

INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE 2024-25


DECODING THE SEASON ON AND OFF THE FIELD



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RESEARCH REPORT

A report of the 2024-25 Indian Super League season to assess the teams' chances of success and their attractiveness as potential partners for brands.

ABOUT THE REPORT

This report, “Indian Super League 2024-25: Decoding the Season On and Off the Field,” offers a comprehensive analysis of the Indian Super League (ISL) teams as they prepare for the upcoming season. By examining both on-field performance metrics and off-field factors, it provides a holistic view of each team’s strengths and weaknesses, offering insights into how these could influence their overall performance by the season’s end.

Covering aspects such as squad depth, historical performance, fan engagement, sponsorships, and management stability, this report delivers a detailed outlook on each team’s potential trajectory for the season.

The purpose of this report is to guide brands in identifying which teams are poised for success as the season kicks off from a market agnostic viewpoint. Teams well-positioned for victory will offer maximum value to sponsors and partners, and this report aims to give brands a strategic advantage as they plan their sponsorship engagements.

ANALYSIS OF THE INTERPLAY
BETWEEN ON-FIELD ACTION AND
OFF-FIELD FACTORS





METHODOLOGY

ANALYSIS CRITERIA

The report evaluates each team based on 6 on-field and 6 off-field criterias. Each criterion assesses the teams using specific factors designed to fairly judge their strengths in that area.

ON-FIELD CRITERIA

Squad strength
Management
Head coach
League performance
Titles
AFC Performance

OFF-FIELD CRITERIA

Stadium attendance
Fan base size
Digital following
Digital engagement
Sponsorship portfolio
Player popularity

WEIGHTED SCORING SYSTEM & RANKING

After evaluating each team across 12 individual criteria, the teams are ranked from 1 to 13 based on their performance in each category. Once the rankings for all criteria are assigned, each criterion is given a specific weight, and a weighted average score is calculated for each team.

Based on these weighted average scores, the teams are then assigned a final rank, which determines their overall position in the report.

*Criteria based methodology in annexure.

** Squads as of 13th September, 2024 were used for the analysis in this report.

BENGALURU FC



ON-FIELD RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
6	3
Head Coach	League Performance
12	6
Titles	AFC Performance
3	3

OFF-FIELD RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
7	4
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
7	8
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
3	1



Weighted Average Score

5.75

Overall Rank

5

- A traditional powerhouse in the league, the club takes a hit on the on-field front primarily due to their new coach and a mid-table squad strength.
- Off the field, the club excels in the Player popularity category, led by national team icons Sunil Chhetri and Gurpreet Singh Sandhu.
- The club's two I-League titles, earned before joining the ISL, have also been considered and given appropriate weightage.

CHENNAIYIN FC



ON-FIELD RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
10	7
Head Coach	League Performance
3	8
Titles	AFC Performance
4	6

OFF-FIELD RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
8	5
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
2	6
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
4	9



Weighted Average Score

6.00

Overall Rank

7

- The club generates a respectable on-field score, thanks to its title-winning history and the success of head coach Owen Coyle.
- However, the squad is relatively young and lacks experience, as the club focuses on long-term development of its squad.
- Off the field, while the club boasts a strong digital following, its stadium attendance figures fall short of expectations given the size of its fan base.

EAST BENGAL FC



ON-FIELD RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
2	7
Head Coach	League Performance
2	11
Titles	AFC Performance
10	7

OFF-FIELD RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
4	2
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
4	1
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
9	4



Weighted Average Score

4.85

Overall Rank

2

- The club is ranked 2nd overall and appears poised for a strong season on paper, though a history of inconsistent performances raises concerns.
- Off the field, the club boasts a vast online and offline following, which translates into high engagement across its digital platforms and in-stadium attendance.
- In 2022, the club gained a new ownership group that has shown a strong commitment to success, investing heavily in both the squad and coaching staff.

