Roadmap to restart sports: Test all

Sports executives say testing the only solution until vaccine is found but medical experts warn mass testing not easy

MIHIR VASAVDA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

FROM IPL and football to hockey and even the Olympics, global sports executives and Sports Ministry officials say organisers should ensure that all players, support staff and the officials involved are tested for COVID-19 before mass events are restarted — and not focus only on holding matches behind closed doors.

However, medical experts say it's not easy. They foresee practical problems with mass testing, thus diminishing the chances of an early start to sporting action around the world.

With no clear timeframe available, various tournament organisers — including the BCCI that conducts IPL, cricket's biggest event — have been exploring the possibility of conducting matches in empty venues. But hockey's gameplan will depend on testing, International Hockey Federation chief executive Thierry Weil told The Indian Express.

"I am convinced that sooner than later, a vaccine will be found. And then, you can go back to normal. Until then, I am sure what will happen is, before going on a field of play, or playing again, everybody -- not only the sports side but everybody -- will have to be tested," he said.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), which has put off the Tokyo Games in June by a year, said they will follow "risk management and mitigation measures set out by the WHO for mass gatherings". Screening and testing are among the key recommendations in the WHO's guidelines.

The Sports Ministry, too, is planning to test its athletes before allowing them to enter Sports Authority of India (SAI) centres after the lockdown is lifted.

But medical experts feel that, even without fans, the idea of mass testing may not be practical during tournaments, where at least 200 people will be present, including players, coaching staff, match officials, medical personnel and the media. "The testing process at the moment takes around five to seven days. Two tests are conducted during this period and only when both are negative, we can conclude that the person is not infected," says Dr Damanjit Chadha, an internal medicine specialist. "During this duration, they should be totally isolated. So the idea to test everyone is very theoretical."

Dr Yash Gulati, a consultant orthopedic surgeon at Apollo Hospital added: "Mass testing is a secondary option... It is a stupid idea to even start any sporting event the way things are right now. Once things settle down, once other activities are started, then maybe we can do that."

The BCCI is considering to host IPL behind closed doors. However, sports executives feel that alone might not be enough and, till a vaccine is found, organisers will have to test players and other staff for coronavirus when sport resumes. *File*

The Sports Ministry is planning to test its athletes before allowing them to enter Sports Authority of India (SAI) centres after the lockdown is lifted

According to Sports Ministry officials, one of the options is to set up isolation wards at major SAI centres, where training camps have been suspended. "At major centres, for example, when athletes come to train, they will first have to be tested for the virus, irrespective of where they are coming from. If two consecutive tests come negative (as per Health Ministry protocols), they can enter the centre. If there is a positive test, the athlete will be placed under quarantine in the isolation ward. This is one of the ideas," the official said.

"We might have to start with a few centres where we have isolation facilities. At places where we have limited accommodation, we might hire adjacent premises," the official said.

Mitigation measure

Most national federations say they will follow the guidelines laid out by world governing bodies. The IOC, in an emailed statement, said: "We will follow the risk management and mitigation measures set out by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for mass gatherings in the context of the current COVID-19 outbreak."

The five-page guideline, issued on March 19, details the steps that need to be taken, with focus on surveillance and testing. "We are committed to following this principle in the future," the IOC said.

As the coronavirus began spreading across the word over the last two months, organisers had floated the idea of resuming games without fans. Recently, Aleksander Ceferin, the president of UEFA -- European football's governing body -- said: "It is still better to play the game behind closed doors and have it on TV, which is what the people need and want because it brings positive energy to their homes than not playing at all."

The IPL is looking at a September-October window before the T20 World Cup. And team owners were involved in discussions with the cricket board last month to explore the idea of conducting the games minus spectators.

Rajasthan Royals co-owner Manoj Badale had told BBC: "These are unprecedented times and sport needs to be put in the right perspective overall. If the way of ensuring the cricket economy survives is by playing behind closed doors, so be it."

But world hockey CEO Weil said caution is now the need of the hour. "In my personal view, it is obvious that you need to test literally everybody to find out who was contaminated to make sure the virus doesn't spread. So before potentially playing a game, players will need to be tested just to see there is no contamination between the two teams on the field of play," he said.

In England, footballers to be tested before season resumes

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
LONDON, APRIL 11

LEAGUE MANAGERS Association chief executive Richard Bevan has said that the English season can only be restarted if all footballers are tested for coronavirus. "Tests must be made available first to National Health Service (NHS) workers and patients," Bevan told the BBC. "Once that's happened, by all means let's access it in sport."

Football has already been shelved for a month due to the virus which has killed nearly 9,000 people in Britain.

