

Broadcasters bet big on cricket advertisement spends

The Financial Express

Cricket is likely to rule television from September 2009 to March 2010. As per industry sources, the advertisement spot rates for Champions Trophy and Champions League on ESPN are pegged at around Rs 2 lakh and Rs 3 lakh, respectively. Sources reveal that Airtel and ESPN have signed a five-year deal worth Rs 170 crore for the Champions League T20.

Media buyers are betting high on ad revenues that broadcasters are expected to generate during the cricket season. Some of the upcoming cricket events include the India-Sri Lanka-New Zealand tri-series, Champions Trophy, Champions League T20 and the India-Australia and India-Sri Lanka ODI series. Broadcasters are likely to fetch around Rs 650-700 crore from advertisers.

According to Navin Khemka, SVP, Zenith Optimedia, "The series between India, Sri Lanka and NZ is expected to be extremely popular. The ad spot during the cricket season are likely to cost between Rs 2 lakh and Rs 3 lakh per ten seconds. Most brands in categories like FMCG, telecom and consumer durables are likely to increase their ad spend by 30% during this period."

Neo Sports Broadcast Pvt Ltd, which will telecast the ODIs, is charging around Rs 5 lakh per ten seconds from advertisers. Abhishek Verma, head marketing, Neo Sports Broadcast, said: "Next six months will be a very strong period for the sports channels. With the various cricket series lined up, we hope to see a growth of 100%. Brands like two-wheelers and financial services will have the highest advertising spend during this time."

Matches that feature India are expected to be big in terms of ratings as well as ad revenue. Verma said, "As per the last year's data, ratings for the India matches were as high as nine. Advertisers will have to shell out more money for the matches that will be played by India. These matches will prove fruitful for broadcasters in terms of ad revenue."

According to Television Audience Measurement (TAM), earlier this year, the T20 World Cup 2009 fetched a rating of 2.7 for Star Cricket. The ODI series between India and NZ on MAX garnered an average rating of 3.2, whereas India vs Sri Lanka on Neo Cricket got an average rating of 3.1.

While the Indian audience was devoid of the cricket fever in the first half of 2009 due to the IPL going overseas, advertisers are expected to divert a large sum of money for television and on-ground cricket promotions. Mahesh Ranka, general manager, India Relay Worldwide, Starcom MediaVest Group, said: "With the festive season colliding with the cricket events, advertisers in the categories like telecom, automobiles and sports apparel will feel the push of increasing their ad spends."

Sanjay Kailash, EVP-ad sales and digital media, ESPN Software India Pvt Ltd, said: "The ICC Champions Trophy will see a huge traction with advertisers as the tournament will see world's

top eight cricket playing nations fight it out for the coveted title in the ODI format. For the Champions League T20, Airtel has just come on board as the title sponsor for five years."...