

IPL 2026 – Complete Guide: All 10 Teams, Players, Owners & Schedule



TATA IPL 2026 · 19th Edition

IPL 2026 – THE COMPLETE GUIDE ☰

Everything you need to know about the 19th Indian Premier League season – history, all 10 teams, owners, captains, key players, auction highlights, venues, and the full schedule from 28 March to 31 May 2026.

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WHAT IS IPL? – A BRIEF HISTORY

The Indian Premier League (IPL) is the biggest, most-watched, and most lucrative Twenty20 (T20) cricket league in the world. It

was founded by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in 2007, and the first season was played in 2008. The man behind

this revolutionary idea was Lalit Modi, the then-Vice President of BCCI, who drew inspiration from franchise-based sports leagues

in the United States such as the NBA and NFL.

The idea was simple but bold – bring together the best cricket players from across the world, put them under city-based franchise

teams, and let them compete in a fast, entertaining 20-over format. The result was nothing short of a revolution in world cricket.

The inaugural IPL season in 2008 was a massive success. Rajasthan Royals, led by the

legendary Shane Warne, won the very first title. Since then, the IPL has grown into a multi-billion dollar property. It has produced some of the most memorable moments in cricket history — last-over finishes, record-breaking scores, surprise discoveries of young talent, and battles between the world's greatest players.

≡ Did You Know? The IPL brand was valued at over \$16.4 billion USD in 2023, making it one of the most valuable sports leagues in the world. A single IPL match attracts viewership in the hundreds of millions.

Over the years, the number of teams has changed. The league started with 8 teams, temporarily expanded and contracted, and now operates with a stable 10 franchises. Some teams like the Deccan Chargers and Kochi Tuskers Kerala no longer exist, while newer sides like the Lucknow Super Giants and Gujarat Titans were added in 2022. Each team represents a different city or state of India, giving every part of the country a team to support.

The IPL has also been a huge platform for young Indian cricketers. Countless players who were unknown before the IPL have gone on to represent the Indian national team. The league truly democratized Indian cricket by giving opportunities to talent from every corner of the country — not just the big cities.

The 2026 edition is the 19th season of the IPL. It is officially branded as the TATA IPL 2026, with the Tata Group serving as title sponsors for the second year running under a 5-year deal worth ₹2,500 crore. Television and digital broadcasting rights are held by JioStar (Star Sports & JioHotstar).

IPL 2026 OVERVIEW — KEY FACTS & DATES

IPL 2026 is a very special edition. The defending champions, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), are coming into this season on a high after winning their first-ever IPL title in 2025 — a historic moment for a franchise that had waited 18 long years for their maiden trophy. All 10 teams return, and the competition promises to be intense.

≡ Start: 28 March 2026

≡ Final: 31 May 2026

≡ 13 Venues

≡ 74 Total Matches

≡ 10 Teams

≡ Title Sponsor: TATA

The tournament runs from 28 March 2026 to 31 May 2026 across 13 venues in India. The schedule was announced in two phases due to State Assembly Elections in Assam, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. The opening match was played at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru between defending champions RCB and Sunrisers Hyderabad on 28 March.

The format this season has the 10 teams divided into two groups of five. Each team plays 14 league matches — twice against teams in their group and twice against two teams from the other group, and once against the remaining four from the opposition group.

The top four teams from the combined points table advance to the playoffs, which follows the classic Qualifier 1, Eliminator, Qualifier 2, and Final structure.

One notable aspect of IPL 2026 is that all 10 teams are being led by Indian captains at the

start of the season. This is a first in IPL history and reflects the BCCI's push towards ensuring local players lead their franchises.

IPL 2026 AUCTION HIGHLIGHTS

The IPL 2026 mini-auction was held on 16 December 2025 in Abu Dhabi, UAE, with each franchise given a purse of ₹125 crore to spend. A total of 173 players had been retained by the franchises before the auction. The auction witnessed some big-money moves and exciting bids.

The biggest buy of the auction was Australian all-rounder Cameron Green, who was snapped up by the Kolkata Knight Riders for ₹25.20 crore, making him the most expensive overseas player in IPL auction history. In a surprising move, KKR also bought Sri Lankan fast bowler Matheesha Pathirana for ₹18 crore.

Chennai Super Kings made bold moves by signing uncapped Indian players Kartik Sharma and Prashant Veer for ₹14.20 crore each, setting a new record for uncapped players. CSK also acquired wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson after he was traded from Rajasthan Royals — a major transfer that shook the IPL ecosystem. Liam Livingstone was initially unsold but was later picked up by Sunrisers Hyderabad for ₹13 crore.

≡ Auction Drama: Bangladeshi fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman was initially bought by KKR for ₹9.2 crore, but was later released from his contract by BCCI due to security concerns amid India-Bangladesh diplomatic tensions. This was one of the most controversial

moments of the pre-season.

