

Change in point system : Badminton

By Abhijit Kulkarni | May 18, 2014,

Badminton World Federation considers change in scoring system to reduce match time



The Badminton World Federation is flirting with the idea of tweaking the scoring system in order to reduce the duration of the matches and keeping the spectators engaged. A formal proposal to this effect will come up for discussion in the BWF Events Committee meeting and if cleared would be discussed in the BWF Council.

However, a final decision on the issue would not be made till the BWF's Annual General Meeting in May 2015 as any change to the Laws of the Game have to be ratified at the AGM only. A BWF source confirmed that they were considering three different formats as they felt that the matches in the current format were dragging far too long and that is adding to the scheduling woes.

According to the proposal that has been prepared by the BWF Events Working Group, the three formats that are likely to be discussed during the meeting include a shift to a 15 point scoring system with three games, maintaining the 21 point format for first two games with the decider reduced to 11 points or a 9 points scoring system with five games.

"When we introduced the rally point system with 21 points the match time initially decreased to 20- 25 minutes. But now even regular matches are going on for almost an hour and that is throwing the schedule hay-wire," said the source.

NOT THE FIRST TIME

Since the turn of the century, BWF has already changed two scoring formats as the traditional 15 point classic format in which a player could only earn points on his / her serve. The Women then used to play a game of 11. In 2002, the World Body experimented with the 7 points classic format over five games but reverted to the traditional scoring system within a few months as the players and spectators were both unhappy with the scoring system.

The current 3x21 rally-point system came into existence in 2006 and though many players were initially critical of the format, they slowly but surely have warmed up to the format.

THOMAS / UBER CUP REVAMP?

Apart from the scoring system, the Events Committee would also discuss the proposal to change the Thomas and Uber Cup format from five matches to three.

Currently the Tournament format includes three Singles and two Doubles rubbers and the matches normally drag to over five hours. According to the new proposal, a tie would be reduced to two Singles and one Doubles. If ratified by the Council, this will be the third change in the Thomas and Uber Cup format since the start of the tournament.

Thomas Cup was first played in 1948-49, while Uber Cup was introduced in 1956-57. The initial format for the Tournament was a best-of-nine affair till 1982 with both the events played separately. The BWF began holding the events together since 1984 and the matches were reduced to five.

NOT THAT EASY

The proposed change is however expected to be debated extensively as some Asian Countries feel that the new changes were aimed at reducing the gap between the European Countries and the traditional powerhouses in Asia.

In the current format, the Teams with a strong squad strength have an obvious advantage and that explains why only three Nations - Malaysia, Indonesia and China - have managed to lift the Thomas Cup while China, Indonesia, Japan, USA and Korea are the only countries to lay their hands on the Uber Cup.

PROPOSED SYSTEM

The BWF Events working group is to propose three alternative systems during the BWF Events Committee meeting later this month. The proposed systems are:

- * Maintaining the 21 point system for the first two games and reducing the third game to 11 points.**
- * Reducing the length of the game to 15 points.**
- * Reducing the length of the game to 9points and increasing the number of games to 5.**

PAST AND THE PRESENT

The classical scoring system in which point could only be earned on serve was the primary scoring system followed till 2002. In that system, the Men's matches were a race to 15 while Women played 11 point games.

In 2002, BWF experimented with a seven point system and increased the number of games from 3 to 5 but the system was discarded within months and they returned to the classical system.

In 2006, BWF introduced the rally point system with both Men and Women playing 21 points games in a best of three encounter. This system is still being followed.
