

## ICC board to discuss radical future programming proposal

The International Cricket Council (ICC) board will discuss a radical proposal to have a championship of best Test, one-day and Twenty20 nations every four years in home and away basis.

The new programming concept has been created by Australian-born Indian Rohan Sajdeh, 33, who is now based in Chicago with Boston Consulting Group (BCG), The Australian reported Tuesday.

The ICC board will discuss the proposal at its ongoing meeting in Dubai. Cricket Australia (CA) is fully supporting the proposal.

In its current form the new schedule would have each of the nine active Test nations playing each other over two years, with two home and two away series each year consisting of three Tests, five one-day matches and a Twenty20 game.

If fully implemented, there would be semi-finals in all three formats among the top four sides during the third year of the cycle followed by home and away finals in the last year.

Room would remain in the programme for ICC events each year such as the World Cup, Champions Trophy and World Twenty20.

However, uncertainty remains over how Australia would fit in its traditional five-Test series against England and four-Test series against India.

The proposal does not offer a window for the Indian Premier League despite claims from players and player associations that without a gap for the tournament the next generation may abandon traditional forms of the game for the super-rich competition.

CA chief executive James Sutherland is a strong promoter of the plan, which was discussed at the ICC's meeting of chief executives over the past two days and is likely to be considered by the ICC's executive board at its two-day meeting beginning Wednesday.

'James Sutherland has gone to Dubai as a supporter of the concept and the theory of a complementary connection between Test cricket and other forms of the game,' Young said.

A BCG consultant is currently based at CA's office in Melbourne working on strategic planning.

'We are attracted to the idea of a Test championship and from what we've seen we support the BCG proposal. It offers the chance to simplify future scheduling.

'It also offers the opportunity to add context to what sometimes appears seemingly endless bilateral tours that can lead nowhere,' Young said.

The future tours programme has a six-year cycle but icon series such as the Ashes and India versus Pakistan are played more regularly.

Young insisted that if there was any change to the ICC schedule once the current future tours

programme ends in 2012, so-called 'icon' series would continue to be protected.

Part of the attraction of the integrated proposal is that every match and every series would mean something to other teams, particularly in the top half of the table, creating wider interest and supposedly increasing the value of television rights.

The ICC's current Test and one-day rankings are confusing and largely meaningless.

In May this year a meeting of the ICC's Cricket Committee, which includes four former Test captains including Mark Taylor, made a series of recommendations on future programming, including:

- \* All three formats of international cricket should be protected and promoted with Test cricket identified as the pinnacle.

- \* The icon Test series must be protected.

- \* The concept of a Test championship and/or play-off should be explored further.

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