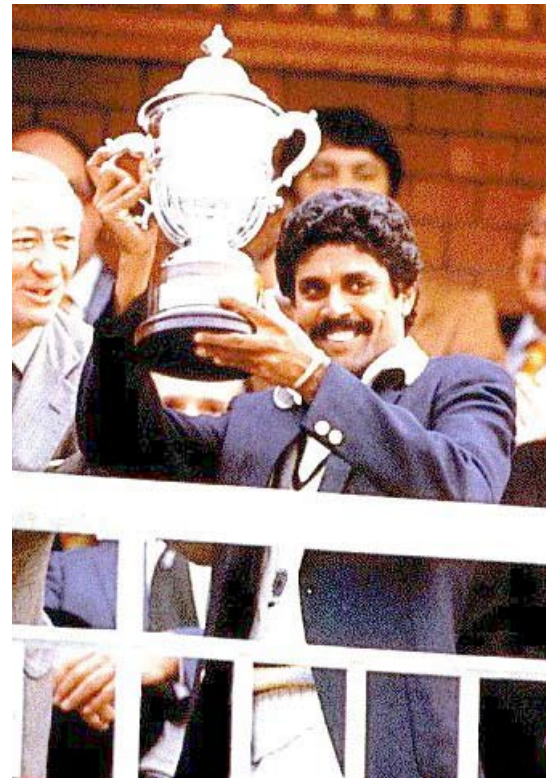
Page4

Most recalled sportspersons

26 years after Kapil's Devil's triumphed at the 1983 World Cup, India is considered a pre-eminent power in world cricket and the game is valued in the country as much for its entertainment and commercial value as much as for pure cricketing skills.

Entertainment and commerce go hand in hand with pure sporting skills not only in the case of cricket in India but in the case of any modern professional sport, the world over.

In India, success stories of sporting icons, global exposure because of increased travel (a result of increasing income levels plus a greater number of more affordable service providers) and explosion of mass media, better regulation that recognises the importance of sports and entertainment as character builders on the one hand and a robust business on the other and improved lifestyles in general, enabling access to world class amenities have ensured that Indians are now able to take up a number of sports at a very early age. At the same time, advances in both the software as well as hardware of broadcasting technology enable the young and not-so-young to watch excellent coverage of live telecasts of global sports from the comforts of their rooms (and increasingly, when mobile as well).



Even in the eighties, inspite of limited Indian presence in tennis, Indian television audience used to cheer the antics of McEnroes and Beckers of tennis as much as the tennis lovers elsewhere in the world. Occasional flashes of brilliance by a Vijay Amritraj or a Ramesh Krishnan to upset the best in the



world and of course the above-par performances of the Indian Davis Cup teams over the years only added to the charm of tennis and it was well accepted for entertaining TV viewing.

Lately, a host of newer games have caught the fancy of sports lovers to varying degrees and it can be argued that the magic works both ways – a sporting success story resulting in increased popularity of a sport (a la Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore and Abhinav Bindra in Shooting and Vijender Kumar and to an extent Jitender Kumar and Akhil Kumar in Boxing) and also general fondness for watching a particular sport tending to throw up a few world class athletes in the discipline (e.g. Karun Chandok and Narain Karthikeyan in racing; of course Dr Vijay Mallaya’s personal interest in owning the Force India F1 team has also contributed to the phenomenon).



In tennis, the exploits of Leander Paes, Mahesh Bhupathi, Sania Mirza and lately Somdevvarman have ensured that the Indian interest in the game has been sustained; same with Badminton, where first Pullela Gopichand and now Saina Nehwal have been redefining Indian success in the sport; Indians have been coming up even in the so-called elitist Golf and the names of Jeev Milkha Singh and Jyoti Randhawa bear mentioning in this regard.

Nowadays it is a common sight to see youngsters playing a local game of football with sometimes

all of the participants dressed in the attire of two or more of the famous English League clubs – Manchester United, Liverpool, Chelsea and Arsenal. It is equally common to find slightly older men sporting selfsame t-shirts or sweat shirts in malls on leisurely Saturday/Sunday afternoons and evenings.

Events, in the form of television channel Ten Sports sponsoring the Indian WWE star Dalip Singh Rana (Khali) to meet legions of his fans while on visit to India or Vodafone showcasing the McLaren car in India and sponsoring Lewis Hamilton’s visit to the country providing an opportunity for his numerous admirers to see him in flesh and blood too have been demonstrably successful.

Inspite of such positives for sports, it is believed that (though ever growing) only 10% of overall advertising spends in India are made around sporting events and of that more than 80% of that is still accounted for by cricket alone.



Yet, many of the Indian youngsters are considered to have an extremely strong fan following for a host of sporting icons ranging from Roger Federer to Lewis Hamilton to Cristiano Ronaldo across the spectrum of events. The viewership of international events like the World Cup (2006) and Euro Cup (2008) for soccer have been consistently on the ascendency despite some inordinate timings of telecast .



With this background, in late 2009 Accord conducted a market research exercise among **500 plus youngsters in the age group of 16 to 20 years (across the Top 5 cities in India viz. Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore and Chennai)** in order to verify the level of interest for various outdoor sports among the youth and the popularity of various international (non-cricket) sporting icons. The sample consisted of a higher proportion of male participants (66%) as against female participants (34%).

Youth interest in various outdoor sports



On the question of interest level of survey participants in various sports, cricket understandably emerges on top. None of the other leading sports are even near cricket but football is fast catching up. Interestingly, football is more male dominated in terms of interest than even cricket.

