



India Waives IP Filing Fees for Sports Sector

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In recent years, the intellectual property (IP) ecosystem has undergone a significant transformation, with consistent growth in trademark, copyright, design and patent filings reflecting a broader shift toward innovation-led development. Policy interventions aligned with initiatives such as “Make in India” and “Startup India” have strengthened institutional frameworks and improved access to IP protection. As a result, businesses are increasingly integrating IP into their core commercial and growth strategies, rather than treating it as a peripheral legal function.

IP in India is no longer an afterthought. It is fast becoming a cornerstone of business strategy. Rising filing trends, faster examination timelines, and a stronger policy push have reshaped how companies approach innovation and brand building. From startups to established enterprises, IP is now central to how value is created, protected, and monetised.

The Government of India has taken deliberate steps to make the intellectual property system more accessible to smaller businesses by subsidising and significantly reducing official filing fees for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Under the existing IP framework, MSMEs benefit from concessional fee structures across trademarks, patents, and designs, often paying a fraction of the fees applicable to large entities. These measures have played a key role in encouraging MSMEs to move toward formal IP protection, innovation, and brand-building, reinforcing the government’s broader push toward an innovation-driven economy.

The Government of India has announced yet another game-changing move, this time to boost IP in the sports sector. The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry of India, Mr. Piyush Goyal announced at the World Intellectual Property Day celebrations on 29 April 2026 that the government official filing fees for all intellectual property registrations related to sports - including trade marks, patents, copyrights, designs, traditional knowledge, and geographical indications, have been waived for 3 years. The waiver is applicable to individuals, athletes, start-ups, sports academics, leagues and established companies in the sports sector. The press release doesn’t specifically indicate that this waiver is only applicable to India based sports, though the intention is to promote Indian sports ecosystem. The rules and procedure under this waiver are yet to be released for further clarification.

The current filing fee schedules range from INR 500 to ₹INR 60,000 depending on the type of intellectual property and the applicant category (individual, startup, small entity, or large company). This waiver, which is effective immediately, encourages sports businesses, leagues, athletes and



other sports start-ups to innovate and approach intellectual property and monetisation positively. It promotes intellectual property creation and innovation in the sports technology, sports equipment, sports brands and leagues, and manufacturing of sports goods. Besides the official fee filing waiver, the government has also indicated to support applicants in filing and securing intellectual property rights under the existing schemes.

The scope of intellectual property in the sports sector is massive. The following aspects in the sports industry are eligible for protection under the intellectual property laws in India:

Team names, league names, athlete's personal brands, event titles, among others can be protected as trade marks. Performance equipment, wearable technology, training devices, safety gear, among others can be protected as patents. Broadcast graphics, commentary scripts, original music and videos can be protected as copyrights. Kits, trophies, merchandise styling can be protected as designs. Regional craft techniques (such as Kashmir willow bats) can hold geographical indication status.

A few examples of IP protected by large organizations in India are as follows:

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has protected the "Indian Premier League (IPL)" trade mark, the IPL logo, broadcasting rights, merchandise and sponsorships.
- Individual team names and logos of Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), Mumbai Indians (MI), Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), Chennai Super Kings (CSK).
- Event names and logos of "Indian Super League", "Pro Kabaddi League".
- Tournament and team slogans such as "KORBO LORBO JEETBO".
- Famous sports nick names, such as Mahendra Singh Dhoni has recently applied for "CAPTAIN COOL" trade mark.
- Jersey designs.
- Sports footwear patents by Nike or Puma.

This development is a positive step ahead as it has opened doors for individuals, athletes, and sports start-ups to boost brand ownership, intellectual property filings in India, structured IP portfolios and enhance monetisation opportunities with stronger valuation narratives, licensing revenue streams and better leverage in sponsorship negotiations.



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