Notably, several big names went unsold, including Jake Fraser-McGurk, Jonny Bairstow, Daryl Mitchell, Devon Conway, Alzarri Joseph, and Gus Atkinson. The auction reshaped every squad significantly, making the competition even more unpredictable than previous years.

FORMAT, VENUES & SCHEDULE

IPL 2026 is being played across 13 venues spread across India. Some of the most iconic cricket grounds in the country are hosting matches this year. The venues include iconic stadiums from major cities ensuring that cricket fans from all over India get a chance to watch live IPL action.

Key venues include the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium (Bengaluru), Eden Gardens (Kolkata), Wankhede Stadium (Mumbai), MA Chidambaram Stadium (Chennai), Arun Jaitley Stadium (Delhi), Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium (Hyderabad), Narendra Modi Stadium (Ahmedabad), Sawai Mansingh Stadium (Jaipur), PCA Stadium (Mohali), and Ekana Cricket Stadium (Lucknow).

The playoff format is the traditional and beloved structure: the top two teams play Qualifier 1, where the winner goes directly to the final. The third and fourth-placed teams play the Eliminator. The loser of Qualifier 1 and the winner of the Eliminator then face off in Qualifier 2, with the winner taking the second spot in the final. The Grand Final is scheduled for 31 May 2026.

≡ Where to Watch: IPL 2026 is broadcast on Star Sports (TV) and streamed live on JioHotstar (digital). Both platforms are part of the JioStar network, which holds the broadcasting rights for the 2023–2027 cycle.

1. ROYAL CHALLENGERS BENGALURU (RCB)

≡ Royal Challengers Bengaluru – The Champions

≡ Titles: 1 (2025) ≡ Captain: Rajat Patidar ≡ Home: Chinnaswamy Stadium ≡ Coach: Andy Flower ≡ Owner: Royal Challengers Sports Pvt. Ltd (New)

History: Royal Challengers Bengaluru, commonly known as RCB, are one of the original 8 franchises that participated in the first IPL season in 2008. For 18 long years, they were the most popular team in the IPL to never win the title – earning them the somewhat affectionate nickname "nearly men" of the IPL. They reached the finals three times (2009, 2011, 2016) but always fell short. That heartbreak ended in 2025 when, under captain Rajat Patidar, RCB defeated Punjab Kings in the final to claim their maiden IPL title – sparking massive celebrations across Bengaluru.

Ownership Change: In a historic development ahead of IPL 2026, RCB got new owners. A powerful consortium including the Aditya Birla Group, The Times of India Group, Bolt Ventures, and Blackstone's private equity arm bought RCB for a staggering \$1.78 billion (approximately ₹16,706 crore) from the previous owner United Spirits Limited (Diageo). Under the new ownership, Aryaman Vikram Birla – son of Kumar Mangalam Birla – serves as the team's chairman.

Star Players: The crown jewel of RCB has always been Virat Kohli, who has been with the

franchise since Day 1 in 2008. Kohli finally lifted the IPL trophy in 2025 after a career-long wait — one of the most emotional moments in IPL history. Other key players include Rajat Patidar (captain), Phil Salt (wicketkeeper-batter), Josh Hazlewood (pace bowling), Krunal Pandya (all-rounder), and Devdutt Padikkal (opening batter). Young all-rounder Jacob Bethell from England is also part of their overseas quota.

IPL 2026 Outlook: As defending champions, RCB begin the 2026 season with high expectations. Patidar's aggressive captaincy style and a balanced squad with world-class overseas players make them genuine contenders for a back-to-back title. Their home ground, the Chinnaswamy Stadium, was cleared for hosting matches after major safety inspections following the tragic stampede during the 2025 victory parade that claimed 11 lives. RCB opened their 2026 campaign at home against SRH.

2. CHENNAI SUPER KINGS (CSK)

≡ Chennai Super Kings — The Five-Time Champions

≡ Titles: 5 (2010, 2011, 2018, 2021, 2023) ≡ Captain: Ruturaj Gaikwad ≡ Home: MA

Chidambaram Stadium ≡ Coach: Stephen Fleming

≡ Owner: Chennai Super Kings Cricket Ltd (N. Srinivasan)

History: Chennai Super Kings are arguably the most consistent and beloved franchise in IPL history. Founded in 2008 and owned by India Cements (later Chennai Super Kings Cricket Ltd), CSK has been the flagship of the IPL. Under the legendary MS Dhoni, they won 4 of their 5 titles (2010, 2011, 2018, 2021), and went on to win one more in 2023 under

Ruturaj Gaikwad's captaincy (though Dhoni was still playing). The team was even banned from IPL for two seasons (2016 and 2017) due to the betting controversy involving team officials, but came back stronger than ever to win the 2018 title.

The MS Dhoni Factor: The one name that defines CSK is Mahendra Singh Dhoni (MSD). Now 44 years old, Dhoni continues to play for CSK in IPL 2026 in what is widely expected to be his final season. He was retained by CSK ahead of the 2026 auction in November 2025. Even at this age, Dhoni's presence in the dressing room is invaluable — his calm under pressure, finishing ability, and sharp cricketing mind remain unmatched. The entire cricketing world is watching his every match this season, knowing the legend could hang up his gloves at any moment.

