



Game, Set & Match Monthly

Gaming and Sports Law Newsletter (April 2025)

GAMING NEWS UPDATE

1. TAMIL NADU DEFENDS NIGHT BAN AND AADHAAR VERIFICATION FOR ONLINE GAMING

Facing legal challenges from real-money gaming (RMG) companies such as Play Games 24X7, the Tamil Nadu government has defended its controversial measures, including a ban on online cash games from midnight to 5 a.m. and mandatory Aadhaar verification for all players. In court, the state argued that these steps are essential to protect teenagers and vulnerable users from addiction and financial harm. The companies, however, contend that the restrictions are arbitrary and infringe on constitutional rights, setting the stage for a landmark judicial decision.

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2. CHHATTISGARH HC DEMANDS ACTION ON ILLEGAL BETTING & OPINION TRADING PLATFORMS

The Chhattisgarh High Court, in a PIL by Sunil Namdeo, has directed the state and central governments to clarify enforcement against illegal online betting platforms despite the 2022 Gambling Prohibition Act. It also questioned the skill element in opinion trading apps, deeming them games of chance. The state filed an affidavit detailing actions taken but admitted no complaints were received against some named platforms, with investigations ongoing. The Court granted three weeks for a detailed response and called for the Union Government's input, scheduling the next hearing for May 6, 2025. The case underscores regulatory gaps around opinion trading apps, which are regulated abroad but remain unregulated in India. Industry bodies and MeitY have urged the government to ban such platforms to curb "digital satta" risks and protect consumers.

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3. EPWA ARGUES ONLINE GAMING REGULATION FALLS UNDER CENTRAL JURISDICTION

The eSports Players Welfare Association (EPWA) has opposed Tamil Nadu's online gaming law in the Madras High Court, arguing that only the central government has the constitutional authority to regulate online gaming. EPWA cited the Union List's provisions on communication and online activities, warning that state-level laws could

create a patchwork of conflicting regulations and hinder the industry's growth.

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4. KARNATAKA INITIATES STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS ON NEW ONLINE GAMING POLICY

Karnataka has set up a committee to draft a comprehensive online gaming policy. The state government is actively consulting with industry leaders, legal experts, and civil society to create a framework that balances consumer protection, responsible gaming, and industry development. The policy aims to address concerns over illegal betting, player safety, and the distinction between games of skill and chance.

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5. GOA LAUNCHES CRACKDOWN ON HOUSIE GAMES AMID GAMBLING CONCERNS

Authorities in South Goa have begun a crackdown on commercial housie (tombola) events, citing violations of the Goa Public Gambling Act. The move follows concerns that such games, often organized by clubs and associations, are increasingly commercialized and resemble gambling. Goa's Chief Minister has defended the ban, even as the local football association and other groups call for a rethink, arguing that non-commercial, recreational games should be exempt.

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6. MAHARASHTRA TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS ON ONLINE GAMING LEGISLATION

The Maharashtra government is preparing to introduce legislation to regulate online real-money gaming. Officials are engaging with stakeholders to draft a licensing framework that would protect users, curb illegal offshore betting, and ensure fair play. The move is seen as an effort to bring much-needed clarity to the state's booming but largely unregulated online gaming sector.

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7. RAJKOT POLICE ARREST SEVEN MORE INFLUENCERS FOR PROMOTING ONLINE GAMBLING

In a widening crackdown on illegal online gambling, Rajkot police have arrested seven additional social media influencers. Investigations revealed these individuals promoted gambling platforms to their combined audience of over 2.8 million followers, earning commissions for each new user referred. Police warn that further arrests may follow as they continue to monitor digital promotions.

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8. DELHI HC DIRECTS WINZO TO DEPOSIT ₹30 LAKH IN CREATIVELAND IP DISPUTE

The Delhi High Court has ordered WinZO Games to deposit ₹30 lakh with the arbitral tribunal within three weeks, pending the outcome of an intellectual property dispute with Creativeland Advertising. The case centres on allegations that WinZO misused a campaign tagline developed by Creativeland, with the court seeking to secure potential damages while arbitration proceeds.