FC GOA



ON-FIELD
RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
5	6
Head Coach	League Performance
5	6
Titles	AFC Performance
5	4

OFF-FIELD
RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
6	6
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
5	9
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
7	5



Weighted Average Score

5.75

Overall Rank

6

- The club is consistent both on and off the field, delivering stability from a small yet football-focused market.
- Head coach Manuel Marquez, who also leads the Indian national team, brings valuable insights into opponents as the season unfolds.
- From a partnership perspective, the club presents a reliable option, offering a unique but niche market opportunity.

HYDERABAD FC



ON-FIELD
RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
13	13
Head Coach	League Performance
13	3
Titles	AFC Performance
7	7

OFF-FIELD
RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
13	11
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
11	10
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
9	13



Weighted Average Score

10.20

Overall Rank

13

- The club faces challenges due to management instability and a lack of investment, though things seem to be stabilizing with new ownership coming on board before the new season.
- A tough season awaits, as the club fields a young squad without its full foreign player quota and struggles with a disengaged fan base, which hopes the new ownership will turn the club's fortunes around in future seasons.

JAMSHEDPUR FC



ON-FIELD RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
8	11
Head Coach	League Performance
8	9
Titles	AFC Performance
6	7

OFF-FIELD RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
5	9
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
9	12
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
9	8



Weighted Average Score

8.50

Overall Rank

9

- After back-to-back poor seasons following their league title win in 2021-22, the club seems poised for another transitional year.
- Off the field, the club enjoys a strong local fan base, reflected in solid stadium attendance figures.
- As a primarily regional brand in a smaller media market, the club's appeal is more localized compared to teams in larger markets.

KERALA BLASTERS FC



ON-FIELD RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
7	3
Head Coach	League Performance
10	4
Titles	AFC Performance
13	7

OFF-FIELD RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
3	1
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
1	5
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
1	3



Weighted Average Score

5.30

Overall Rank

4

- The team consistently reaches the playoffs but has a history of falling short when it comes to winning trophies.
- Off the field, they boast a large and passionate fan base, highly engaged both in-stadium and across digital platforms.
- The club leads the league in commercial revenue, making it an ideal marketing platform for brands looking to expand in the Kerala market.

MOHAMMEDAN SC



ON-FIELD
RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
9	12
Head Coach	League Performance
7	13
Titles	AFC Performance
7	7

OFF-FIELD
RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
2	10
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
10	3
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
13	10



Weighted Average Score

8.55

Overall Rank

10

- The newly promoted Kolkata powerhouse enters the ISL after a strong I-League campaign.
- The team’s ranking in on-field criteria is impacted by their lack of ISL history.
- Off the field, the club relies on a passionate fan base, though their engagement is stronger in-stadium than on digital platforms.

MOHUN BAGAN SG



ON-FIELD
RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
1	1
Head Coach	League Performance
6	1
Titles	AFC Performance
1	1

OFF-FIELD
RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
1	3
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
3	2
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
6	2



Weighted Average Score

2.30

Overall Rank

1

- The club stands head and shoulders above most of the league teams, alongside Mumbai City FC, with a strong trophy cabinet, and strong squad.
- Off the field, the team excels across most parameters, boasting a fan base highly engaged both in-stadium and on digital platforms.
- The club’s sponsorship portfolio is relatively limited compared to other top teams, leaving room for potential brand partnerships to be added.

MUMBAI CITY FC



ON-FIELD
RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
3	1
Head Coach	League Performance
4	2
Titles	AFC Performance
2	2

OFF-FIELD
RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
11	8
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
6	13
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
1	6



Weighted Average Score

5.00

Overall Rank

3

- Last season’s ISL Cup winners are set for another strong campaign, thanks to efficient recruitment and a stable club structure.
- Off the field, the club faces challenges due to a small stadium and low digital engagement.
- Being in a competitive media market like Mumbai is a double-edged sword, with a robust sponsorship portfolio but limitations in growing the fan base.

