The Winning Auction Strategy for Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB)

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1.0 Abbreviations

Avg	Average
BPB	Balls Per Boundary
CSK	Chennai Super Kings
DC	Delhi Capitals
Death-Overs	Overs 16-20 of an innings
Econ	Economy
Inns	Innings
IPL	Indian Premier League
KKR	Kolkata Knight Riders
KXIP	Kings XI Punjab
MI	Mumbai Indians
Middle-Overs	Overs 7-15 of an innings
Powerplay	First 6 overs of an innings
RCB	Royal Challengers Bangalore
RR	Rajasthan Royals
RTM	Right to Match
SRH	Sunrisers Hyderabad
SR	Strike Rate
SWOT	Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat
Uncapped	Players who are yet to make their debut for country
Wkts	Wickets

2.0 Introduction

The Indian Premier League (IPL) is a T20 cricket league which is conducted during the months of March, April and May every year by teams representing different cities in India.

The Indian Premier League (IPL) in its twelve completed sessions has seen thirteen franchises play and a cumulative of six different winners. Out of the eight current franchises, there are three, that have never won the IPL and the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) is one of them. The team has been runners up thrice (2009,2011, and 2016), losing to the franchise from Hyderabad two out of three times

RCB in the past twelve years has seen it all: great fans, management turmoil, and continuous turnover of the coaching staff. However, amidst all these changes this franchise, is still pursuing its first IPL title. Despite the great talent it possesses, the team has been on a downfall since its last promising season in 2016, when it made it to the finals. In the last three seasons, the team has twice finished at the bottom of the table and has changed its management every year since that season.

This research paper will delve into the team composition for the 2021 IPL and would try to suggest a prospective strategy for the mega auction. Before going into the strategy for 2021, the paper will investigate the shortcomings of the franchise in 2019 and the prospective player slots that needs to be filled. For the purposes of this paper, we will assume that the format of the 2021 auction will be the same as 2018, in which each team had a budget of 80 Crs and could retain up to 5 players using a combination of retention and Right to Match (RTM). Each team could have to have a minimum team size of 18 players and a maximum team size of 25 with up to 8 overseas players.

This research paper has four sections. The third section will investigate the 2019 season and decipher the positive and negative outcomes from that season. The fourth section will look into the Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat Analysis (SWOT) of the team assembled at the 2020 auction. The fifth section will suggest a potential auction strategy for the 2021 auction and the sixth section will summarize all the findings.

3.0 The success and failures of the 2019 IPL season

The 2019 season was a difficult one for RCB. Prior to the start, the franchise got rid of its head coach Daniel Vettori and replaced him with Gary Kirsten. The team got off to a bad start by losing the first six matches in succession. Furthermore, the margins of those losses were such that the team only had a mathematical chance of making it to the playoffs. The team did not stop fighting and won five out of its last eight matches. However, that was not enough to recover the season and RCB eventually finished bottom of the table, for the second time in the last three years. This section will investigate the positive outcomes, the areas of concern, and the franchise's restructuring before the 2020 season.

3.1 Positive outcomes

Though the 2019 season was subpar for the franchise, there were some players who stood out.

3.1.1 Yuzvendra Chahal

India leg spinner, Yuzvendra Chahal was the standout bowler for RCB in the season and finished as the top wicket-taker by a margin of seven wickets (Exhibit 1). He also stood out among all the spinners in 2019, finishing as third in the wicket-takers tally at a healthy strike rate (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 1: Highest Wicket-Taker for RCB (IPL 2019)

Bowler	Matches	Wkts	Avg.	Econ.	SR
Yuzvendra Chahal	14	18	21.4	7.8	16.4
Navdeep Saini	13	11	36.1	8.3	26.2
Umesh Yadav	11	8	46.4	9.8	28.4
Mohammed Siraj	9	7	38.4	9.6	24.1
Moeen Ali	11	6	28.2	6.8	25.0

Data source: Espncricinfo

Exhibit 2: Highest Wicket Takers Among Spinners (IPL 2019)

Bowler	Matches	Wkts	Econ.	SR
Imran Tahir	17	26	6.7	14.8
Shreyas Gopal	14	20	7.2	14.4
Yuzvendra Chahal	14	18	7.8	16.4
Rashid Khan	15	17	6.3	21.2
Harbhajan Singh	11	16	7.1	16.5

Data source: Espncricinfo

What stands out with Chahal, is his ability to take wickets at the M.Chinnaswamy stadium in Bengaluru (Exhibit 4), which is believed to be a graveyard for spinners because of its small boundaries and dew. When compared to other spinners in the last four editions (Exhibit 3), he has a better economy and strike rate at this ground.

Exhibit 3: All Spinners at Bengaluru (Since IPL 2016)

Overs	Runs	Wkts	Econ.	SR
339.4	2777	97	8.2	21.0

Data source: Espncricinfo

Exhibit 4: Chahal at Bengaluru (Since IPL 2016)

Overs	Runs	Wkts	Econ.	SR
101.3	779	36	7.7	16.9

Data source: Espncricinfo

3.1.2 Moeen Ali

In a franchise such as RCB with so many stars, England allrounder, Moeen Ali slips under the radar. However, he was one of the few players that RCB captain, Virat Kohli could turn to during times of crisis. Ali had a great year with both bat and ball and was one among three players to score more than 200 runs and take 5 wickets in the season (Exhibit 5). He also had the best strike rate among all the batsmen in RCB for the 2019 season

Exhibit 5: Runs>200 and Wickets>5 (IPL 2019)

Bowler	Matches	Runs	Bat SR	Wkts	Econ.
Andre Russell	14	510	204.8	11	9.5
Hardik Pandya	16	402	191.4	14	9.2
Moeen Ali	11	220	165.4	6	6.8

Data source: Espncricinfo

Though his numbers for the season would be an envy for most allrounders, he also held his nerves in a crucial last over in Match 35 against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) (Exhibit 6)**,** conceding only thirteen, when KKR needed twenty-four and were the favourites to win with Andre Russell going strong. He also scored an invaluable 66 off 28 balls in that game.