Star Players: CSK's key players for IPL 2026 include Ruturaj Gaikwad (captain & opener), MS Dhoni (wicketkeeper-finisher), Sanju Samson (big trade from Rajasthan Royals), Shivam Dube (power-hitter), Noor Ahmad (Afghan spinner), Khaleel Ahmed (left-arm pace), and uncapped stars Kartik Sharma and Prashant Veer. Australian pacer Spencer Johnson also joined the squad as an injury replacement for Nathan Ellis.

IPL 2026 Outlook: CSK had a dismal 2025 season, finishing last on the table with only 4 wins from 14 matches. The arrival of Sanju Samson and the youth injection through the auction have given the side a fresh look. With Dhoni's experience and Ruturaj's class at the top, CSK will look to bounce back strongly. Their trademark slow-and-steady strategy combined with new explosive elements makes them a team to watch in 2026.

3. MUMBAI INDIANS (MI)

≡ Mumbai Indians — The Most Successful Franchise

≡ Titles: 5 (2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020) ≡ Captain: Hardik Pandya ≡ Home: Wankhede Stadium ≡ Coach: Mahela Jayawardene ≡

Owner: Reliance Industries (Mukesh Ambani Family)

History: Mumbai Indians are tied with Chennai Super Kings as the most successful team in IPL history with 5 titles. Owned by the Ambani family through their company Reliance Industries, MI has always been the best-resourced franchise in the league. Under the iconic captain Rohit Sharma, they won five titles between 2013 and 2020, a feat unmatched in IPL history. Rohit was arguably the greatest IPL captain of all time. MI have a tradition of producing match-winners — Jasprit Bumrah, Kieron Pollard, Lasith Malinga, Rohit Sharma himself — all became superstars under the MI banner.

Captain — Hardik Pandya: Hardik Pandya was appointed captain ahead of the 2024 season when Rohit Sharma was released. His first year was disastrous — MI finished last. But in 2025, Pandya made a strong comeback, guiding MI to Qualifier 2 before they were knocked out by Punjab Kings. Pandya had previously led Gujarat Titans to the IPL title in 2022, so he knows how to win. IPL 2026 is his chance to prove he can take MI back to the top.

Star Players: MI's squad features Hardik Pandya (captain & all-rounder), Rohit Sharma (legendary opener, still in the squad), Jasprit Bumrah (world's best fast bowler), Suryakumar Yadav (T20 world no. 1 batter), Allah Ghazanfar (Afghan spinner, IPL debut in 2026), and Finn Allen (New Zealand explosive opener). Young pacer Blessing Muzarabani

from Zimbabwe also made his IPL debut this season for MI.

IPL 2026 Outlook: With possibly the most star-studded squad in the tournament, MI are among the top favourites to win IPL 2026.

The team's balance of experience (Rohit, Bumrah) and youth (Tilak Varma, Naman Dhir) is excellent. If Jasprit Bumrah stays fit, MI are virtually unplayable. Getting their sixth IPL title would make them the most successful franchise in the history of the league – and everyone associated with MI knows it.

☰ Continue reading in Part 2 – KKR, SRH, DC, RR, GT, PBKS, LSG & Records

4. KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS (KKR)

☰ Kolkata Knight Riders – The Knight Riders

☰ Titles: 3 (2012, 2014, 2024) ☰ Captain: Ajinkya Rahane ☰ Home: Eden Gardens, Kolkata ☰

Coach: Abhishek Nayar ☰ Owner:

Knight Riders Sports Pvt. Ltd (Shah Rukh Khan, Juhi Chawla, Jay Mehta)

History: Kolkata Knight Riders, popularly known as KKR, were founded in 2008 and are co-owned by Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan, actress Juhi Chawla, and businessman Jay Mehta. The glamour of SRK's involvement has always made KKR one of the most followed franchises in the world. Their iconic purple-and-gold jersey and the deafening atmosphere at the Eden Gardens make them a unique team in the IPL.

KKR won their first title in 2012 under the dynamic leadership of Gautam Gambhir, and their second in 2014 again with Gambhir at

the helm. After a decade-long wait, they claimed their third title in 2024 — this time under the leadership of Shreyas Iyer — with a dominant season that saw them go through the tournament almost unbeaten. The 2024 title showed that KKR had rebuilt brilliantly through smart auction strategies.

Captain — Ajinkya Rahane: After Shreyas Iyer was released and snapped up by Punjab Kings, Ajinkya Rahane was handed the KKR captaincy for IPL 2026. Known for his calm and experienced demeanour, Rahane brings test-match thinking to T20 cricket. He had a tough time in 2025 when KKR finished 8th on the points table, and 2026 is his chance to turn things around.

