

Here are 5 reasons why the IBL is fantastic:

Aparna Popat

(Arjuna awardee Aparna Popat is a former world number 16. She was India's National Badminton Champion for nine consecutive years from 1998 – 2006 and shares the record for most National titles won with the legendary Prakash Padukone. She also participated in the Sydney and Athens Olympics.)

Jul 25, 2013

The recently-concluded IBL auctions at Delhi may have been interesting and astonishing to some and disappointing and frustrating for others – but for me it was excitement through and through.

The richest Badminton league in the world (\$1 million) had over 150 players up for auction, with the men's singles world no. 1 Lee Chong Wei and the Indian superstar Saina Nehwal leading the pack.

So what's the big deal with this IBL then?

Here are 5 reasons why I think that it is fantastic.

1. The highest prize money earned in an International Super Series Premier Tournament (i.e. the highest category of open International Tournament) is \$75,000 and at an All-India Ranking Tournament is Rs.40,000. Therefore, player auctioned for \$15,000 would need to reach the semi-finals of a Super Series Premiere Tournament or win 20 domestic tournaments to earn this much.

A total of over 8.5 crores were spent on buying the 36 Indian players. This is a huge draw financially as the money trickled down from the top players all the way to promising juniors.

Also, the players could attract prospective sponsors due to the visibility provided here. This platform has a probability of making heroes out of Champions that are waiting in the wings.

2. Our Indian players get to play against the top players including world no.1. Lee Chong Wei in a compact format which otherwise could have taken them a year or more to do. Having five league matches to play, there is a probability of playing at least 5 top quality players before the semis.

3. Our players can experience a camaraderie and team spirit while they stay, travel and play alongside successful players in different conditions. They shall be exposed to new ideas, strategies and inspiring stories that would make them more mature and confident and help them grow as players.

Till date, only a handful of Indian players like P. Gopichand and Prakash Padukone have got the chance to represent foreign Badminton Clubs and they have certainly benefitted from this opportunity.

4. As fans, we will get to watch top notch Badminton in 6 cities which otherwise was possible only during the International Tournaments held in India each year. This will not only spread awareness about the game but also allow our players to interact with and soak in the adulation of their fans and create new ones of course. I'm sure that the likes of R.M.V.Gurusaidutt, K.Srikanth, P.C.Thulasi, Pranav Jerry Chopra, Manu Attri, Pradnya Gadre etc. will build up their own fan base before the IBL is over.

5. The 'Shuttle Express' school programme was initiated by the IBL to popularize the sport and inspire children to take to it. Our Indian icon players went to 6 cities encouraging talented school kids and giving them important tips on Badminton. This will help build a pipeline of players for the future.

The [IPL](#) has proved that we have a huge propensity towards sports. Today IBL-1 has started off with prize money of Rs. 6 crore as compared to IPL-6 with a Rs. 25 crores tag. I think IBL is off to a good start and there is ample room and aspiration to grow.