Exhibit 6: RCB last 6 overs v KKR (Match 35, IPL 2019)

Over Number	Bowler	Runs Conceded	Equation Post that Over
15	Yuzvendra Chahal	20	93 from 30 balls
16	Navdeep Saini	17	76 from 24 balls
17	Mohammed Siraj	15	61 from 18 balls

18	Dale Steyn	18	43 from 12 balls
19	Marcus Stoinis	19	24 from 6 balls
20	Moeen Ali	13	RCB won by 10 Runs

Data source: Espncricinfo

3.1.3 Performance of Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers

The two pillars of RCB again outperformed the rest of the team scoring the highest and second-highest number of runs (Exhibit 7). While as India captain, Virat Kohli finished in the top ten run-scorers (8th) former South Africa wicketkeeper batsman, AB de Villiers finished just outside at 12th.

Exhibit 7: Highest Run Scorers for RCB (IPL 2019)

Player	Matches	Runs	Avg.	SR	50's	100's
Virat Kohli	14	464	33.14	141.5	2	1
AB de Villiers	13	442	44.20	154.0	5	0
Parthiv Patel	14	373	26.64	139.2	2	0
Moeen Ali	11	220	27.50	165.4	2	0
Marcus Stoinis	10	211	52.75	135.3	0	0
Gurkeerat Singh	3	98	32.67	140.0	1	0

Data source: Espncricinfo

However, what would be concerning for the franchise is the dependence on these two players. Both players have scored the major chunk of the team runs for the last 4 seasons (Exhibit 8). In the 2019 season, both won the Man of the Match awards in 3 out of 5 wins.

Exhibit 8: The Dependence on Kohli and AB de Villiers

Runs	2016	2017[1]	2018	2019
Virat Kohli	973	308	530	464
AB de Villiers	687	216	480	442
Total Runs	2,863	1,760	2,240	2,129
% of Team Runs	58%	30%	45%	43%

Data source: Espncricinfo

[1] In 2017, both Virat Kohli and Ab de Villiers did not play the whole season because of injuries. Virat played ten matches and AB de Villiers played nine.

3.2 Areas of Concern

The 2019 edition of the IPL exposed a fair number of chinks in the RCB armour that the team needed to investigate and strengthen before the next season.

3.2.1 Death Bowling

One of RCB's biggest concern is its death bowling (overs 16-20). Over the past two seasons, the team had the highest economy and boundary percentage (Exhibit 9) in this phase of the match. Further, the team has also picked up the second lowest number of wickets in this phase of the game.

Exhibit 9: Death Overs (16-20) Since IPL 2018

Team	Inns	Wkts	Econ.	Boundary%
SRH	32	72	9.2	58%
DC	29	78	9.6	57%
CSK	33	69	9.8	58%
MI	30	77	9.9	63%
KXIP	27	71	10.4	59%
RR	26	52	10.4	58%
KKR	27	57	10.8	63%
RCB	27	56	11.5	66%

 Data source: Espncricinfo

Even in IPL 2019, four out of its eight losses can be attributed to death over bowling (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10: Death Bowling of RCB in Losses in IPL 2019

Opponent	Runs	Wkts	Overs	Econ.	Venue
DC	60	2	5.0	12.00	Arun Jaitley Stadium
MI	45	2	4.0	11.25	Wankhede Stadium
DC	29	3	3.5	7.57	M Chinnaswamy Stadium
KKR	72	2	4.1	17.28	M Chinnaswamy Stadium
RR	43	1	4.5	8.90	Sawai Mansingh Stadium
SRH	67	2	5.0	13.40	Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium
MI	48	5	5.0	9.60	M Chinnaswamy Stadium
CSK	8	0	2.4	3.00	MA Chidambaram Stadium

Data source: Espncricinfo

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3.2.2 Umesh Yadav

India fast bowler, Umesh Yadav has been a very volatile player for this franchise. His performances were promising in 2018, when he was the highest wicket taker in the powerplay (Exhibit 11). IPL 2019 is a season that he would want to forget as he could not make inroads both at the beginning of the innings and at the end. RCB's bowling performance in the powerplay has also fluctuated with Umesh's performance (Exhibit 12)

Exhibit 11: Highest Wicket takers in Powerplay (IPL 2018)

Bowler	Matches	Wkts	Avg.	Econ.	SR
Umesh Yadav	14	14	14.9	6.7	13.3
Deepak Chahar	12	10	23.6	7.3	19.3
Mitchell McClenaghan	11	9	20.7	7.4	16.7
Krishnappa Gowtham	15	8	22.5	7.2	18.8
Ankit Rajpoot	8	7	18.1	7.5	14.6
Andrew Tye	12	7	17.6	7.2	14.6

Data source: Espncricinfo

Exhibit 12: Team Powerplay Performance (IPL 2018)

Team	Inns	Wkts	Overs	Econ.
CSK	16	27	96	7.9
RCB	14	25	84	8.0
KXIP	14	25	84	8.1
RR	15	23	90	8.6
SRH	17	22	102	7.7
MI	14	21	84	8.2
DD	14	17	84	9.6
KKR	16	13	96	9.3

Data source: Espncricinfo

In IPL 2019, Umesh Yadav was not very effective in the powerplay and RCB also struggled in this phase of the game (Exhibit 13,14).