A relatively higher (71% in Delhi and 63% in Mumbai) proportion of boys and young in the two biggest metros find cricket very interesting.

In Kolkata, soccer is almost as popular (49% find it very interesting) as cricket (57%) but least so in Delhi (9% say they are very interested in soccer)

Soccer is the second most popular outdoor sport after cricket with almost a quarter of youth expressing extremely high interest levels in the sport

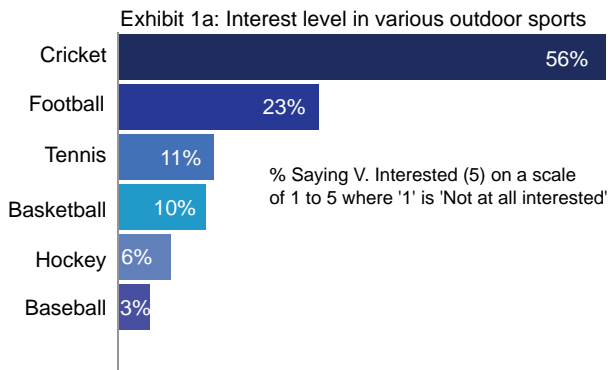


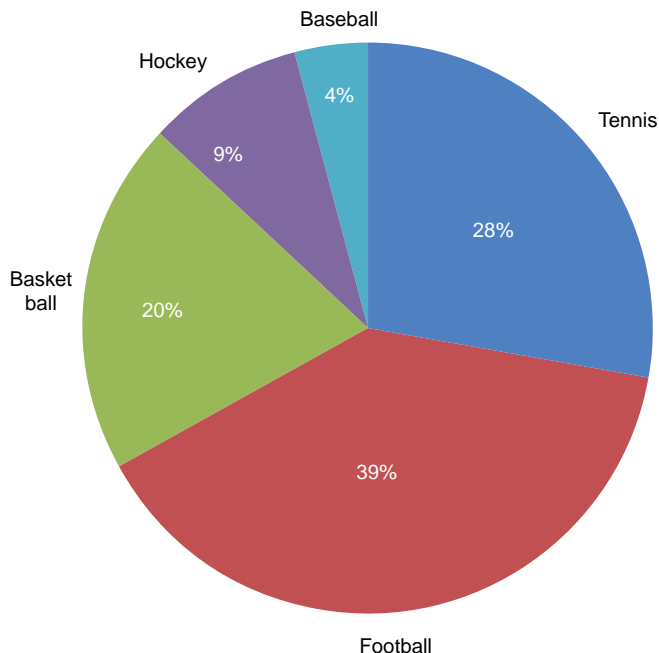
Exhibit 1b: Interest level in various outdoor sports – differences by gender

Various sports	% Saying Very Interested	
	Boys	Girls
Cricket	63	44
Football	29	12
Tennis	12	11
Basketball	10	12
Hockey	7	6
Baseball	3	3

Favourite non-cricket sport for viewing

In terms of viewership, viewers have preference for soccer over tennis or basketball underlining the fact that soccer has cemented its place as the second most popular outdoor sport in India after cricket, both in terms of participation and viewership; it must be noted however the polarisation is more defined among the boys and young men (for 43%, soccer would be the most preferred non-cricket sport to watch) as compared to girls and young women, for whom tennis is still slightly more enjoyable as compared to soccer (34% to 31%)

Exhibit 2: Favourite non-cricket outdoor sport for viewing

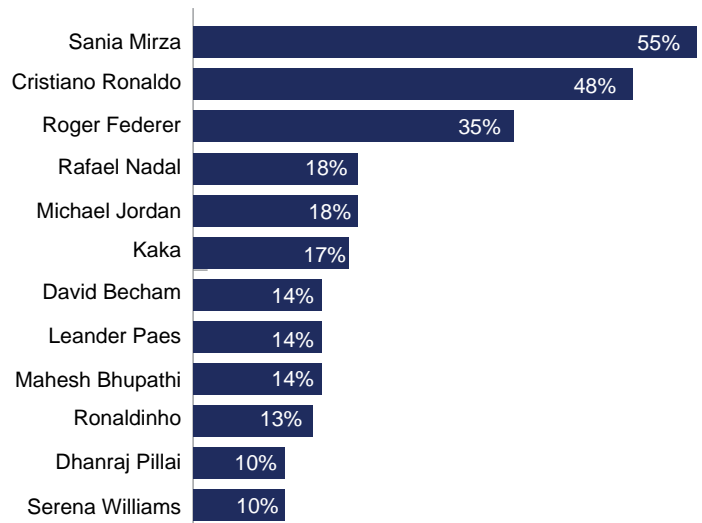


Most recalled sports persons

Player recall is, understandably, a function of the excellence achieved in a particular sport; it helps if a player is perceived as having contributed to Indian sporting identity (especially if against odds) but by and large, global sporting icons are also the sporting icons of Indians.

The responses to a question asking the 16-20 year old youth to recall names of 5 players include names of players Indian and international, from team as well as individual sports, past and present (though it is also a fact that the recall of past greats extends to 4-5 years back and no more, except in

Exhibit 3: Most recalled sports persons



Apart from the above, Maria Sharapova, Venus Williams, Bhaichung Bhutia, Kobe Bryant, Wayne Rooney, Saina Nehwal, John Terry and Lionel Messi (in the same order) are some of the other names prominently mentioned by the youth.