Star Players: KKR's major signings for 2026 include Cameron Green (most expensive player at the auction, ₹25.20 crore), Matheesha Pathirana (Sri Lankan pace sensation, ₹18 crore), and Ajinkya Rahane (captain). Retaining players include pace giant Varun Chakravarthy (mystery spinner), Andre Russell (who continues in a power coach/player role), Venkatesh Iyer, and young talent Rinku Singh. Ajinkya Rahane also marked his 200th six in T20s during an IPL 2026 match — a remarkable milestone.

IPL 2026 Outlook: KKR have assembled a strong squad with excellent depth in pace bowling through Pathirana and Green. The Eden Gardens will be rocking if KKR start well. Rebuilding under Rahane is the key challenge, but the squad has the firepower to be competitive.

5. SUNRISERS HYDERABAD (SRH)

☰ Sunrisers Hyderabad — The Rising Sun

☰ Titles: 1 (2016) ☰ Captain: Ishan Kishan (interim for Pat Cummins) ☰ Home: Rajiv Gandhi

International Stadium ☰ Coach:

Daniel Vettori ☰ Owner: Kalanithi Maran / Sun Group (Kavya Maran)

History: The Sunrisers Hyderabad were formed in 2013 when they replaced the defunct Deccan Chargers, which was terminated by the BCCI due to ownership disputes. The franchise is owned by media tycoon Kalanithi Maran of the Sun Group, and is today popularly managed by his daughter Kavya Maran, who has become the face of SRH ownership. SRH won their only IPL title in 2016 under the captaincy of veteran spinner David Warner — one of the great IPL seasons.

SRH had an extraordinary 2024 season, finishing as runners-up. Under the explosive batting lineup that set all sorts of records — they became the first team to score 300+ in T20 cricket — they were arguably the most exciting team of that year. However, 2025 was a step down, and rebuilding has been the focus since.

Captain — Ishan Kishan: Regular captain Pat Cummins — the Australian cricket captain — is recovering from a back injury and has been unavailable for the opening matches of IPL 2026. In his absence, Ishan Kishan has been appointed interim captain. Kishan, a ferocious wicketkeeper-batter who previously played for MI, has had a tremendous turnaround. He was dropped from the national team in 2024 but came back brilliantly to play a key role in India's 2026 T20 World Cup victory, scoring 317 runs in the tournament at a rapid strike rate. Abhishek Sharma serves as his deputy.

Star Players: SRH's key players include Abhishek Sharma (explosive opener), Heinrich Klaasen (South African powerhouse), Ishan

Kishan (wicketkeeper), Liam Livingstone (English all-rounder, signed for ₹13 crore after initially going unsold), Pat Cummins (when fit), Harsh Dubey, and young spinner Shivang Kumar, who has already impressed early in IPL 2026 as noted by coach Vettori.

IPL 2026 Outlook: SRH have the batting firepower to chase or set any total. The challenge will be maintaining consistency in bowling and managing Cummins' fitness. If Kishan can lead from the front and the team's batting unit fires, SRH can easily make the playoffs. A potential rivalry with RCB from the opening match has already set the tone.

6. DELHI CAPITALS (DC)

≡ Delhi Capitals — The Capital's Pride

≡ Titles: 0 (Finalist 2020) ≡ Captain: Axar Patel ≡ Home: Arun Jaitley Stadium, Delhi ≡ Coach: Hemang Badani ≡ Owner: JSW GMR Cricket Pvt Ltd (Parth Jindal + GMR Group)

History: Delhi Capitals were originally known as the Delhi Daredevils when the franchise was founded in 2008. The team rebranded to Delhi Capitals in 2019 under new co-ownership by JSW Sports (Parth Jindal) and the GMR Group. The rebranding brought a fresh identity and better results — in 2020, under the captaincy of Shreyas Iyer, DC reached their first-ever IPL Final (losing to Mumbai Indians). Before that, DC had always been a team that underachieved despite having talented players.

The franchise has historically been a breeding ground for some of India's most exciting players — Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Virat Kohli, Rishabh Pant, Shikhar Dhawan, all wore Delhi colours at various points. Despite all

this talent, the IPL trophy has eluded them.

Captain — Axar Patel: Axar Patel, DC's dependable all-rounder, continues as captain for IPL 2026. He was first appointed ahead of the 2025 season, where DC finished 5th — just a point outside the playoffs. Axar is a member of India's T20 World Cup-winning squad in 2026, which adds to his credentials and confidence heading into this season.

Star Players: DC boasts an impressive lineup with KL Rahul (wicketkeeper-batter), Mitchell Starc (Australian left-arm pace, one of the best in the world), Axar Patel (captain, left-arm spin all-rounder), Kuldeep Yadav (wrist spinner, India's finest chinaman bowler), David Miller (South African finisher), Karun Nair (returning to big cricket), and T. Natarajan (left-arm yorker specialist). Promising talents Sameer Rizvi and Abishek Porel add youth to the side.

