

Comment on Discussion Paper 2008-26

This is rather novel paper analysing a non-traditional problem using tools of modern game theory. The issue is the game of cricket and the problems that have arisen by the arrival of a new form of twenty20 competition involving club teams consisting of international players. There are three broad groups of interested parties: the players, the national cricket boards, and the outside organization introducing a new tournament. The author also considers a scenario in which the national cricket boards are themselves the organizers of the new tournament. Each of the parties has different interests, sometimes conflicting. The players may have to forgo the chance of playing for their countries by signing up for the new tournament. A three-stage is considered and the equilibria characterized.

The paper is very well written and the analysis is extremely competent. The assumptions are clearly laid out. At the end the paper attempt to predict how the game of cricket is going to evolve, based on its results. In this sense, it is difficult to say if the results conform to the reality and we do not have the reality it: the new form cricket has just started. Time will tell us if the predictions turn out to be true or not.

I have some broad questions. First of all, why did this problem surface to start with? Has the emergence of new rich in India anything to do it? Or, has it to do with something that was wrong with the existing form of cricket? Some discussions on these would be helpful.

At times, it seems that the author assumes potential criticisms and answers those criticisms. This is a matter of style. Because of this style, the approach of the paper (particularly the introduction and the description of the model) looks far too defensive to me.

The introduction attempts to distinguish cricket with other sports which also have club-nation conflicts. These discussions can be improved. For example, in soccer a lot of "friendlies" are played apart from tournaments. In soccer, one hardly finds a start player giving up playing for his/her country at the peak of his/her professional life. In the present paper, such a possibility can arise. There are certain rigidities in cricket which possibly are more important than the differences the author focuses on. For example, playing for a country in Cricket involves a continuous commitment for a few months at a time. In soccer, one can play for his/ country on a Wednesday and then play for the club on a Saturday.

To summarize, the like the paper.