

## Career in Sports Management Kicks Off in India

Increased corporate investments in commercial sports leagues have opened up new avenues

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**New Delhi:** Sarthak Dubey was working for investment firm Goldman Sachs when he decided to quit his job in 2016 and enrol for an MBA in football industry at the University of Liverpool. He finished a separate programme in level 2 of FA coaching.

After returning to India in November 2017, Dubey set up operations for Double Pass, a Belgian football consultancy agency which provides assessment and advice on optimising talent development to clubs around the world and now looking to explore the Indian market.

Another football enthusiast, VS Shreyas Balakrishnan, studied engineering and was working in a corporate job before his love for the sport got him volunteering for a football development NGO-Slum Soccer. After working with

the NGO for a couple of years, Balakrishnan enrolled into Skillanation India, a specialised programme for football management approved by the All India Football Federation (AIFF), in 2017.

After his course, the 24-year-old set up his own football academy exclusively for girls and goalkeepers in Chennai while also working as the youth team coach, marketing manager and tactical analyst for league club Chennai City FC.

In choosing a career in sports management, Dubey and Balakrishnan are still largely seen as unorthodox in an India obsessed with engineers and bankers. However, if industry experts and professionals are to be believed, the trend might soon change because of increased corporate investments in commercial sports leagues over the past five years opening an entirely new avenue for specialised sports management jobs.

"About 30% of our students are absorbed by commercial sports clubs, 40% are employed by grassroots initiatives such as academies and training programmes, and the rest generally start with their own entrepreneurial ventures in sports management. A few students also do the course just for the interest of it, and go back to whatever jobs they were working, with a title of a certified sports manager," says Shail Ka

### It's All Play

TOP INDIAN COLLEGES FOR SPORTS MANAGEMENT

IISWBM, Kolkata-Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management (PG Diploma)

IISM, Mumbai-International Institute of Sports Management (UG and PG courses)

NASM-National Academy of Sports Management (UG and PG courses)

Skillanation, Mumbai (full-time, part-time and online courses)

### JOB PROFILES A SPORTS MANAGER CAN OPT FOR:

Sports Marketing	Business Development
Sports Event Management	Relationship Management
Team Management	Training
Players' Management	Sports Media
Infrastructure Management	Media Providers
Grassroots Development Activities	



pri, dean and founder of Skillanation, which gives specialised management training in cricket, tennis and golf besides football.

Kapri says that a fresh recruit in this field generally earns between Rs 25,000-30,000 a month, whereas with 3 to 5 years of experience, salaries can reach up to ₹60,000 a month.

"Opportunities in sponsorship marketing, high-quality operation management and performance analysis in sports like cricket,

football tennis and badminton in India are what is driving this industry forward," says Kapri.

ISL club Bengaluru FC's COO Mustafa Ghoush said with an increased scale of operation, the number of hires made by the club has also gone up since the club was incepted in 2013.

"Currently, we have close to 30 staff employed through the year and beyond. While we started with a small number in 2013, we

were certain that every department needed to have dedicated personnel. At present, the club has full-fledged teams across operations, media, marketing and sponsorship, merchandise, events, BFC Soccer Schools and accounts," says Ghoush. Bengaluru FC is the ISL champion.

"Staff at the club is handpicked and we don't have a set system of recruitment. It's a bit of a mix, to be fair. Most of the staff at BFC have had prior experience with Indian football and that does make a difference" Ghoush adds.

Emergence of commercial sports leagues such as Indian Premier League (IPL), Indian Super League (ISL), Premier Badminton League (PBL) and Pro Kabaddi League has been game-changers in terms of bringing in big moolah and establishing grassroots academies for their respective sports. However, that the leagues only happen over the course of a few months hampers employment opportunities.

"The league competitions have certainly raised the demand for sports managers. However, the type of employment offered to most are still short term. It may be converted to long term if these leagues and their participants start doing yearlong activities," says Ankan Banerjee, a faculty member at IISWBM Kolkata, the first college in India to start with a sports management programme.