IPL 2026 Outlook: DC are one of the strongest squads on paper. Starc and Kuldeep form a fearsome bowling combination. KL Rahul and Miller give them outstanding batting depth. If the experienced core stays fit and delivers together, DC could finally end their title drought in 2026. Many experts consider them dark horses.

7. RAJASTHAN ROYALS (RR)

≡ Rajasthan Royals — The Pink Panthers

≡ Titles: 1 (2008) ≡ Captain: Riyan Parag ≡ Home: Sawai Mansingh Stadium, Jaipur ≡ Coach:

Rahul Dravid ≡ Owner: Emerging

Media / Manoj Badale

History: Rajasthan Royals are the founding champions of the IPL. They won the inaugural 2008 IPL title under the leadership of the legendary Shane Warne in one of the greatest upset stories in cricket. They were a budget team with no superstars — but Warne's brilliant captaincy and team spirit helped them beat the odds and win the first-ever IPL trophy. They were banned from IPL for two seasons (2016 and 2017) due to the same spot-fixing controversy that affected CSK.

In 2022, they reached the IPL Final again, losing to Gujarat Titans. Their journey is one of the most romantic in IPL history — from underdogs to champions, time and again showing that spirit and strategy can overcome star power.

The Legendary Coach — Rahul Dravid: One of the most exciting developments ahead of IPL 2026 is that Rahul Dravid, "The Wall" of Indian cricket and former India head coach, has taken charge as RR's head coach. His experience of managing the Indian team through the 2024 T20 World Cup win and his deep knowledge of players makes him an invaluable asset for RR.

Captain Change — Riyan Parag: Former captain Sanju Samson was traded to Chennai Super Kings ahead of the 2026 auction. Riyan Parag, the young and flamboyant Assamese batter, has taken over as full-time captain. Parag has been one of the most improved players in Indian cricket over the last two years and brings an energetic, attacking approach to leadership.

Star Players: RR's squad features Riyan Parag (captain), Jos Buttler (English explosive batter & wicketkeeper), Yuzvendra Chahal (wrist spinner), Shimron Hetmyer (West Indian power hitter), Sandeep Sharma (seam bowler), and young talent Vaibhav Suryavanshi —

the teen sensation who broke records at the U19 level and is tipped to be one of IPL 2026's breakout stars.

IPL 2026 Outlook: RR are a team in transition after Samson's departure. But Riyan Parag's aggressive captaincy, Buttler's explosiveness at the top, and a strong domestic talent pool make them competitive. With Dravid's coaching wisdom guiding the ship, RR could spring surprises.

8. GUJARAT TITANS (GT)

≡ Gujarat Titans — The New Age Champions

≡ Titles: 1 (2022) ≡ Captain: Shubman Gill ≡ Home: Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad ≡

Coach: Ashish Nehra ≡ Owner: CVC

Capital Partners

History: Gujarat Titans are one of the newest IPL franchises, having been introduced in 2022 along with the Lucknow Super Giants.

What they lacked in IPL history, they more than made up for in performance — they won the IPL title in their very first season

(2022), becoming the second team in IPL history (after Rajasthan Royals in 2008) to win on debut. Under captain Hardik Pandya, GT

played disciplined, data-driven cricket and blew everyone away.

In 2023, they reached the final again, losing to Chennai Super Kings. Hardik then left for Mumbai Indians, and Shubman Gill took

over as captain from the 2024 season. GT's consistent performance in a short time has made them one of the most respected

franchises in the league. They are owned by CVC Capital Partners, a British private equity firm.

Captain — Shubman Gill: Shubman Gill is one of Indian cricket's brightest young stars. A technically brilliant batter from Punjab, Gill plays elegant yet aggressive cricket. He has represented India at the highest level across all three formats and continues to grow as a leader. His tactical maturity and run-scoring ability make him one of the most valuable assets in modern Indian cricket. GT have continued to be a competitive outfit under his captaincy.

Star Players: GT's strong squad includes Shubman Gill (captain & anchor batter), Rashid Khan (Afghanistan's leg-spin genius, one of the best T20 bowlers in the world), Mohammed Siraj (Indian pace spearhead, excellent with the new ball), David Miller (when fit), B. Sai Sudharsan (stylish young batter from Tamil Nadu), Washington Sundar (spin all-rounder), and big-hitting wicketkeeper Matthew Wade.

≡ Rashid Khan is a central figure for GT. The Afghan spinner's combination of attacking batting at the end and wicket-taking leg-spin makes him perhaps the single most valuable all-round T20 cricketer in the world today.

IPL 2026 Outlook: GT are built around Gill's batting and Rashid's bowling. If both are firing, GT are extremely hard to beat.

Their home ground — the massive Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad (capacity 1.3 lakh, the world's largest cricket stadium) — gives them an incredible home advantage. GT will be aiming to go one better and win their second title in 2026.