Football League chiefs believe they can finish the season in 56 days once it is safe to resume. "We're not really going to see more accurate forecasting about when we can get on the pitch until the end of April," said Bevan. He added: "In Germany, if you look at discussions about coming back in May, that's probably a direct result of some very clear thinking from their government because they're doing 50,000 tests a day. In this country we're doing 10,000 per day, although the government are targeting 100,000 each day by the end of the month. Our managers do not want to be back on the pitch unless the players have been tested."

Clubs in the Championship, League One and League Two were sent a letter by the Football League this week revealing that the governing body hope to complete the season this summer despite the on-going pandemic. But Bevan insists bosses should have been consulted.

"You're going to have to get the support of the coaches and managers. You do not do that by not talking to them," Bevan said. "You're going to have to get the goodwill of the players because you're going to have at least three weeks of training to get back on the pitch at least. The most important thing guiding every principle is health, and getting back on the pitch without ensuring fully-fit players is a very big call to make."

Tests must be made available first to National Health Service (NHS) workers and patients. Once that's happened, by all means let's access it in sport."

RICHARD BEVANS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
LEAGUE MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

'Should not even think to start... relapse reported'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

SIMPLY PUT

Can sporting events begin even after three or four months?

Dr Damanjit Chadha, an internal medicine specialist at Fortis, believes 'right now, it should not even be thought of.'

"We are getting daily reports of re-infections in Wuhan, and even in Korea. There were reports that the situation was totally clear there but two days ago, patients started showing symptoms again and tested positive again. They say that it may be a relapse. Maybe in the next six weeks, we will be much wiser about how things are going to unfold."

Till then, according to Dr Yash Gulati, a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Apollo Hospital, it is 'impossible' to hold an event. "It is a stupid idea to even start any sporting event the way things are right now, with or without spectators. Maybe, once things settle down, once other activities are started."

Is testing all players, support staff and organisers – making it roughly 200 people – at a venue practical?

Dr Gulati says sparing 200-odd testing kits 'should not be an issue' if events start three-four months from now. However, there could be logistical challenges. "Two tests are conducted in a span of five-to-seven days and only when both are negative, can we conclude that the person is not infected," Dr Chadha says. "During this duration, they should be totally isolated. So, the idea to test everyone is very theoretical." He, however, says antibody tests, which give results in a shorter time, can be an alternative.

What if someone tests positive?

A sports ministry official said they are considering having isolation wards at major Sports Authority of India centres in case such a scenario takes place at one of their facilities. There is no clarity yet on what happens if someone will test positive before a tournament or a match.

BRIDGE

Dealer East, nil vulnerable.

NORTH	SOUTH
♠K852	♠AQ
❤53	❤AJ6
♦A86432	♦KQ
♣8	♣KQ9643

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♣	1NT	
Pass	1♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads the H7 to the H3 and East's HQ. How do you plan the play?

THE WEST HAND: ♠107 ❤K10872 ♦J7 ♣J1052
THE EAST HAND: ♠J9643 ❤Q94 ♦1095 ♣A7

Looking at top tricks, we have three in spades, three in diamonds and the HA and we can set up one more in clubs by knocking out the ace; but that is only eight tricks. Playing on clubs is unlikely to be successful; two tricks in the suit will have to be lost and, by that time, the defenders may well have set up three heart tricks to complete five. It looks as though the whole diamond suit will be needed. That implies a 3-2 split but even then, we still have to reach the board to cash the long cards.

The only entry outside diamonds is the AK, which means that we shall have to sacrifice one of our top spade tricks by over taking our own SQ. Recounting our tricks in that light, we have six diamond tricks (given a friendly 3-2 break), two spades and the HA to total nine and we may have time to knock out the CA for an overtrick.

Our plan is to cash the two diamond honours in hand, then over take SQ with the SK and cash the DA and the remainder of the suit, finishing with the SA.

From the point of view of the contract, it does not matter whether we win the first heart or hold it up. But you should have realised that if we decided to hold it up, and East cunningly shifts to a spade (attempting to attack our entry) we must win this with the SA, keeping our AQ intact for when it is needed. Satisfy yourself that, if we put on the SQ, we cannot make the contract.

