

Vodafone ends ECB sponsorship

Vodafone said it would not renew its £4million-a-year sponsorship deal with the England cricket team.

The agreement, which will have run for 12 years by the time it ends after England's tour of South Africa in 2009-10, was originally negotiated by Lord MacLaurin when he was chairman of both the England and Wales Cricket Board and Vodafone.

The decision leaves the ECB looking for a new headline sponsor for the England team just as the global economy enters the harshest climate for many years. It is also in the process of renegotiating its deals with Npower, which sponsors home Tests, and NatWest, which sponsors one-day internationals.

Ian Shepherd, Vodafone UK's consumer director, said: "As part of an ongoing strategic review of our sponsorship portfolio, we have decided not to renew this sponsorship agreement.

"We remain fully committed to the successful conclusion of the sponsorship at the end of the winter tour of South Africa and we look forward to an exciting summer ahead with the Ashes."

The ECB's commercial director, John Perera, told UK newspaper, The Times: "It's the first time a major sports property has come on to the market for a number of years. It's unique ... the real attraction is the number of playing days. The England team are playing for around 100 days a year and that goes up to 150 with training and preparing."

Perera added that sponsorship made up only around 15 per cent of the ECB's annual revenue and that its television deals, signed before the downturn, brought in around 80 per cent. "The decision to go early [with the TV deals] has started to look very smart from the ECB's point of view," he said.

Sportbusiness, London, 17 dez. 2008, Sports, online. Disponível em <www.sportbusiness.com>. Acesso em: 19 dez. 2008.