

ECB's stance on IPL ridiculous, says Warne

Legendary Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne has lashed out at the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) for preventing its contracted players from participating in the cash-rich Indian Premier League (IPL), and called the decision 'ridiculous and short-sighted'.

The past fortnight has seen a tussle between ECB and its cricketers who are up in arms to join other international players and reap the IPL largesse.

'It is a ridiculous decision... ECB is stopping the players from joining IPL. It is a shame on the part of ECB that their players are missing from such a big tournament,' said Warne, who is the coach-cum-captain of Rajasthan Royals in IPL.

ECB's fears stem from the fact that the already struggling domestic county championship might receive another setback if their star players appear in IPL.

It has also prompted ECB to plan its own version of Twenty20 league for the counties on the lines of IPL.

'Every other board is letting their players participate (in IPL). ECB has taken a short-sighted decision. They will have to consider the desire of their players to take part in IPL. They are surely missing out on this big occasion,' Warne said Saturday night after his side's opening IPL match against Delhi Daredevils here.

Explosive England batsman Kevin Pietersen and other players had joined the chorus to play in the inaugural IPL tournament.

Jolted by the voices of revolt, ECB last week softened its stance and allowed them to sign for the 2010 edition of IPL, but till then the players have been asked to concentrate on the 2009 Ashes and World Twenty20 at home in June.

Pressure is mounting on ECB to allow stars such as Pietersen and Andrew Flintoff, who are flooded with tempting offers from the IPL franchisees, to play in IPL's next season.

'Pietersen and Flintoff are dynamic players and they should be here playing for IPL,' Warne said.

'Cricket is such a passion in India. The tournament is so huge and it is going to change the future of cricket.'

'All top international players are here and everybody would love to watch these stars,' he added.

Warne also said that the International Cricket Council (ICC) should 'wake up to the IPL reality'.

'ICC should show some common sense and open a six-week window for the IPL in its international tour schedule. That would make the job easier for the cricket boards of various countries.'

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