



## **FLIGHTS**

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MBA Class of 2010

### **IML... IIT MBA LEAGUE**

It was a chilly, early February, evening. They came dressed formally in suites...And sat on the chairs. They were the organizers and owners. The rest squatted on the floor...Waiting for their name to be called out. And then...the people on the floor were sold...They were enslaved...The highest bidder took them all. But wait...Everyone seemed to be enjoying the process....this was something different...A legend was being born. The IIT MBA League (IML). It was an evening to remember and cherish.

Conceptualised on the lines of the now famous IPL, IML aims to makes the batch more interactive through sport. IML hopes to foster a culture of cooperation and increase team spirit in the batch. It recognizes the need to stay physically fit in addition to doing well in academics. Also, IML will improve the sporting skills of the MBA students.

Late in the month of January, a few boys were having tea at the hostel canteen. Their topic of discussion was a recent disaster in SPORNADO-09, an inter IIT MBA sports meet. They had a common belief that some thing needs to be done; things need to change.

The MBA program at IIT Kanpur is gaining increasing recognition and its position in the national B-School rankings is shooting up with its strong focus on industry and high quality education. With stiff deadlines to meet at classes and state of the art infrastructure, the life at MBA, IIT Kanpur revolves essentially between classes, discussion rooms and hostel rooms, with majority of the students surfing net/ LAN or reading in their leisure time.

Coming back to those guys; sitting in the canteen. The initial thoughts were to organise competition of popular events like Table Tennis and badminton. The issue was how to ensure mass participation?

The discussion went for over two hours. Finally, someone (no one remembers now, who) suggested, why not have a league for all the MBA students like IPL or EPL? The agreed to include 7 popular sports in the league like cricket, Table Tennis, Lawn Tennis, football and basketball. It took some

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*AVANT GARDE, Monthly e-Newsletter by MBA, IIT Kanpur*

time for the idea to sink in. Very soon plans were charted out and it looked something interesting was going to happen very soon.

The primary concern still was: "Will it be big enough to pull people out of their rooms?" An advertising and marketing strategy for this event was planned. It was decided to keep this idea a secret. The event was built up by circulating teasers. These teasers were floated from mail ids of students who were not very active in co-curricular, thus, pulling them into the group even when they had no clue of what was it. The idea was held so close to the chest that till the third teaser came out people didn't have any clue that this was a sporting event, still most of the batch was excited about it and was waiting to find out what it is.

The advertising strategy was a sure-shot hit. The marketing team roped in a major sponsor for the event. So even before the official launch of IML, it was a brand with some sponsors supporting the event. On the 4th of February 2009, IML had its official launch party.

Now, for formation of team, concept of English Auction was used, 12 sportsmen from the batch were handpicked and were made owners of 4 competing teams, they did the bidding for the rest of the players pool. They owners held long close door meetings to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each player in the pool; they tried every thing, from Linear Programming to interviewing players for their talents. The amount of commitment can be observed from the fact that one team had planned for the bidding for full three days with detailed analysis of each and every player available. Each team looked to get the best players for the lowest amount. As the bidding progressed, economic concepts like Winner's curse and inflation were in action.

How are students viewing IML with the amount of course work already present? The first few matches of IML have seen participation by almost all of the students. Students can be seen practising whenever they find some free time. Team strategies have replaced movies as the topics of discussion in the canteen and mess. People are taking the games seriously. Worth mentioning here is the following anecdote:

A cricket match was scheduled for Monday the 17th of February at 2.30 PM. And that morning our Finance Sir announced that he would be taking a quiz the next morning on the entire syllabus covered till date. That was about a month and a half of core financial concepts. Immediately following the class, a meeting was held between the organizers and the team owners to discuss how to handle this contingency. It was decided that the match would go on. The match was a close encounter with the winner being decided in the last over. And one person who took five wickets was also among the top scorers the next day!

IML is definitely a challenge. Scheduling the games in between many presentations, submissions and deadlines is proving to be a tough ask. None of the teams would like to be at a disadvantage. The schedule needs to ensure that all students can contribute both on the field as well as off it, in terms of cheering the teams. It will be interesting to see the slotting of matches as the exams approach closer.

IML was launched within one week of the conception of the idea. It is too early to predict the future of IML. But if one goes by the current trends one can safely predict that the venture will be one that will be spoken of, in times to come.

"Sport is 90% mental and the rest physical" goes a famous quote. That would hold true in the traditional sense. But for IML; I won't be exaggerating if I say it is 99% mental and just 1% physical. And along with sports IML includes major management concepts right from team selection, to team

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management, handling transfers season. Teams are even having HR policies, incentive schemes in place and they also perform CAR (Causal Analysis and Resolution) meetings after each game.

I wish IML all the very best and success in the time to come.

Praveen

Organizer IML

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