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9. KARNATAKA TO LAUNCH INDIA'S FIRST WHITELIST FOR REAL MONEY GAMING PLATFORMS

Karnataka is set to introduce India's first official whitelist of licensed real-money gaming platforms. The initiative, part of the state's upcoming regulatory framework, aims to help players distinguish between legal, skill-based gaming operators and illegal gambling sites. The whitelist will be publicly accessible and updated regularly.

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10. HARYANA'S NEW GAMBLING LAW TO OUTLAW OPINION TRADING PLATFORMS

Haryana's proposed gambling legislation the Prevention of Public Gambling Bill, 2025, passed during the budget session in the state's Vidhan Sabha, has cast doubts on the operations of opinion trading platforms in India. The move comes amid growing concerns about the proliferation of such platforms and their impact on consumers, especially minors.

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11. SEBI WARNS INVESTORS AGAINST UNREGULATED OPINION TRADING PLATFORMS

India's Securities and Exchange Board (SEBI) has issued a public advisory warning investors about the dangers of unregulated opinion trading platforms. SEBI emphasized that these platforms operate outside the legal financial system and pose significant risks to users' funds and data privacy.

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12. PIL FILED IN PUNJAB & HARYANA HC AGAINST CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS OF BETTING APPS

A Public Interest Litigation has been filed in the Punjab & Haryana High Court seeking action against celebrities and the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) for endorsing illegal betting apps. The PIL calls for stricter enforcement and clearer guidelines to curb misleading celebrity promotions of gambling platforms. The petition states that ASCI, the industry self-regulatory body, is failing to act against misleading advertisements. The petitioner argues that ASCI has not fulfilled its mandate, by allowing celebrity endorsements that glamorize and legitimize these illegal platforms. The petitioner has urged the court to direct ASCI to initiate legal proceedings against the celebrity endorsers and to enforce its code of advertising more stringently. The petition also calls on the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to block access to these websites and coordinate with enforcement agencies to investigate money laundering, data privacy breaches, and the misuse of Aadhaar and mobile data.

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13. DREAM SPORTS INC. COMPLETES REVERSE FLIP TO INDIA

Dream Sports Inc., the parent entity of fantasy sports platform Dream11, has successfully redomiciled from Delaware, USA, to India via a reverse merger with its Indian wholly owned subsidiary, Sporta Technologies Private Limited. The reverse merger marks one of the first instances of adoption of the fast-track merger route introduced by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs in September 2024, enabling foreign entities to merge into their Indian subsidiaries without requiring prior approval from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). The move aligns with the government's broader push to attract Indian startups to rebase domestically.

Access the confirmation order of the scheme [here](#).

14. KERALA HIGH COURT RULES SERVICE TAX NOT APPLICABLE ON LOTTERY TICKET SALES

In *C.N. Mithran v. Union of India* (WP(C) No. 11406 of 2018), the Kerala High Court held on April 10, 2025, that lottery-ticket sales do not come within the purview of auxiliary service or taxable service under the Finance Act, 1994 and are not “taxable services”. The Kerala HC relied

on the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Union of India v. Future Gaming Solutions Pvt. Ltd.*, which held that the sale of lottery tickets constitutes a principal-to-principal relationship and not of principal-agent between the State Government and purchaser of the lottery tickets, and there being no agency and no service rendered, service tax is not leviable on such transactions.

Access the judgement [here](#).

SPORTS NEWS UPDATE

1. CAS HALTS AIFF FROM DECLARING I-LEAGUE CHAMPION AMID INTER KASHI APPEAL

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has intervened in the 2024–25 I-League title race, ordering the All India Football Federation (AIFF) not to declare Churchill Brothers as champions or hold a medal ceremony until ongoing arbitration is resolved. The move comes after Inter Kashi filed an appeal, contesting Churchill Brothers’ title win following a dispute over an allegedly ineligible player fielded by Namdhari FC in a match against Inter Kashi.

Churchill Brothers finished the season atop the table with 40 points, narrowly edging Inter Kashi’s 39. However, Inter Kashi challenged the final standings, arguing that Namdhari’s use of an ineligible player unfairly impacted their points tally. The AIFF Appeals Committee ruled in Churchill Brothers’ favour on April 18, 2025, prompting Inter Kashi to escalate the matter to CAS.

In granting provisional measures, CAS has stayed the AIFF’s decision and instructed the federation not to make any official declaration or conduct any celebratory event until the arbitration concludes. CAS has also given AIFF, Churchill Brothers, and Namdhari FC until April 29, 2025 to submit full responses to Inter Kashi’s claims.

