

Double-header matches boost interest in women's cricket, study finds

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Double-header cricket matches—where men's and women's matches are played on the same day, at the same venue—lead to a significant increase in interest in the women's game, a [new report](#) has found, with researchers calling for further integration of the men's and women's

games through the introduction of mixed-gender cricket.

Carried out by researchers at King's College London, the study found that, compared with single-header matches—when a single women's game is scheduled for a particular day—double-header matches generated 27.4% more hits on the Wikipedia pages of female players on the day of the event, and 18.3% more when the matchday and the following two days were included in the analysis.

Google Trends data showed a more modest, but still statistically significant, impact, with double-header events leading to a 2.7% increase in searches for female players both on the day of and in the two days following the events, compared to single-header matches.

The researchers analyzed data from between 2015 and 2022 related to 122 matches and 226 players, focusing on the Australian Big Bash as a tournament with a sufficient number of both double- and single-header matches that could be compared. This resulted in nearly 10,000 observations that were included in the analysis.

The study made use of a statistical approach called "difference-in-differences analysis." In practice, this meant comparing the number of hits related to a cricketer involved in a double-header match before that match, with the number of hits related to a cricketer involved in a single-header match, and then making the same comparison on the days of the match or following it.

To conduct the analysis, the researchers built a model that controlled for the fact that some years have more double-header matches than others, and which accounted for the prior popularity of individual cricketers. For each of these models, they tested whether there was an immediate effect (on just the match day), and whether this persisted into the days after the match.

They also looked at the number of hits on women's players' Wikipedia pages to investigate the pattern of interest in them around the matches they played in the two tournaments. In each case, the results showed a "pronounced spike in interest" in women's cricket on the days when women played matches.

Recommendation: Mixed-gender cricket with 'interleaving innings'

Based on the results, the researchers argue for the further integration of men's and women's cricket by merging them into a single game.

To achieve this, the researchers suggest the men's and women's sides of two teams should alternate their innings, "with each team batting for one innings of 100 balls, while the same-gendered team fields." The team with the highest combined scores across their men's and women's teams would win the game.

As well as exposing women's cricket to new audiences, this format could support diversity in a sport in which women "remain severely under-represented," the researchers conclude.

Professor Michael Sanders, Professor of Public Policy at King's College London and the lead author of the study, said, "The coordination of women's and men's cricket matches through 'double-header' events, in which one ticket allows spectators to watch both matches, is an approach that has been suggested as a way of increasing parity of esteem and interest between women cricketers and their [male counterparts](#)—but our research is the first to investigate this empirically.

"Taken together, our results suggest that coinciding men's and women's cricket has a positive impact on interest in women's cricket—and a

bigger impact than single-header women's events alone—but that it is difficult to be sure of exactly how large the effect of this is.

"It is our hope that a revamped form of cricket could further encourage more diverse participation, while also providing more exposure to women's cricket for spectators, many of whom may continue to follow women's [cricket](#) in its own right."

More information: Build it and they will search: The impact of using double-header fixtures to boost the profile of women's cricket.

[www.kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute ... they-will-search.pdf](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute...they-will-search.pdf)

Provided by King's College London

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