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ALL ABOUT...

IPL 2013 - on air, and online

Jagadeesh Krishnamurthy takes a look at what's in store this year.

Billed as India's answer to the Superbowl, Indian Premier League (IPL) has become a permanent fixture in the calendar for some marketers. Arguably, some of the biggest monies are spent every year around the property – be it by brands associated with teams as sponsors or by on air advertisers.

IPL Season 5 was pitched as a 'Great Indian carnival'

1 **Last year, in its fifth edition, IPL was pitched as a 'Great Indian carnival'** and everyone connected to the property are hoping that it lives up to the tag this year too. Though not much has changed - on paper - from the number of matches and tournament structure point of view, the biggest change for IPL 2013 will be the change in title sponsor from DLF to Pepsi. Add to that the change in one franchise – that of Hyderabad – from Deccan Chronicle Holdings' Deccan Chargers to the Sun Network's Sunrisers Hyderabad. While the players' auction will be held on 3 February, the tournament begins on 3 April and ends on 26 May.

2 **PepsiCo replaced DLF as the title sponsor** starting with the 2013 season. DLF did not renew its association after the initial five-year contract for Rs 250 crore ended with the previous season. PepsiCo's contract is for Rs 396.8 crore for five years, ending with the 2017 season. Says T Gangadhar, managing director, MEC India: "Pepsi coming on board is a good thing for the tournament. Over the past five years, DLF has done much as title sponsors to market the property. I am sure Pepsi will do what a title owner has to do."

Echoing a similar sentiment, Rohit Gupta, president, Sony Entertainment Television, adds, "With Pepsi coming on board as presenting sponsor, they are going to use all their resources to build up the property. They have the star power to do that. Moreover, since Sun Network has taken up the Hyderabad franchise, they are going to use their might across South to build up the franchise. So, this year, the pre-IPL buzz will be quite significant."

3 **Multi Screen Media (MSM) has announced it will simulcast the IPL matches** on both its Hindi movie channel Max and its dedicated sports channel Six. The MSM group will continue to broadcast the IPL as a Standard Definition feed on Max, while to ramp up its 'premium' subscriber numbers on Six, the English feed will only be available on the channel's HD beam.

Last year's tournament followed soon after the ICC Cricket World Cup, which according to some took some of the steam off the IPL. Gupta acknowledges: "Unlike last year where there was the ICC Cricket World Cup before IPL, there are no big ticket tournaments before this year's edition. So, the tournament will have a clean run."

With respect to ratings, according to data released by TAM in June 2012, the final match of IPL 5 recorded a rating of 8.92 TVR among the TG 4+ years audience across India against 6.96 TVR recorded for the final match of IPL 4. However, IPL 5 was not able to match the ratings of final matches for the first three seasons.

4 **IPL 5 matches were streamed online by Times Internet Limited** (TIL) in partnership with YouTube. The partnership has not been renewed yet for 2013. During the 2012 season, the company claims that there was a 55 percent increase in online viewership. Against 72 million page views in 2011, TIL said there were 113 million page views generated during the subsequent edition. Other factors remaining constant, while online viewership will grow if the property grows as a function of growth of online viewing across genres, this will not impact television viewing, according to the broadcaster MSM.

Gupta explains, "Online viewership is independent to the television audience. India has a long way to go before we see a drop in television advertisers due to online viewership. Both will co-exist, and each medium will grow on its own."

Meanwhile, Gangadhar is of the opinion that the online medium will definitely see organic growth this year too. He feels that Indiatimes should be promoting the property more than Sony to change consumers' viewership patterns. "On the other hand, social chatter during the tournament is something we need to watch out for. Sony with its television reach will have to drive cross-media engagement. It is well established that people tweet a lot during sporting events, and it will now be interesting to see how this chatter is different from last year's."

What it means for...

ADVERTISERS

- 76 matches in a concentrated cricket season
- Nine teams with individual strengths – and sponsors
- Mix of International and domestic players

MEDIA PLANNERS

- An annual big-ticket sporting tournament
- Rationalised rates from the broadcaster as the property has matured
- More inventory to choose from: television plus online

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