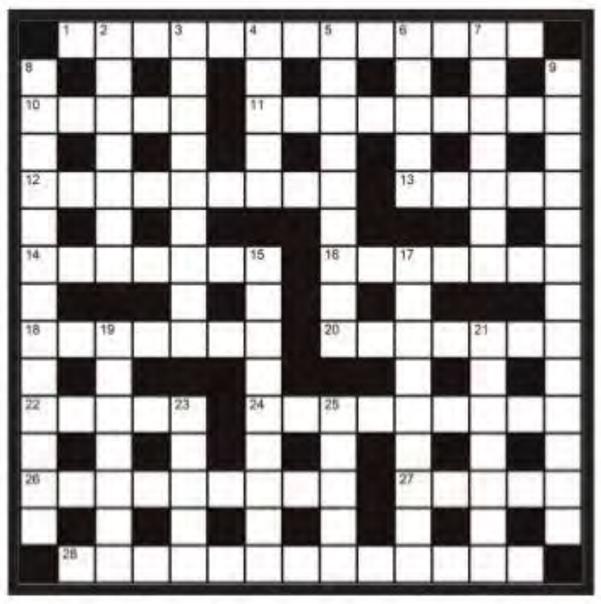
Dealer North, EW vulnerable

NORTH	SOUTH
♠A62	♠KQJ1094
❤Q4	❤K73
♦J742	♦K65
♣AK72	♣5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣		
Pass	1♠	2♦	dbl
Pass	Pass	Pass	

You are in 4S, having missed the easy 3NT contract. West leads the DA, and (believe it or not) your play to trick one will decide the fate of the contract. What is your plan for the first trick?

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2264



QUICK CLUES
ACROSS
1. Easy to deal with (13)
10. Send or forward (5)
11. Migratory movement (9)
12. An inability to feel pain (9)
13. Slack (5)
14. Baltic land (7)
16. Understand (7)
18. Food item - "Alter TT" anagram ? (7)
20. Epicure (7)
22. Complete (5)
24. Lowest female singing voice (9)
26. Over the side of a ship (9)
27. Majnu's counterpart (5)
28. Dull; stupid (13)

DOWN
2. A mutual agreement (7)
3. Eight-sided (9)
4. Office notes (5)
5. Ruthless competition (3-3-3)
6. Lag behind (5)
7. Noxious (7)
8. Embellishment (13)
9. Global (13)
15. Sterilizing vessel (9)
17. Position on the cricket field close to the umpire (6,3)
19. Heavy napped woolen fabric (7)
21. 1000 times 1000 (7)
23. Biblical father of Rachel and Leah (5)
25. Tennis star Rafael ____ (5)

CRYPTIC CLUES
ACROSS
1. Transforming of our huge fees into sheltered accommodation (5,2,6)
10. Rubber solution ? (5)
11. Not working but attending a cad who appears poor (3,2,4)
12. Old army fare made Hector complain (5,4)
13. A cracker of a short satire (5)
14. Was it used in operating a big fiddle ? (4,3)
16. The girl, confused, hit the switch again (7)
18. I'm turning up in a family football club (2,5)
20. School where learning is acquired by a tot, maybe (7)
22. Midget monsieur of some note (5)
24. Badly upset, I'd go to show the way (5-4)
26. Refusal to debase apprenticeship (9)
27. Chieftain always going round Middle East (5)
28. Brummie is shut out of London tourist attraction (7,6)

DOWN:
2. Bunting gets a great deal of backing in a North African port (7)
3. Ring put on cross Madonna, perhaps? (3,6)
4. High-grade oxygen in a duck region (5)
5. Nonsense provided hesitantly by leading actor on minute aquatic animals (9)
6. Feast arranged for Lachesis, Clotho and Atropos (5)
7. Golly! Not working in a native plant? (7)
8. Environmental hazard resulting in a rise in mercury? (6,7)
9. Are they peripatetic basketballers? (5-8)
15. Vessel outside port perhaps (9)
17. With "green" make-up a girl's content, that's the size of it (9)
19. After half-time, I have the right fur (7)
21. Author turning on the earth-first movement? (7)
23. Paid to get books in for composition (5)
25. I operate on mule for an intestinal section (5)

Solutions to 2263

QUICK CLUES Across: 1 Dreamscape, 6 Talc, 9 Invigorate, 10 Pawn, 12 Fit as a fiddle, 15 Caelian, 16 Learned, 17 Umpteen, 19 Partner, 20 Unaccustomed, 23 Apia, 24 Abducentes, 25 Esne, 26 A great many. **Down:** 1 Drip, 2 Envy, 3 Magnificence, 4 Curtain, 5 Pitfall, 7 Abandoning, 8 Contenders, 11 Disagreement, 13 Accumulate, 14 Temptation, 18 Nosebag, 19 Profuse, 21 Etna, 22 Espy. **CRYPTIC CLUES Across:** 1 Hippodrome, 6 Snib, 9 Munificent, 10 Tara, 12 That's your lot, 15 Unaired, 16 Dubious, 17 Modicum, 19 War hero, 20 Steering gear, 23 Ida's, 24 Remarkable, 25 Nose, 26 Sub-letters. **Down:** 1 Harns, 2 Pant, 3 Off-the-record, 4 Recited, 5 Moneyed, 7 Nearly over, 8 Beauty spot, 11 Lumber-Jacket, 13 Submission, 14 Handle bars, 18 Manteau, 19 Wagtail, 21 Able, 22 Hens.