Exhibit 13: Umesh Yadav in Powerplay (IPL 2019)

Matches	Wkts.	Econ.	SR
10	4	8.5	31.5

Data source: Espncricinfo

Exhibit 14: Powerplay Performance (IPL 2019)

Team	Inns	Runs	Wkts.	Overs	Econ
CSK	17	812	29	102	8.0
RR	14	659	22	83	7.9
DC	16	753	21	96	7.8
SRH	15	670	20	90	7.4
MI	16	761	19	96	7.9
KKR	14	669	16	84	8.0
RCB	14	710	14	81.2	8.7
KXIP	14	787	12	84	9.4

Data source: Espncricinfo

One of Umesh's other big problem is his performance in the death overs. Over the last two editions of the tournament he has been the most expensive bowler in the death overs (Exhibit 15) and one of the main reasons behind RCB's poor performance in this phase of the game.

Exhibit 15: Death Bowling Since IPL 2018 (Min. 10 Overs)

Bowler	Matches	Wkts	Econ.	SR
Umesh Yadav	15	4	13.7	24.0
Mohit Sharma	9	3	12.9	23.3
Mujeeb Ur Rahman	11	4	12.2	16.5
Hardik Pandya	17	14	12.2	8.2
Tim Southee	8	3	11.8	26.0
Jaydev Unadkat	22	13	11.8	15.1

Data source: Espncricinfo

3.2.3 Mis Management of Resources

RCB had invested a lot of money in a few Indian and international players who did not live up to their price tags. One of the main reasons for that was a few of these players did not get enough chances to play (Exhibit 16).

Exhibit 16: Prices and Performances in IPL 2019

Player	Price INR(CR)	Matches	Inns	Runs	Avg.	Overs	Wkts	Econ.
Shimron Hetmyer	4.2	5	5	90	18.00			
Shivam Dube	5.0	4	4	40	13.33	1.4	0	4.80
Washington Sundar	3.2	10	8	66	13.20	29	8	9.17
Akshadeep Nath	3.6	8	5	61	12.20			
Heinrich Klaasen	0.5	3	2	9	4.50			
Mohammed Siraj	2.6	9	9			28.1	7	9.55
Total	19.1							

Data source: Espncricinfo

Post the 2019 season, RCB decided to change the structure of the team. Head coach, Gary Kirsten and bowling coach, Ashish Nehra were relieved of their duties and the franchise appointed Mike Hesson, former head coach of the New Zealand cricket team and King's XI Punjab, as director of cricket. Simon Katich, former Kolkata Knight Riders batting coach was appointed as head coach. RCB let go of nine of its players including six overseas players. The only overseas players retained were AB de Villiers and Moeen Ali.

The squad retained and the financials post the restructuring were as follows

Squad: AB de Villiers, Devdutt Padikkal, Gurkeerat Singh, Moeen Ali, Mohammed Siraj, Navdeep Saini, Parthiv Patel, Pawan Negi, Shivam Dube, Umesh Yadav, Virat Kohli, Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal

Player slots left: 12 (six domestic, six overseas)
Money spent: INR 57.10 crore (US$ 8.1 million approx.)
Purse remaining: INR 27.90 crore (US$ 3.9 million approx.)

Given the dynamics of the team, the 2020 auction would be interesting as the franchise would need to fill up six slots, mostly with international players on a limited budget

4.0: The 2020 Auction

The 2020 auction was going to be crucial for the franchise as it had to fill up at least six slots mostly with international players. With a new coaching staff and scouting system in place, the fans hoped that the franchise had some fresh and innovative tricks up its sleeve.

This section will discuss the player roles that the team needed to fill and a SWOT analysis of its performance at the auction.

4.1 Requirements for the 2020 Season

Given the areas of concern, as discussed in the previous section, the team would have looked to fill in the following spots in the 2020 Auction.

4.1.1 Hard Hitting Opening Batsman

The RCB Top-Order (1-3) had contributed the least in IPL 2019 (Exhibit 17), despite of the fact that Virat Kohli and India wicketkeeper, Parthiv Patel were among the top three contributors for the franchise (Exhibit 7). This stat is alarming, as it depicts that the Top-Order contribution level of this team does not match up with other franchises in the league.

Exhibit 17: Top-Order (1-3) Contribution (IPL 2019)

Team	Inns	Runs	Wkts	SR	RR	Avg Runs/Wkt
SRH	15	1726	37	143.7	8.6	46.6
KXIP	14	1471	38	143.5	8.6	38.7
MI	16	1370	44	129.4	7.8	31.1
RR	14	1361	35	140.9	8.5	38.9
DC	16	1346	46	131.1	7.9	29.3
CSK	17	1249	49	120.3	7.2	25.5
KKR	14	1248	38	135.9	8.2	32.8
RCB	14	1235	40	142.8	8.6	30.9

Data source: Espncricinfo

The other reason why RCB will also be looking for a hard-hitting opener is because with the T20 World Cup coming up, one could expect Virat Kohli to bat at three (Exhibit 18).

Exhibit 18: Kohli as an Opener RCB v India (Since 2018)

Team	Inns
RCB	17
India	1

Data source: Espncricinfo

4.1.2 Seem Bowling Allrounder

Though RCB, over different seasons, has spent a healthy amount on a seem bowling allrounder the franchise is yet to settle on one. This has been largely because of average performances by this category of players (Exhibit 19).

Exhibit 19: Seem Bowling Allrounders since IPL 2018

Player	IPL Season	Price INR(Cr)	Matches	Runs	SR	Wkts	Econ.
Marcus Stoinis	2019	6.2	10	211	135.3	2	8.7
Chris Woakes	2018	7.4	5	17	89.5	8	10.4
Colin de Grandhome	2018/2019	2.2	13	177	133.1	2	9.2
Shivam Dube	2019	5.0	4	40	121.2	0	4.8
Total		20.8					

Data source: Espncricinfo

4.1.3 Quicks

As discussed in the previous section the RCB pace department had a below average season in 2019 (Exhibit 9, 12). The fast bowling department picked up the second lowest number of wickets at a very high economy (Exhibit 20).

