

Poll shows England players prefer IPL to country

Fears of mass exodus of players from the England team to join the Indian Premier League (IPL) have come true as a poll revealed a startling figure --half of the current team want to take premature retirement and play in the second edition of the multi-million dollar Twenty20 tournament.

The Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA) surveyed 16 players currently involved in the England set-up. According to the results that came out Monday, eight indicated their preference to the IPL's six-figure salaries to their country -- a finding that PCA chairman Dougie Brown described as 'extremely worrying.'

'You can't blame the England players for thinking that way,' Brown was quoted as saying in The Daily Telegraph Tuesday.

'We're all in the game for a short period of time, and those people who spend a lot of time travelling the globe must find the idea of the IPL very appealing. These guys will be faced with the choice of spending 300 days away a year, or going to India for six weeks, and getting paid the same if not more money,' he said.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) had disallowed its cricketers from being bought over by IPL franchise, insisting on fulfilling their national and county commitments. English players, however, continued to attract huge sums from IPL franchises with Kevin Pietersen and Andrew Flintoff being the top draw.

Pietersen and his teammates had openly expressed their displeasure on being forcibly shut out of the IPL.

In April, a preliminary PCA survey found that 35 per cent of England's international cricketers would consider swapping international cricket for the IPL.

But with increasing number of players mulling switch-over, ECB is in great pressure to bow to their demands.

The news also emphasises the need for the International Cricket Council to open up a window in the international itinerary for the IPL, so the tournament does not clash with any Test or one-day international series.

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