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2. DELHI HC REJECTS RCB’S PLEA AGAINST UBER’S ‘DISPARAGING’ YOUTUBE AD

Royal Challengers Sports Private Limited, the owner of the Indian Premier League franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), filed a suit in the Delhi High Court against Uber India Systems Pvt Ltd claiming that Uber

Moto’s YouTube advertisement titled “Baddies in Bengaluru ft. Travis Head” disparages RCB’s trademark.

Describing the video advertisement, RCB counsel said the cricketer, Travis Head, could be seen running towards Bengaluru cricket stadium with an aim to vandalise the signage of “Bengaluru Vs Hyderabad”, takes a spray paint and writes “Royally Challenged” before Bengaluru making it “Royally Challenged Bengaluru” which disparages RCB’s mark. The counsel representing Uber said RCB had “severely discounted” the sense of humour of the public at large. The general messaging of the advertisement, the counsel said, was that there was a match between RCB and Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Bengaluru cricket stadium on May 13, 2025, and since it was a city known for notorious traffic jams, “public must use uber moto”.

Justice Saurabh Banerjee turned down the request, stating that the advertisement, being rooted in the context of cricket, did not require judicial interference at this point. The Court noted that since cricket is a sport known for its spirit of fair play, the nature of the ad did not seem harmful enough to merit any legal restraint.

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3. MAJORITY OF STATE UNITS DEMAND IMMEDIATE BFI ELECTIONS AS LEGAL DEADLOCK DRAGS ON

A fresh wave of dissent has emerged within the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) as 27 out of its 37 affiliated units have called for urgent elections, days after World Boxing installed an interim committee to manage BFI’s affairs under outgoing president Ajay Singh. The federation’s elected body, led by Singh and Secretary General Hemanta Kalita, completed its term on February 02, 2025

but elections have remained in limbo due to ongoing legal challenges.

Returning Officer RK Gauba had halted the March 28, 2025 elections after the Delhi and Himachal Pradesh High Courts intervened, ordering inclusion of names excluded from the electoral college, including former Sports Minister Anurag Thakur. The High Court of Himachal Pradesh further mandated a new election schedule before April 28, 2025, the next hearing date.

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4. MOTORSPORT UK VS FIA: DISPUTE OVER STRICTER CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS

David Richards, Chair of Motorsport UK, has criticized FIA President Mohammed Ben Sulayem over the introduction of a stricter non-disclosure agreement (NDA) for World Motor Sport Council (WMSC) meetings, describing it as a “gagging order”. Richards and FIA Deputy Director for Sport, Robert Reid, were barred from attending a WMSC meeting after refusing to sign the new NDA, which reportedly forbade discussions outside official settings.

In letters to Motorsport UK members, Richards accused the FIA leadership of failing to deliver on promises, reducing transparency, and concentrating power within the President’s office. The FIA defended the stricter confidentiality measures, arguing they are standard practice to protect information and foster the growth of motorsport globally, and emphasized organizational achievements under Ben Sulayem’s leadership, including financial recovery, sustainability initiatives, diversity efforts, and broader participation. Richards, however, maintained that the new NDA lacked clear processes for breach evaluation and dispute resolution, calling the exclusion from the WMSC meeting unlawful under French law. While acknowledging the FIA’s broader accomplishments, Richards insisted that concerns over governance and transparency must be addressed, expressing hope for a face-to-face meeting with the FIA President to resolve the matter.

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5. PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS FACE FINANCIAL RISK FROM MANCHESTER CITY TRIAL OUTCOME

Premier League clubs could face significant financial consequences depending on the outcome of Manchester

City’s ongoing legal battle over 130 alleged financial fair play breaches. City, who went on trial in September 2024, have reportedly spent over £30 million in legal fees, with no verdict timeline yet in sight. If City are found not guilty, the Premier League’s rules stipulate that the combined legal costs, estimated at around £100 million, would be deducted from the league’s broadcast and commercial revenue pool, meaning each club could lose at least £5 million. This could severely impact merit payments, particularly for clubs finishing in the relegation zone, and complicate Profit and Sustainability compliance ahead of next season. Conversely, if City are found guilty, a separate hearing would determine appropriate sanctions. This legal saga has contributed heavily to the Premier League’s surging administrative costs, which reached £200.2 million last season, with legal expenses driven by conflicts involving multiple clubs, including City, Everton, Nottingham Forest, and Leicester.