Exhibit 20: Performance of Pacers in IPL 2019

Team	Inns	Wkts	Econ.	Balls/Wkt
DC	16	68	8.4	16.8
MI	16	64	8.6	19.2
SRH	15	51	8.3	21.6
KXIP	14	45	9.6	21.3
CSK	17	44	8.1	20.0
RR	14	43	9.0	22.5
RCB	14	34	9.3	28.1
KKR	14	27	9.3	29.9

Data source: Espncricinfo

The franchise would want to pick quick bowlers who would help it solve its death bowling woes. In the 2019 season 6 out off its 8 bowlers conceded at an economy of more than 10 runs per over (Exhibit 21)

Exhibit 21: RCB Pace Bowling in Death Overs (IPL 2019)

Bowler	Matches	Overs	Wkts	Econ.
NA Saini	11	15	8	9.5
Mohammed Siraj	9	12.1	5	10.4
UT Yadav	9	9.5	3	13.4
K Khejroliya	1	1	1	5.0
S Dubey	1	0.4	0	4.5
DW Steyn	2	2	0	15.5
TG Southee	2	2	0	20.0
MP Stoinis	3	2.4	0	16.5

Data source: Espncricinfo

4.2 Possible Targets

Given the three categories the following could be the players targeted by the franchise.

Exhibit 22: Prospective Players for the Franchise

Opening Batsman	All Rounder	Quicks
Alex Cary	Glen Maxwell	Pat Cummins
Aaron Finch	Chris Morris	Sheldon Cottrell
Jason Roy	Jimmy Neesham	Kartik Tyagi
Yashasvi Jaiswal	Deepak Hooda	Dale Steyn

Data source: Author

4.3 The Auction:

At the IPL auction, the team tried to fill up most of these player roles. The franchise spent a little above 21 Cr and bought following eight players:

Exhibit 23: Players bought in Auction 2020

Player	Price INR (Cr)	Role
Aaron Finch	4.4	Top-order Batsman
Kane Richardson	4.0	Fast Bowler
Josh Philipe	0.2	Wicketkeeper Batsman
Pavan Deshpande	0.2	Allrounder
Dale Steyn	2.0	Fast Bowler
Shahbaz Ahmed	0.2	Allrounder
Chris Morris	10.0	Allrounder
Isuru Udana	0.2	Allrounder
Total	**21.2**	

Data source: Espncricinfo

The squad for the 2020 season was as following:

Exhibit 24: RCB 2020 Squad

Player	Role
Virat Kohli (C)	Batsman
Moeen Ali	Allrounder
Yuzvendra Chahal	Bowler
AB de Villiers	Batsman
Shivam Dube	Allrounder
Gurkeerat Singh Mann	Batsman
Mohammed Siraj	Bowler
Pawan Negi	Bowler
Devdutt Padikkal	Batsman
Parthiv Patel	Wicketkeeper Batsman
Umesh Yadav	Bowler
Washington Sundar	Allrounder
Aaron Finch	Batsman
Kane Richardson	Fast Bowler
Josh Philipe	Wicketkeeper Batsman
Pavan Deshpande	Allrounder
Dale Steyn	Fast Bowler
Shahbaz Ahmed	Allrounder
Chris Morris	Allrounder
Isuru Udana	Allrounder
Navdeep Saini	Bowler

Data source: Espncricinfo

4.4 SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE TEAM

RCB have retained their core ahead of the auction and have added decent backups in all departments.

4.4.1 Strengths:

RCB have added depth in the batting, bowling, and leadership departments at the 202o auction

Fire Power at the Top

Australia captain, Aaron Finch and uncapped Australia wicketkeeper batsman, Josh Phillipe will give the RCB Top-Order the necessary fire power that the team was missing in the last 2 seasons. Aaron Finch, will also be a useful addition to the leadership group. Josh Phillipe was the third highest run scorer in the Big Bash League (BBL) 2019-20 (Exhibit 25).

Exhibit 25: Highest Run-Scores in BBL 2019-20

Player	Matches	Runs	Avg	SR	50s	100s
Marcus Stoinis	17	705	54.23	136.6	6	1
Alex Hales	17	576	38.40	146.9	6	0
Josh Philippe	16	487	37.46	129.9	5	0
Jonathan Wells	15	478	68.29	135.4	4	0
Shaun Marsh	12	449	37.42	124.0	3	0

Data source: Espncricinfo

Explosive Lower- Middle-Order

South Africa allrounder, Chris Morris, Moeen Ali, India allrounder, Shivam Dubey and Washington Sundar make for a strong lower- Middle-Order. All these batsmen can help RCB turn fighting scores into match winning ones (Exhibit 26).

Exhibit 26: Batting SR in Death Overs in T20

Player	Matches	Runs	SR	4's	6,s	BPB
Chris Morris	98	1174	161.3	78	63	5.2
Moeen Ali	22	276	179.2	25	17	3.7
Washington Sundar	18	124	161.0	6	8	5.5
Shivam Dube	12	70	122.8	4	3	8.1

Data source: Espncricinfo

4.4.2 Weakness

Post the 2019 season, RCB let go of its overseas pacer, Tim Southee and two overseas all-rounders Stoinis and de Grandhomme and needed someone who could bowl well in the death overs. After missing out on Pat Cummins at the auction to KKR, the team added four pacers who are considered T20 specialists, however none of them are bankable death bowlers.

