

# Badminton League manage to attract viewers

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Cricket might still be the king of games, drawing millions of Indians. But if Broadcasters' advertising revenues and viewership numbers are any indication, other sporting events — especially Badminton — too, is coming of age in the country.

Company like [Vodafone](#) putting their money in this sporting event and some heavy marketing going into seem to indicate there's appetite for these sports.

The recently-concluded Indian Badminton League ([IBL](#)) was able to attract as many as 21.7 million viewers on Star Sports during the 18-day tournament (August 14 to 31).

The figures for the Badminton league seem to look even more attractive if one takes into account the average number of viewers per day. The Badminton League clocked an average 1.2 million viewership. In comparison, the average viewership of IPL-6 was 3.5 million per day.

In terms of the Broadcasters , according to analysts, the Badminton League saw around Rs 70 - 90 Crores of revenues rustling. That might looks quite good, given that the non-cricket league earned their advertising revenues over 18 days, while IPL was a 54-day event.

Today, one of the biggest marketing tools for reach and measurement is Facebook likes. It was 1,10,000 for IBL league. On YouTube, IBL had 5,800 subscribers.

Many factors contributed to the relative success of the league. These include Indian viewers' cricket fatigue due to over-exposure to the sport, thrust by broadcasting partners and players' popularity.

Mona Jain, CEO of VivaKi Exchange, the agency responsible for marketing and communication of the Indian Badminton League, says: "I would say it has been a very encouraging start for IBL. While there was skepticism around the tournament earlier, everyone would agree that the response from the audiences and advertisers has been very good. The ratings for the tournament, above 1.0, say it all."

A big thrust for IBL came from the popularity of players like Saina Nehwal and P V Sindhu and their appeal among the youth.

“The first year is always low in terms of revenues, as it is the time franchises and all parties involved are pumping in money. Even IPL picked up in the second year. IBL may not have made lot of money this year but, going by the response, one can say these properties will only become richer and more popular next year,” says a media planner, asking not to be named.

It is interesting to note that IBL, despite its less reach, earned higher ad revenues. “Badminton viewership is slightly more skewed towards the SEC A (Socio Economic Classification - A) audience. So, the spend on the property by brands could have been higher.

Also, ESPN Star Sports, the broadcaster for the events, should be given due credit, feel media observers. The events got a good showcase because of the broadcaster’s reach and marketing, too, was done well. In the case of IBL, VivaKi Exchange came up with an outdoor campaign featuring top-notch Badminton players. This grabbed a lot of eyeballs.

ESPN Software India COO Vijay Rajput says: “India has primarily been a single-sport country. But at STAR Sports, we believe Indian fans would love to consume other sports as well, if a product is packaged well and presented in an interesting manner. Our main aim is to broad base consumption of sports in the country. IBL fit in well with our overall strategy of building multi-sport viewership. We see huge potential for a product like IBL.”

Besides, the availability of content in both English and Hindi also helped generate interest in the league.