9. PUNJAB KINGS (PBKS)

≡ Punjab Kings — The Waiting Royals

≡ Titles: 0 (Finalist 2014) ≡ Captain: Shreyas Iyer ≡ Home: PCA Stadium, Mohali ≡ Coach:

Ricky Ponting ≡ Owner: K.P.H. Dream

Cricket Pvt Ltd (Mohit Burman, Preity Zinta, Ness Wadia, Karan Paul)

History: Originally called the Kings XI Punjab (rebranded as Punjab Kings in 2021), PBKS are one of the original 8 IPL franchises from 2008. Co-owned by Bollywood actress Preity Zinta, who is often seen passionately cheering from the stands, the team has had a rollercoaster journey. PBKS reached the IPL final in 2014, losing to Kolkata Knight Riders, and that remains their best-ever finish. Despite a string of talented players over the years — from Chris Gayle and David Miller to Glenn Maxwell and KL Rahul — the title has always eluded them.

However, PBKS had their best-ever recent performance in 2025 — they reached the IPL Final, only to lose to Royal Challengers Bengaluru by 6 runs in a nail-biting match. That near-miss gives them motivation and momentum heading into IPL 2026.

Captain — Shreyas Iyer: Shreyas Iyer joined Punjab Kings for a record-breaking ₹26.75 crore at the 2025 mega auction, making him one of the most expensive players ever bought in IPL history. He has a unique distinction — he has taken three different teams (Delhi Capitals, KKR, PBKS) to the IPL playoffs, making him arguably the most reliable captain in IPL history. In 2025, he led PBKS to the final — their best finish in over a decade. Coach Ricky Ponting, the legendary Australian captain, oversees the team's strategy.

Star Players: PBKS have an exciting squad with Shreyas Iyer (captain), Arshdeep Singh (India's premier death bowler), Yuzvendra Chahal (experienced leg-spinner), Marcus Stoinis (Australian all-rounder), Marco Jansen (South African tall left-arm pacer), Priyansh Arya (young explosive opener), Shashank Singh, and Lockie Ferguson (New Zealand pace). Australian youngster Cooper Connolly — who has spoken about wanting to leave his own legacy at Punjab — is another exciting overseas pick.

IPL 2026 Outlook: Punjab Kings are on the rise. A final appearance in 2025 showed this is a team capable of winning. Shreyas Iyer's proven captaincy, Arshdeep Singh's bowling, and the firepower in the batting order make PBKS genuine title contenders in 2026. Many feel this could finally be the year PBKS end their long wait for the IPL trophy.

10. LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS (LSG)

☰ Lucknow Super Giants — The Giants of the North

☰ Titles: 0 (Consistent playoff finisher) ☰ Captain: Rishabh Pant ☰ Home: Ekana Cricket Stadium, Lucknow ☰ Coach: Justin Langer ☰ Owner: RPSG Sports Pvt Ltd (Sanjiv Goenka)

History: Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) are one of the two newest IPL franchises, introduced in the 2022 season alongside Gujarat Titans. Owned by Sanjiv Goenka of the RPSG Group, they were built around the foundation of experienced domestic talent and smart overseas signings. In their first three seasons, LSG consistently qualified for the playoffs — a remarkable record for a new team. They have never won the title but have established themselves as a serious contender every year.

LSG initially built their identity around the captaincy of KL Rahul, but he was released after the 2024 season (moving to Delhi Capitals). For 2025, they signed the returning legend Rishabh Pant — one of the most hyped transfers in IPL history.

Captain — Rishabh Pant: Rishabh Pant is the heartbeat of LSG in 2026. After surviving a life-threatening car accident in December 2022 and a remarkable recovery journey, Pant returned to cricket stronger than ever. His fearless, instinct-driven batting and wicketkeeping make him one of the most entertaining cricketers in the world. Coach Justin Langer (former Australian batting coach) has been tasked with getting the best out of this talented squad. Rishabh Pant's leadership style is bold and aggressive, which perfectly suits LSG's vision.

Star Players: LSG's strong squad includes Rishabh Pant (captain & wicketkeeper), Aiden Markram (South African batter), Nicholas Pooran (West Indian wicketkeeper-batter), Ravi Bishnoi (leg-spinner, India international), Mohsin Khan (left-arm pacer), Matthew Breetzke (South African opener), and exciting youngsters Ayush Badoni and Shamar Joseph. Josh Inglis adds overseas wicketkeeping depth.

≡ **Fun Fact:** LSG's home ground, the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, has a capacity of over 50,000 and is one of the loudest and most electric atmospheres in Indian cricket. LSG fans — known as the "Super Giants Army" — are among the most passionate in the IPL.

IPL 2026 Outlook: With Rishabh Pant at the helm and a deep squad, LSG are genuine title

contenders. Pant's fearless approach combined with Markram and Pooran's firepower makes the batting formidable. LSG have already shown early form in IPL 2026, winning against SRH in an early-season match. Their consistency in making the playoffs, combined with a richer squad, puts them among the favourites to go all the way this year.