Death Bowling Problems

Though RCB added Chris Morris and Kane Richardson to its squad, however the team still does not have an impressive death bowling lineup (Exhibit 27).

Exhibit 27: RCB Seamers in the Death Overs (Since IPL 2016)

Bowler	Matches	Wkts	Econ.	BPB
Umesh Yadav	27	17	12.6	4
Navdeep Saini	11	8	9.3	5
Mohammed Siraj	23	15	10.5	5
Chris Morris	29	26	8.1	7
Kane Richardson	4	3	9.5	6

Data source: Espncricinfo

Chahal Lacks Support in the Spin Department

One of the other big issues for RCB is the lack of support for Yuzvendra Chahal in the spin department. Over the past two seasons, the team has invested in another India international offspiner, Washington Sundar, however his performances have been average. Among all spinners for RCB since IPL 2018 Chahal has taken 56% of all wickets (Exhibit 28).

Exhibit 28: RCB Spinners Since IPL 2018

Bowler	Matches	Wkts	Econ.	SR
YS Chahal	28	30	7.5	19.9
MM Ali	16	9	7.0	25.4
W Sundar	10	8	9.2	21.8
P Negi	9	4	10.0	22.8
M Ashwin	2	3	7.6	14.0
P Ray Barman	1	0	14	-

Data source: Espncricinfo

4.4.3 Opportunity:

Given the depth in the squad that the team possesses post the auction, it would want to deploy its resources in an optimal manner and maximize home advantage which it has been unable to do over the past two seasons.

The Chance for de Villiers and Kohli to Replicate IPL 2016

With the influx of experienced and explosive T20 players such as Chris Morris, Joshua Phillipe and Aaron Finch the two of the biggest pillars of RCB, Kohli and AB de Villiers can express themselves and recreate the same magic that they created in 2016 (Exhibit 29).

Exhibit 29: Highest Run Scorer in IPL 2016

Player	Matches	Runs	Avg	SR	50's	100's
Virat Kohli	16	973	81.08	152	7	4
David Warner	17	848	60.57	151.4	9	0
AB de Villiers	16	687	52.85	168.8	6	1
Shikhar Dhawan	17	501	38.54	116.8	4	0
Gautam Gambhir	15	501	38.54	121.9	5	0

Data source: Espncricinfo

4.4.4 Threat:

Pressure on Parthiv and Finch to Deliver

The Royal Challengers were outbidded more than once, mainly by Kings XI and the Knight Riders. It was therefore, forced to pick second- or third-choice overseas players towards the end of the auction. Kohli has more bowling options than ever before, but the pressure on Finch and Parthiv will be high - they need to take the load off Kohli and de Villiers. If the Royal Challengers must play two overseas quicks, they must sacrifice their opening slot otherwise they need to depend on Indian quicks. If, by chance, Morris is injured or not in form, their perennial death bowling problems will return.

Prospective Playing XI

After assessing the squad that RCB has for IPL 2019, the potential playing XI could be Aaron Finch, Parthiv Patel (Wk), Virat Kohli, AB de Villiers, Moeen Ali, Shivam Dube, Chris Morris, Washington Sunder, Umesh Yadav, and Navdeep Saini.

5.0: The 2021 Auction Strategy

As RCB goes into the 2021 auction, the team management will want to ensure that it constructs a team that will be able to win both home and away matches. The assumption that this research paper is following is the 2021 auction, like the 2018 auction, will be a mega one. This section will investigate the key takeaways from the 2020 auction, the players to be retained pre auction, the RTM options and then look at possible options for different player roles in the squad.

5.1 Auction Guidelines

The following will be the key guidelines for the 2021 IPL

- Each franchise will have a budget of Rs 80 Cr to assemble a squad of a maximum of 25 players (up to 8 overseas) and a minimum of 18 players.
- An IPL Franchise is eligible to secure up to 5 players by virtue of a combination of Player Retention (Pre-Player Auction) and Right to Match (RTM) (during the Player Auction)
- A maximum of either 3 retention or 3 RTM is at the discretion of the franchises. If there is no retention before player auction, then franchises can have up to 3 RTMs. If a franchise uses three retentions (pre-auction), then they will have two RTM during the auction.
- If three players are retained by a franchise, it will be down by Rs 33 Crore (15 Crore for the first player retained, 11 Crore for the second and 7 for the third).
- If two players are retained by a franchise, it will be down by Rs 21 Crore. (12.5 Crore for the first player retained and 8.5 Crore for the second).
- If only one player is retained by a franchise, it will be down by Rs 12.5 Crore.
- If the player retained is an uncapped player, it will be down by Rs 3 Crore for each uncapped player retained

5.2 Takeaways from the 2020 Auction

RCB had put together a potentially match-winning squad for the IPL of 2020 (Exhibit 23). Some of the key takeaways from that auction were:

- RCB has two of the best T20 batsmen in the Top-Order in AB de Villiers and Virat Kohli. The franchise further strengthened their batting by adding a proven and experienced foreign opener in Aaron Finch to its ranks.
- Bringing in Chris Morris to replace Marcus Stoinis meant that the team acquired a better bowler who can bowl in the death overs and can also act as a pinch hitter of sorts, down the order.
- RCB have India's best T20I spinner in Yuzvendra Chahal, a proven wicket taker, especially at Chinnaswamy stadium, which has often been a nightmare for other spinners. If Sundar and Moeen also pulled their weight with the ball, RCB will have a competitive spin trio.

- One area where RCB have always lacked is the death bowling department. To fill that gap the franchise bought four pacers, all of whom are T20 specialists (Steyn, Morris, Richardson and Udana)

5.3 Players to Retain Pre-Auction

RCB should retain 3 players pre-auction and buyback 2 using the RTM card. The rationale behind retaining players in the pre-auction are two-fold, the player should be a key pillar of the team and his auction value will be greater than his retention price.