If it's your Birthday

Sunday April 12
The Sun's intriguing alignments offer you the chance of a breakthrough at work, or the opportunity to pursue a major public ambition, with all the praise that success will bring. It's all a question of getting your intuitions in top gear.

Monday April 13
You may avoid certain shocks, but then you may also miss out on a number of pleasant surprises. Set your heart on a treasured ambition. You might not succeed, but you'll make good progress.

Tuesday April 14
You'll be ready to enjoy social and romantic encounters, free from commitment or concern about the future. You need to live in the present and put the past behind you.

Wednesday April 15
Don't be too worried if someone has failed to get in touch or reply to your blandishments. It's not what other people do that matters, but how you respond.

Thursday April 16
This is no time to worry about letting someone down — it is time they took responsibility for their own affairs. They could do with your understanding.

Friday April 17
In love you'll be flexible and, when you face opposition, you'll give way gracefully. At work, however, stand up for your rights.

Saturday April 18
It stands to reason that new people could come into your life and challenge you to broaden your interests. You can follow your intuitions and find yourself in some wonderfully colourful situations.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
The right strategic moves and tactics will enable you to preserve and protect all you hold dear. You will find it easier to make financial decisions in the future, now that more information is to be released.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
You know very well what must be done. Now that Mercury, planet of communication, has turned from an opponent into an ally, you will be far better able to make yourself understood and persuade other people that you are right.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
You will be happier than before to let partners know about certain of your personal plans. Drop your guard and allow people to charm you. Now is the time to trust that friends have your best interests at heart.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
If someone has got the better of you in a business matter, there is no need to worry. Not only are your financial prospects looking up but you are now entering the initial phases of a new cycle of hope and optimism. Jupiter, the most beneficial of planets, is about to work its magic again.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
The current relationship between Jupiter and Mars impacts on that part of your chart associated with health and work. Could it be that you have been pushing yourself too hard lately? Or that you are beginning to feel worn out? Is it time to shed a number of commitments? I think it is.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
One important factor stopping you from making the most of yourself has been a deep fear of taking risks, perhaps a feeling rooted back in the distant past. However, you should by now have overcome such inhibitions and be ready to face the future with renewed optimism.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Venus continues its challenge to your sign, urging you to take greater notice of partners' needs and wants plus, of course, family members' real desires. There is a great deal of affection coming your way. All you must do is open yourself up to the love and good feeling which other people have for you.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
It's a strange old week, to be sure. It will take a good deal of courage to swallow your pride and admit that you should change your plans. On the other hand, if you really must continue with your current proposals be certain that close partners are reassured and reconciled.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)
Your fine words and elegant phrases are pouring oil on troubled waters. You have exactly the right touch, especially for getting people at work to buck their ideas up. You may have to knock heads together if that is what it takes. Venus brings excellent romantic developments.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
A series of extraordinary events will make the next week somewhat more lively than anticipated. If you are in tune with the mood of the moment you will get both the best out of opportunities and find the most appropriate solution to every problem. It's not a question of right and wrong, but of what works best.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
It's time to show your serious face, in the knowledge that if you are careful now you'll be in a much better position to take advantage of various bizarre events that are due to happen very soon.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Most Pisceans pride themselves on being sensitive, compassionate and easy to get on with. Mars is making you feel rather tough and unwilling to compromise but, instead of rubbing people up the wrong way, why don't you take the lead in some new charitable enterprise: selfless behaviour will make you feel good.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

____like___are divided into incisors and grinders. - Walter Bagehot (7,.,5)

PWEEE
AERTTT
AFIRR
ILTHSW

SOLUTION:PEWEE, FRIAR, TATTER, WHILST
Answer: **Writers** like **teeth** are divided into incisors and grinders. - Walter Bagehot

SUDOKU 4177

Difficulty Level 5s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

9	2	1		6			4	
			5					
		6		9			3	2
		7					5	
	4						2	
	1					4		
2	3			4		8		
					1			
	7			5		3	9	6

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4176

8	6	5	1	2	7	9	3	4
9	4	1	5	3	6	2	8	7
7	3	2	8	4	9	6	1	5
1	2	6	4	8	5	3	7	9
3	9	8	6	7	2	5	4	1
4	5	7	3	9	1	8	6	2
6	7	3	2	5	4	1	9	8
2	8	9	7	1	3	4	5	6
5	1	4	9	6	8	7	2	3

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