☰ Continue reading in Part 3 — IPL All-Time Records, Stats, Fun Facts & Who Will Win IPL 2026

IPL ALL-TIME RECORDS & FUN FACTS

The Indian Premier League has produced some of the most extraordinary moments in cricket history. Over 18 seasons and thousands of matches, records have been broken, legends have been made, and the game of T20 cricket has been pushed to its very limits. Here is a comprehensive look at some of the most important records and facts from IPL history.

☰ IPL TITLE WINNERS — SEASON BY SEASON

Year	Edition	Champion	Runner-Up
2008	IPL 1	Rajasthan Royals	Chennai Super Kings
2009	IPL 2	Deccan Chargers	Royal Challengers Bengaluru
2010	IPL 3	Chennai Super Kings	Mumbai Indians
2011	IPL 4	Chennai Super Kings	Royal Challengers Bengaluru
2012	IPL 5	Kolkata Knight Riders	Chennai Super Kings
2013	IPL 6	Mumbai Indians	Chennai Super Kings
2014	IPL 7	Kolkata Knight Riders	Kings XI Punjab
2015	IPL 8	Mumbai Indians	Chennai Super Kings
2016	IPL 9	Sunrisers Hyderabad	Royal Challengers Bengaluru
2017	IPL 10	Mumbai Indians	Rising Pune Supergiant
2018	IPL 11	Chennai Super Kings	Sunrisers Hyderabad
2019	IPL 12	Mumbai Indians	Chennai

Super Kings 2020 IPL 13 Mumbai Indians Delhi Capitals 2021 IPL 14 Chennai Super Kings Kolkata Knight Riders 2022 IPL 15 Gujarat Titans Rajasthan Royals 2023 IPL 16 Chennai Super Kings Gujarat Titans 2024 IPL 17 Kolkata Knight Riders Sunrisers Hyderabad 2025 IPL 18 Royal Challengers Bengaluru Punjab Kings

☰ ALL-TIME IPL RECORDS

Record Category	Record Holder	Detail
Most Runs (All-Time)	Virat Kohli	7,000+ runs in IPL history (RCB)
Most Wickets (All-Time)	Yuzvendra Chahal	200+ wickets across multiple teams
Most Titles as Captain	Rohit Sharma / MS Dhoni	5 titles each
Most Expensive Player (2026 Auction)	Cameron Green (KKR)	₹25.20 crore
Most Expensive Player Ever	Shreyas Iyer (PBKS)	₹26.75 crore (2025 Mega Auction)
Highest Team Total	Sunrisers Hyderabad (2024)	287/2 vs RCB – first 300+ T20 score
Most IPL Appearances	MS Dhoni	250+ matches for CSK
Most Successful Franchise	CSK & MI (tied)	5 titles each
First IPL Champions	Rajasthan Royals	2008 title under Shane Warne
Biggest Victory Margin	Mumbai Indians vs Delhi Daredevils (2017)	146 runs

☰ IPL 2026 ONES TO WATCH – YOUNG STARS

Every IPL season produces surprising young talents who burst onto the scene and announce themselves to the world. In IPL 2026, here are the young players every fan should watch closely:

* Vaibhav Suryavanshi (RR) – The teen prodigy who set record scores at U19 level. Could become the story of IPL 2026.

* Sameer Rizvi (DC) – Young aggressive batter from UP who has already shown match-

winning ability.

* Priyansh Arya (PBKS) — Explosive opener who became a household name in 2025 and could cement his place in 2026.

* Harsh Dubey (SRH) — Young bowler praised by coach Vettori for his performance in early IPL 2026 games.

* Shivang Kumar (SRH) — Another young spinner who has made early impressions at SRH.

* Abhinandan Singh (RCB) — Made his T20 debut in the opening IPL 2026 match. One to monitor.

* Ayush Mhatre (CSK) — Young talent who could be the future of CSK's batting after the Dhoni era.

≡ IPL & World Cricket: The IPL has completely changed world cricket. Players from Australia, England, West Indies, South Africa, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and many other nations participate every year. The league has improved the standard of T20 cricket globally and given players from smaller cricket nations like Afghanistan (Rashid Khan, Noor Ahmad) and Zimbabwe (Blessing Muzarabani) a massive world stage.

≡ IPL — A BUSINESS POWERHOUSE

Beyond cricket, the IPL is a massive business ecosystem. The Tata Group's title sponsorship deal alone is worth ₹2,500 crore over 5 years (2024–2028). Broadcasting rights for the 2023–2027 cycle were sold for over ₹48,000 crore — making IPL broadcast rights more expensive than many major global sports leagues. The combined brand value of all 10 IPL franchises runs into tens of billions of dollars. Ticket sales, merchandise, digital subscriptions, and advertising revenues make the IPL one of the most economically significant sporting events in the world.

Individual team valuations have skyrocketed. The new RCB ownership deal valued the franchise at \$1.78 billion. Mumbai Indians and CSK are thought to be even more valuable. The latest transaction for Rajasthan Royals also showed how much IPL franchise values have grown since the league started.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

≡ When does IPL 2026 start and end?