5.3.1 Virat Kohli

The captain of RCB is an integral part of the team. He is not only the highest run-scorer in the IPL but also in T20 Internationals (Exhibit 30). He also has the highest average in T20I among batsmen who have played more than 10 innings (Exhibit 31).

Exhibit 30: Highest Run Scorers in IPL

Player	Mat	Runs	Avg	SR	50s	100s
Virat Kohli	177	5412	37.85	131.6	36	5
Suresh Raina	193	5368	33.34	137.1	38	1
Rohit Sharma	188	4898	31.6	130.8	36	1
David Warner	126	4706	43.17	142.4	44	4
Shikhar Dhawan	159	4579	33.42	124.8	37	0
Chris Gayle	125	4484	41.14	151	28	6
MS Dhoni	190	4432	42.21	137.8	23	0
Robin Uthappa	177	4411	28.83	130.5	24	0
AB de Villiers	154	4395	39.95	151.2	33	3
Gautam Gambhir	154	4217	31.01	123.9	36	0

Data source: Espncricinfo

Exhibit 31: Highest Run Scorer in T20I

Player	Mat	Runs	Avg.	SR	50s	100s
Virat Kohli	82	2794	50.8	138.3	24	0
Rohit Sharma	103	2685	31.59	138.6	20	4
Martin Guptill	88	2536	32.51	134.6	15	2
David Warner	79	2207	31.53	140.5	17	1
Eoin Morgan	89	2138	30.99	137.5	13	0
Paul Stirling	78	2124	29.92	139.3	18	0
Shoaib Malik	102	2043	31.43	124.3	6	0
Aaron Finch	61	1989	38.25	155.9	12	2
Mohammad Shahzad	65	1936	31.23	134.8	12	1

Data source: Espncricinfo

To further add on to his T20 arsenal, over the past season he has added on to his power game. In India's T20 home season in 2019, there has been a significant difference in the way Kohli has approached his innings (Exhibit 32). He has further improved his ability to hit boundaries and is becoming even more destructive against pace. Post IPL 2019, his six hitting ability has doubled at home conditions.

Exhibit 32: Virat Kohli batting in India since 2018

	Inns	Runs	Avg	SR	Balls/ Six
2018-Till IPL 2019	30	1090	41.9	143	21
Post IPL 2019	7	320	106.7	163	10

Data source: Espncricinfo

5.3.2 Navdeep Saini

India fast bowler, Navdeep Saini was one of the finds of the 2019 season. As the season progressed, he became the spearhead of RCB's bowling attack. He was rewarded with an international call up and has been highly impressive ever since (Exhibit 33).

Exhibit 33: Navdeep Saini in T20I

Mts	Inns	Wkts	Avg	Econ	SR
10	9	13	18.1	7.2	15.2

Data source: Espncricinfo

One of Saini's biggest strength is the fact that he can bowl in any phase of the innings (Exhibit 34).

Exhibit 34: Navdeep Saini in T20I by Phases

Phase	Inns	Overs	Wkts	Econ	SR	Dot%
1 to 6	9	36%	3	8.3	24	57
7 to 15	9	36%	5	5.6	14.4	51
16 to 20	6	28%	5	7.7	10.6	49

Data source: Espncricinfo

One more argument for retaining Saini, is that some Indian international fast bowlers are more expensive to procure in an open auction as compared to retaining. For instance, In the 2018 auction, MI and SRH retained India fast bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuvneshwar Kumar for 7 Cr and 8.5 Cr respectively, while as RR paid a high sum of 11.5 Cr for Jaydev Unadkat.

5.3.3 AB de Villiers

AB de Villiers has been one of the most prolific players in the IPL. He is the third-highest run scorer among foreign batsmen, with the best strike rate in the top 10 (Exhibit 35).

Exhibit 35: Highest Foreign Run Scorers in the IPL.

Player	Mat	Runs	Avg	SR	50s	100s	BPB
David Warner	126	4706	43.2	142.4	44	4	5.2
Chris Gayle	125	4484	41.2	151	28	6	4.3
AB de Villiers	154	4395	40.0	151.2	33	3	5.1
Shane Watson	134	3575	31.1	139.5	19	4	4.9
Brendon McCullum	109	2880	27.7	131.8	13	2	5.2
Kieron Pollard	148	2755	28.7	146.8	14	0	5.3
Shaun Marsh	71	2477	40.0	132.7	20	1	5.4
Jacques Kallis	98	2427	28.6	109.2	17	0	7.5
Dwayne Smith	91	2385	28.4	135.2	17	0	4.9
Adam Gilchrist	80	2069	27.2	138.4	11	2	4.5

Data source: Espncricinfo

Over the last two seasons he has been RCB's most consistent match winner (Exhibit 36).

Exhibit 36: Player of the Match Recipients (Since IPL 2018)

Player	Player of the Match (Instances)
AB de Villiers	5
Others	6

Data source: Espncricinfo

In the 8 wins that AB de Villiers was part of for RCB since IPL 2018, he has scored a fifty in 6 of those instances (Exhibit 37).

Exhibit 37: Impact as a batsman in Wins for RCB (Since IPL 2018)

Player	Inns	Runs	Avg.	SR	50+ Scores
AB de Villiers	8	455	113.8	176	6
V Kohli	11	418	41.8	148.8	3
PA Patel	8	173	24.71	146.6	1
MM Ali	5	162	32.4	188.4	2
MP Stoinis	4	105	105	147.9	0

Data source: Espncricinfo

5.4 Players for RTM

Though using the RTM is dependent on the dynamic nature of an open auction, however RCB should use the RTM for the following two players

5.4.1 Yuzvendra Chahal

RCB should use the RTM on Yuzvendra Chahal as it did in the 2018 auction. Chahal has not only done well for RCB but is also India's leading wicket-taker among spinners (Exhibit 38, 39). As discussed in a previous section (Exhibit 3 & Exhibit 4) he is one of the few bowlers who does well in Bengaluru, a venue at which other spinners struggle because of the small boundaries and wet outfields.

