

Non-cricket sports on a roll

Non-cricket sports have a strong following amongst premium audiences.

NEO Cricket has continued its dominance over all other sports channels and has maintained its leadership position once again for the year 2009. We are proud that as a new entrant in the sports category, our channel has achieved this position two years in a row due to our strong commitment to quality sports offering.

The sports broadcasting industry in India has been on a strong growth trajectory. The total advertising pie for sports is estimated at around Rs 1,400 crore in financial year 2009-10 and is expected to maintain a strong growth trajectory in the next year as well.

Cricket still dominates the landscape almost completely though other sports are showing healthy growth trends, albeit on a low base. We believe that cricket viewership in India is driven by three core audience groups — the analytical serious cricket viewer; the India only viewer and the fringe viewer. It is imperative that any sports channel has to appeal to and meet the varied expectations of all these groups in order to achieve success. We have been seeking to meet these expectations through a combination of innovative cricket-centric programming, active viewer involvement through interactivity, attractive packaging and promotions and insightful wrap-around programming in addition to extensive broadcasting of Indian cricket.

The last year also decisively proved the dominance of the international format of cricket over other formats

Aiding this trend of growth is the increasing digitalisation of cable and the growth in DTH sector in India.



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like club cricket, a trend that has been established and reinforced through record ratings and viewership for India international cricket when compared to any club format event. We have always believed in this and have reaffirmed this through our renewal of the BCCI India cricket rights for 2010 – 2014.

Apart from cricket, we are also seeing strong growth in other sports in India like golf, tennis and football although on a low-base at present. Neo Sports has recently acquired exclusive rights for US PGA Tour for six years beginning January 2010 in

addition to its showcasing of the German Bundesliga football league, the Italian Serie A football league, the ITF Davis Cup and Fed Cup tennis events and the WTA Tour women's tennis. These sports have a strong following and demand amongst premium audiences and we expect a number of advertisers targeting these segments to actively associate with these sports.

The next 12 months promise to be a big period for other sports in India with mega events like the Asian Games and Football World Cup taking place this year, in addition to India playing host to the Commonwealth Games and the Hockey World Cup. This will put focus on non cricket sports and generate advertisers' attention.

Aiding this trend of growth is the increasing digitalization of cable and the growth in DTH sector in India. There is now a potential audience for a wider variety of sports channels, unrestricted by limitations of some cable operators to deliver sports content to their consumers. All these will be major factors driving the growth of sports broadcasting. 2010 is a going to be an exciting year and we can all look forward to it. ■