IPL 2026 started on 28 March 2026 with the opening match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Sunrisers Hyderabad at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru. The tournament will conclude on 31 May 2026 with the Grand Final.

≡ Who are the defending champions of IPL 2026?

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) are the defending champions of IPL 2026. They won their maiden IPL title in 2025 under captain Rajat Patidar, defeating Punjab Kings in the final — ending an 18-year wait for their first trophy.

≡ How many matches are there in IPL 2026?

IPL 2026 features 74 matches in total — 70 league stage games and 4 playoff matches (Qualifier 1, Eliminator, Qualifier 2, and the Final). Each team plays 14 league matches.

≡ Who was the most expensive player at the IPL 2026 auction?

Australian all-rounder Cameron Green was the most expensive buy at the IPL 2026 mini-auction, purchased by Kolkata Knight Riders for ₹25.20 crore. He also became the most expensive overseas player in IPL auction history.

≡ Is MS Dhoni playing in IPL 2026?

Yes! MS Dhoni is playing for Chennai Super Kings in IPL 2026. At 44 years of age, this is widely expected to be Dhoni's final IPL

season. He was retained by CSK before the auction in November 2025.

≡ Who owns RCB after the 2026 ownership change?

RCB was sold for \$1.78 billion (₹16,706 crore) to a consortium that includes the Aditya Birla Group, The Times of India Group, Bolt Ventures, and Blackstone's private equity arm. Aryaman Vikram Birla, son of Kumar Mangalam Birla, serves as the team's chairman.

≡ Where can I watch IPL 2026?

IPL 2026 is broadcast on Star Sports (TV) and streamed live on JioHotstar (digital/OTT). Both platforms are part of the JioStar network, which holds the media rights for the 2023–2027 IPL cycle.

≡ How many teams are there in IPL 2026?

There are 10 teams in IPL 2026 — Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), Chennai Super Kings (CSK), Mumbai Indians (MI), Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), Delhi Capitals (DC), Rajasthan Royals (RR), Gujarat Titans (GT), Punjab Kings (PBKS), and Lucknow Super Giants (LSG).

WHO WILL WIN IPL 2026? — EXPERT PREDICTIONS & ANALYSIS

IPL 2026 is shaping up to be one of the most competitive and entertaining editions in the history of the league. With defending champions RCB eyeing a back-to-back title, and powerhouses like Mumbai Indians, Gujarat Titans, Punjab Kings, and Delhi Capitals all boasting impressive squads, it is genuinely anyone's tournament.

≡ TITLE FAVOURITE — MUMBAI INDIANS

With Jasprit Bumrah leading an elite pace attack, Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar Yadav providing experience, and Hardik Pandya having

learned from his mistakes, MI look most complete. A 6th title could make them the most successful IPL franchise of all time — and they know it.

≡ STRONG CONTENDER — ROYAL CHALLENGERS BENGALURU

Champions always find a way. RCB's confidence, Virat Kohli's still-exceptional form, and new-found belief under Patidar's captaincy make them a genuine back-to-back threat. Home advantage at Chinnaswamy can be massive.

≡ DARK HORSE — DELHI CAPITALS

Mitchell Starc and Kuldeep Yadav together might be the most dangerous bowling duo in the tournament. Add KL Rahul and Axar Patel's leadership, and DC could finally win their maiden title.

≡ WILDCARD — PUNJAB KINGS

They were runners-up last year and have retained the same core. Shreyas Iyer's tactical awareness, Arshdeep Singh's death bowling mastery, and team hunger after falling at the last hurdle in 2025 make PBKS dangerous.

However, the beauty of T20 cricket — and the IPL especially — is unpredictability. A single player can change the course of an entire tournament. A young unknown can become a superstar overnight. A team that struggles early can peak at exactly the right time and win the title. That is why millions of fans watch every single match.

≡ The Bottom Line: IPL 2026 has all the ingredients for a spectacular season. Defending champion RCB, the legendary MS Dhoni's

possible farewell, Cameron Green's big-money debut, Rishabh Pant's explosive leadership, and the battle of Virat Kohli vs Hardik Pandya's MI — these storylines alone make IPL 2026 unmissable. Cricket fans across the world are in for a treat from 28 March to 31 May 2026.

≡ FINAL WORD

The Indian Premier League is not just a cricket tournament — it is a celebration. It is the sound of a packed stadium roaring when a six sails over the boundary. It is the nerves of a last-ball finish. It is the joy of a young cricketer from a small town becoming a national hero overnight. It is the pride of a city watching its team lift the trophy.

IPL 2026 — the 19th edition of this incredible journey — is already underway, and if history is any guide, it will deliver unforgettable moments. Stay tuned, stay passionate, and enjoy every ball. May the best team win! ≡

All information is based on publicly available sources as of April 2026. Player availability and squad details are subject to change due to injuries or BCCI decisions.