NORTHEAST UNITED FC



ON-FIELD
RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
11	9
Head Coach	League Performance
9	10
Titles	AFC Performance
12	7

OFF-FIELD
RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
10	7
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
8	7
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
4	11



Weighted Average Score

9.00

Overall Rank

11

- The club has traditionally struggled on the field, with a history of poor results.
- This season, however, has started on a positive note, with the club winning the Durand Cup and setting a marker for the rest of the league.
- The club's stadium attendance and fan engagement are closely tied to their on-field performance, so the Durand Cup victory could boost these metrics.

ODISHA FC



ON-FIELD
RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
4	3
Head Coach	League Performance
1	4
Titles	AFC Performance
10	4

OFF-FIELD
RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
9	12
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
12	11
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
9	7



Weighted Average Score

7.20

Overall Rank

8

- The club is a front-runner in terms of the quality of their head coach and experienced foreign players, many of whom have a history of winning titles.
- Off the field, however, the club struggles with a limited fan base, reflected in lower stadium attendance and digital engagement.
- While the club enjoys strong support from key local stakeholders, this has yet to translate into significant commercial success with national brands.

PUNJAB FC



ON-FIELD
RANKING

Squad Strength	Management
12	9
Head Coach	League Performance
11	12
Titles	AFC Performance
7	7

OFF-FIELD
RANKING

Stadium Attendance	Fan Base Size
12	13
Digital Following	Digital Engagement
13	4
Sponsorship Portfolio	Player Popularity
7	12



Weighted Average Score

10.15

Overall Rank

12

- Last season’s promoted club showed their resilience and squad strength by finishing 8th and will aim for a similar push this season.
- However, the club remains stunted by having to play home games in New Delhi instead of their home state, which affects their ability to engage with local fans.
- Their on-field ranking is also impacted by the lack of ISL history.

ANNEXURE

ON-FIELD CRITERIA

- **Squad Strength:** This criterion assesses each team's squad for the current season, focusing on their readiness for success. Four key factors were analyzed, each weighted differently to calculate the final squad rank:
 - Total squad value
 - Number of players in the squad that have represented the Indian national team over the last three years
 - Trophies won by foreign players during their time in India
 - Total matches played by foreign players in India
- **Management:** This evaluates each team's management and ownership, focusing on stability and investment in the club's growth and development. Teams were ranked based on these two factors, and an average rank was derived.
- **Head Coach:** The head coach's experience and capability were assessed, with special consideration for their performance in India. Coaches with prior experience in the ISL were ranked based on titles won and historical league performance. New coaches were evaluated based on their CV and the leagues they previously managed in.
- **League Performance:** The league performance of each team over the last three seasons was evaluated. Teams were scored based on their league position across these seasons, with the total score determining their rank.
- **Titles:** The total number of titles won by each club across Indian football competitions was assessed, with weightage given to different tournaments. Exceptions were considered when relevant.
- **AFC Performance:** Club's performance at the AFC competitions were analyzed with a weightage based score given to different performance levels and appearances.

ANNEXURE

OFF-FIELD CRITERIA

- **Stadium Attendance:** Clubs were ranked based on their average stadium attendance for the 2023-24 ISL season.
- **Fan Base Size:** The size of each club's core and engaged fan base was evaluated by measuring the social media following of official supporters' clubs on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and X.
- **Digital Following:** The total social media following (Instagram, Facebook, X) of each club was calculated to determine their rank.
- **Digital Engagement:** Each club's social media engagement on Instagram was analyzed using an independent third-party resource, which provided rankings based on engagement metrics.
- **Sponsorship Portfolio Quality:** Each club's sponsorship portfolio for the 2023-24 season was assessed and categorized into three tiers, considering the impact of partner quality:
 - Tier 1: National brands
 - Tier 2: Local/state-specific brands
 - Tier 3: Barter or ownership-associated partners
- **Player Popularity:** To measure the influence of top players in each team, this criterion focused on players with the highest social media following (Instagram). It highlights the additional value these players can bring to partners through their popularity.

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