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Published in The Financial Express

July 21, 2025

Game, set, match

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WILL THE INDIAN CREATORS' WIMBLEDON SOJOURN IMPROVE TENNIS VIEWERSHIP?



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INFLUENCERS PLAY A significant role in the purchase process of consumers in India. According to The Goat Agency's India Influencer Marketing Report 2025 in partnership with Kantar, 63% of Indian users turn to influencers for product discovery, 69% for information, and 60% for making purchasing decisions. The same report puts the influencer marketing industry in the country at ₹3,600 crore in 2024, with projected growth of 25% in 2025. Nearly all brands surveyed indicated influencer marketing was either a strategic component or a top priority within their marketing plans.

Now you see why JioHotstar enlisted a line-up of popular Indian influencers to amplify its Wimbledon 2025 campaign. Among them were Sakshi Keswani, Abhijeet Kain, Unnati Malharkar and Manav Chhabra, along with Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra.

The thing is, Wimbledon associations have been the exclusive preserve of A-list celebrities. So why this motley crew? "Tennis is still a very inspirational sport in India," says Amrita Bansal, assistant professor, Marketing, IIM. "The influencers made sure that more people know about it, there's more awareness around Wimbledon. It got a bit of an extra push from them."

Also, marketers are increasingly evaluating success through engagement rates and content quality, moving away from tradi-

tional vanity metrics. The influencers enlisted by JioHotstar have oodles of all that. Lifestyle influencer Sakshi Keswani, who goes by the moniker Being Suku among her 2.1 million Instagram followers, raked up 2,50,000 likes for one of her early posts from Wimbledon. The comments read like a roller coaster of curiosity and awe — the exact emotions any brand would like to recoup from its investments.

But a larger question is, will these creator collaborations improve tennis viewership in the country? Or will it dent that of cricket?

If one goes by the Ormax Sports Audience Report 2024, tennis doesn't even figure among the Top 10 in terms of viewership. But Wimbledon as a property is seeing growing traction. Star Sports recorded a 40% rise in consumption, while JioHotstar saw a 35% increase in 2024, according to internal analytics and BARC findings. JioStar is hoping to position Wimbledon as a key

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property for premium brands on the back of strong affinity among urban, high-income audiences. "By collaborating with popular creators they made the tournament feel more fun and relatable for younger audiences. Campaigns like these are great for growing other sports," says Charu Malhotra, co-founder & managing director, Primus Partners. Adds Rachna Bhola, vice-president, marketing, Prag India. "By blending tennis with aspirational travel, sports tourism, and storytelling, JioHotstar has transformed Wimbledon into an experience for Indian audiences."