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6. JACK NICKLAUS WINS NAME RIGHTS BATTLE AGAINST NICKLAUS COMPANIES

In the ongoing legal battle between Jack Nicklaus and his former company, Nicklaus Companies, a Manhattan judge has ruled in favour of the golf legend, affirming his right to use his own name, image, and likeness for business ventures such as golf course design. The dispute stemmed from a 2007 deal in which businessman Howard Milstein invested \$145 million in Nicklaus’ company, leading to tensions and Nicklaus’ eventual departure in 2022. The Nicklaus Companies sued to prevent him from independently using his name for business, but the court dismissed the case, allowing Nicklaus to continue promoting his services personally. However, the Nicklaus Companies retains ownership of trademarks like “Jack Nicklaus”, “Nicklaus”, and “Golden Bear”, and can still sell merchandise and design courses under those brands without Nicklaus’ involvement.

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7. ICC DELAYS TWO-TIER TEST CRICKET PLAN AMID BROADER WTC REFORMS

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has decided to delay plans to split Test cricket into two divisions, with the next World Test Championship (WTC) cycle, starting this summer, set to continue in its current nine-team, single-league format. While Cricket Australia had pushed for a two-division structure, citing financial and

competitive benefits for the ‘big three’ (Australia, England, and India), the proposal will not be put to a vote at the upcoming ICC meetings in Zimbabwe. Concerns from other Test nations about financial redistribution and promotion-relegation logistics prompted the ICC to seek more time for review, though the idea could resurface for the 2027–2029 cycle.

In the meantime, significant changes to the WTC points system are under discussion, including introducing bonus points for margins of victory, weighting wins by the strength of opponents, and rewarding away victories. Over-rate penalties, which have caused widespread frustration, particularly for England, who lost significant points due to slow play, are also being reviewed, with potential reforms including the introduction of a stop-clock to speed up over rates. Despite draws becoming increasingly rare in Test cricket, over rates remain historically low, influenced by tactical reasons in seam-friendly conditions. The upcoming WTC cycle could thus see trial implementations of these reforms, aiming to modernize the format while addressing concerns from players, fans, and administrators alike.

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8. **IOC APPROVES RECORD 351 MEDAL EVENTS FOR THE 2028 LOS ANGELES OLYMPICS, EMPHASIZING GENDER EQUALITY AND MODERNIZATION**

The 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games will see a record 351 medal events, following the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) approval of an expanded program aimed at modernizing the Olympics and enhancing gender equality. Among the additions are sprint-distance swimming races, the 50m backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly for both men and women as well as a mixed 4x100m track relay and a mixed-team artistic gymnastics

competition. Six new mixed-gender events have been introduced across sports like golf, rowing, table tennis, and archery. Swimming will take place at SoFi Stadium, creating the largest natatorium in Olympic history, while gymnastics will be hosted at the Crypto.com Arena.

LA28 will also mark a historic milestone as female athlete quotas (5,655) will surpass male quotas (5,543) for the first time, with full gender parity achieved across team sports, boxing, and expanded formats in 3x3 basketball. LA28 will also feature the return or debut of baseball/softball, cricket, flag football, lacrosse, and squash, adding nearly 700 athlete spots. The Games preparations are also historic, as Kirsty Coventry, IOC president-elect and former Olympic champion, co-chaired the meeting that finalized the program, ahead of her formal takeover as the first woman to lead the IOC.

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9. **US SOCCER AND RELEVANT SPORTS REACH SETTLEMENT IN THE ANTITRUST CHALLENGE IN THE US**

On 9 April 2025, Relevant Sports filed to dismiss its 2019 antitrust suit before a US federal court, against the United States Soccer Federation, marking a possible end to the restrictions on staging regular season games of European domestic leagues in the US. The complaint alleged that U.S. Soccer and FIFA violated the Sherman Act by blocking a 2018 La Liga match in Miami under FIFA’s home-territory restrictions. FIFA appointed a working group in 2024 to review its regulations governing international matches, a move supported by Relevant Sports.

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