Exhibit 38: Wicket Takers for India in T20I

Bowler	Matches	Wkts	Avg	Econ	SR
J Bumrah	50	59	20.3	6.7	18.2
YS Chahal	42	55	24.3	8.2	17.8
R Ashwin	46	52	22.9	7	19.7
B Kumar	43	41	26.5	7	22.6
RA Jadeja	49	39	29.5	7.1	24.9
K Yadav	21	39	13.8	7.1	11.6

Data source: Espncricinfo

Exhibit 39: Highest Wicket-Taker for RCB since 2018

Bowler	Matches	Inns	Wkts	Econ	SR
YS Chahal	28	28	30	7.5	19.9
UT Yadav	25	25	28	8.7	19.5
Mohammed Siraj	20	20	18	9.2	23.1
NA Saini	13	13	11	8.3	26.2
MM Ali	16	14	9	7	25.4

Data source: Espncricinfo

5.4.2 Aaron Finch

If RCB decides to acquire Finch, it would have found an explosive opener who could be of great impact in the powerplay. He has got the best strike rate in the powerplay (Exhibit 40)

Exhibit 40: Best SR in Powerplay since 2019 in T20I (Min.150 Runs)

Player	Inns	Runs	SR	Bdry%
Quinton de Kock	9	234	170.8	79%
Aaron Finch	11	228	159.4	75%
Kevin Obrien	29	595	159.1	74%
KL Rahul	15	396	159	67%
George Munsey	15	324	158.8	80%

Data source: Espncricinfo

Finch has also scored the most number of centuries in T20s since 2017 (Exhibit 41).

Exhibit 41: Most Centuries in T20s since 2017

Player	100s
Aaron Finch	6
Chris Gayle	4
Cameron Delport	4
Kamran Akmal	4
Babar Azam	3

Data source: Espncricinfo

5.5 Players to be Bought at the Auction

This section will discuss the different playing roles and the potential options that the franchise can look at.

5.5.1 Top-Order

With Virat Kohli and Aaron Finch already there, the team will be looking for a left-handed opening batsman who could bat through. In 2019, both Virat and Parthiv had solid seasons but they were unable to give RCB an explosive start (Exhibit 42).

Exhibit 42: Lowest SR for an Opening Partnership-IPL 2019

Partner	Inns	Runs	Avg	SR	50+
Sunil Narine - Chris Lynn	7	245	35	181.5	1
David Warner - Jonny Bairstow	10	791	79.1	164.1	7
Chris Lynn - Shubman Gill	4	207	51.8	155.6	2
Chris Gayle - KL Rahul	13	500	38.5	140.1	4
Shikhar Dhawan - Prithvi Shaw	16	430	26.9	140.1	2
Ajinkya Rahane - Jos Buttler	7	249	35.6	139.1	3
Rohit Sharma - Quinton de Kock	15	565	37.7	136.8	5
Parthiv Patel - Virat Kohli	11	328	29.8	132.8	2
Shane Watson - Faf du Plessis	12	345	28.8	113.5	3

Min. 100 balls batted together

Given that there are already two right handers in the team in the top 3 (Kohli and Finch) the franchise would ideally be looking for a left-handed opener, who is also a skilled spinner.

Karnataka uncapped opening batsman, Devdutt Padikkal should be a front runner for the spot given his ability to play pace and spin well (Exhibit 43)

Exhibit 43: Devdutt Padikkal, Pace vs Spin

Pace/Spin	Inns	SR	BPB
Pace	8	170	3.8
Spin	8	177	3.8

Data source: Espncricinfo

Some of the potential options that the team could look for this position are

Exhibit 44: Top-Order Options

Top-Order Options
Devdutt Padikkal
Alex Cary (Wk)
Jason Roy
Yashasvi Jaiswal
Josh Philippe
Parthiv Patel (Wk)

Data source: Author

5.5.2 Middle-Order:

RCB need an explosive Middle-Order batsman to bat alongside AB de Villiers to give the team some much needed momentum in the middle overs (7-15). In IPL 2019, it had the second lowest run-rate in this phase (Exhibit 45).

Exhibit 45: Middle Overs (7-15) run rate in IPL 2019

Team	Inns	Wkts	SR	RR
KKIP	14	25	147.2	8.8
KKR	14	28	141.1	8.5
RR	13	24	131.9	7.9
MI	16	37	126.5	7.6
SRH	15	29	126.9	7.6
DC	16	37	122.3	7.3
RCB	13	26	121.5	7.3
CSK	17	30	117	7

Data source: Espncricinfo

The franchise should try to buy back Moeen Ali, as his biggest strength is to take on the spinners in the middle overs (Exhibit 46, 47). Even against pace, his ability to find the fence is impressive. RCB can look at him coming into bat at #4 as it would be beneficial for two reasons (i) carefree approach against spin in middle overs (ii) cushion of having AB de Villiers at #5 as a finisher

Exhibit 46: Moeen Ali Batting by Position in IPL

BatPosition	Inns	Runs	Avg	SR	50s
Opener (1,2)	2	14	7	140	0
3	1	9	9	112.5	0
4	5	186	37.2	184.2	3
5	4	44	14.7	125.7	0
6	2	44	44	176	0

Exhibit 47: Moeen Ali v Pace/Spin in IPL

Pace/Spin	Inns	Runs	SR	BPB
Pace	12	150	169	4
Spin	11	147	163	4.3

Data source: Author

Some options that the team can look at are:

Exhibit 48: Middle-Order Options

Middle-Order Options
Moeen Ali
Nicholas Pooran
Ishan Kishan
Gurkeerat Singh Mann
Glen Maxwell

Data source: Author

5.5.3 Allrounders

The seam bowling allrounder is a very coveted spot for any IPL team as there are limited match-winning options. The one player that RCB can potentially look at is England allrounder, Ben Stokes for his ability to play spin and pace equally well and potential to accelerate in the death overs (Exhibit 49, 50). He also does well as a bowler in the death overs (Exhibit 51).

