



How is the UAE Using Science to Make Cricket Safe?

After being chosen as the host venue for the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket season, the UAE is ensuring that all precautions are being taken to make the competition as safe as possible. The 60-game tournament was moved from Mumbai to the Middle East after the number of daily coronavirus cases in India continued to climb throughout the summer, so Emirati authorities will be eager to demonstrate how their scientific approach to the virus is paying off.

As well as requiring all players to return three separate negative COVID tests over a six-day period and isolate for the duration, the teams are also being housed in bio-secure bubbles into which no external individuals are allowed. Each team has its own dedicated hotel environment, while journeying between venues will take place in disinfected buses. Meanwhile, the training facilities and playing surfaces themselves are treated by an anti-bacterial solution on a regular basis.

Relocating to the UAE

While many nations around the world are concerned about a [second wave of the coronavirus](#), India is yet to recover from its first – or even contain its escalating numbers. As of the beginning of September, India has the third highest confirmed cases and deaths from coronavirus (at 3.87 million and 67,669, respectively), while it is experiencing the highest tally of new daily cases (over 23,000) of anywhere in the world. Little wonder, then, that the IPL organisers looked for an alternative venue for this year's IPL.

By contrast, the UAE has suffered just over 70,000 confirmed diagnoses and less than 400 deaths, while its daily new case total is in the hundreds rather than the thousands. Its response to the pandemic has been swift, decisive and characterised by scientific common sense, meaning it has managed to swerve the most serious effects of the disease that have devastated nearby nations like Iran and Saudi Arabia. Finally, the UAE has experience in hosting IPL games, having done so in 2014.

Taking all precautions

The season is set to start on 19th September and run until 8th November, but many of the participating teams have already arrived in the country to begin their preparation. Six of the eight franchises involved are based in Dubai and the



remaining two in Abu Dhabi, with separate hotels for all. Although training facilities are shared between teams, there are rigid protocols which mean that after one outfit has finished their session, the space is subject to a vigorous deep clean that eliminates any possible trace of the virus.

All cleaning work is undertaken by professionals kitted out in full hazmat suits, while the players have no interaction with anyone who is not from their own bubble (apart from during the matches themselves). As a result, the training and playing site has been deemed an extension of the quarantine zone of the team hotel, thanks to the extensive precautions and government-level agreements that have placed science and healthcare at the forefront of all ILP preparations.