Exhibit 49: Ben Stokes v Pace/Spin in T20s

Pace/Spin	Inns	Runs	SR	BPB
Pace	90	1319	138.99	5.7
Spin	73	832	136.62	6.4

Data source: Espncricinfo

Exhibit 50: Ben Stokes Batting in Phases – T20

Phase	Inns	Runs	SR	BPB	Bdry%
1 to 6	37	388	117.2	6	62%
7 to 15	73	1242	135.9	7	53%
16 to 20	44	521	166.5	4	66%

Data source: Espncricinfo

Exhibit 51: Ben Stokes Bowling in Phases – T20

Phase	Inns	Wkts	Avg	Econ	SR
1 to 6	48	12	46	8.8	31.5
7 to 15	68	22	40.6	7.8	31.3
16 to 20	57	34	20.5	9.1	13.5

Data source: Espncricinfo

Though Ben Stokes was the highest paid player in the 2018 open auction (12.5 Cr), however his average performances with both bat and ball for RR will make him a value buy at the auction as his price is expected to come down.

Exhibit 52: Ben Stokes for Rajasthan Royals

Inns	Runs	Avg	SR	50+	Wkts	Ecn
22	319	17.72	122.7	0	14	9.1

Data source: Espncricinfo

Some options that the team can look at are:

Exhibit 53: Allrounders

Allrounders
Ben Stokes
Chris Morris
Nathan Coulter Nile
Shivam Dubey
Chris Wokes

Data source: Author

5.5.4 Spinners

RCB over the last couple of years have lacked the support cast in the spin department to Yuzvendra Chahal (Exhibit 27). The franchise should try to invest in a finger spinner who knows the conditions at Bengaluru well. One player that the team can look at is finger spinner and lower order power hitter, Krishnappa Gowtham. Gowtham's greatest strength is his ability to bowl in the powerplay (Exhibit 54).

Player 8: Krishnappa Gowtham

Exhibit 54: Gowtham by Phase since IPL 2018

Phase	Inns	Wkts	Avg	Econ	SR
1 to 6	21	8	33.4	7.9	25.5
7 to 15	17	4	51.3	8.2	37.5
16 to 20	1	0	0	6	0

Data source: Espncricinfo

One of the other reasons why he should be included in the side is his ability to finish games as a lower order batsman (Exhibit 55). In IPL 2018, Gowtham scored a match winning 33 off 12 balls to help RR beat MI. When he walked his side needed 43 off 17 balls.

Exhibit 55: Gowtham in the Death Overs in T20s

Inns	Runs	SR	BPB
24	231	167.4	4

Data source: Espncricinfo

Some options that the team can look at are:

Exhibit 56: Spinners

Spinners
Krishnappa Gowtham
Shreyas Gopal
Washington Sundar
Ravi Bishnoi
Atharva Ankolekar
Murgan Ashwin
Axar Patel

Data source: Espncricinfo

5.5.5 Fast Bowlers

RCB need to add serious artillery to their fast bowling resources as the group as a collective under-performed in 2019 (Exhibit 20). Though Navdeep Saini is a good young addition to the team, the lineup needs fast bowlers who can create inroads in the powerplay and can help RCB improve its record in the death overs .The franchise can look at Umesh Yadav as a new ball option and Australia fast bowler, Mitchell Starc as a death bowling option.

Umesh Yadav has been one of the leading powerplay bowlers over the last two editions of the IPL. His powerplay numbers are only next to fellow India fast bowler, Deepak Chahar who is the highest wicket taker in this phase (Exhibit 57).

Exhibit 57: Highest Wicket Taker in the Powerplay (Since IPL 2018)

Bowler	Inns	Wkts	Econ	SR
Deepak Chahar	29	25	7.3	19.7
Umesh Yadav	24	18	7.5	17.3
Mitchell McClenaghan	16	11	7.8	18.5
Harbhajan Singh	16	11	8.4	17.9
Sunil Narine	25	8	6.7	24.8

Data source: Espncricinfo

However, Umesh's powerplay numbers are in direct contrast to his numbers in the death overs (Exhibit 15). Given the franchise struggles in this phase of the game, it can look at a bowler such as Mitchell Starc who has done well for the franchise and is brilliant in the death overs (Exhibit 58, 59).

Exhibit 58: Starc for RCB

Inns	Wkts	Avg	Econ	SR
26	34	20.4	7.2	17.1

Data source: Espncricinfo

Exhibit 59: Starc Phase-Wise in T20s

Phase	Inns	Wkts	Econ	SR
1 to 6	91	49	6.6	22.2
7 to 15	38	15	7.2	17.9
16 to 20	77	75	8	9.3

Data source: Espncricinfo

Some options that the team can look at are:

Exhibit 60: Fast Bowlers

Fast Bowlers
Mitchell Starc
Umesh Yadav
Siddharth Kaul
Kartik Tyagi
Sandeep Sharma
Kane Richardson
Ishant Sharma
Mohammed Shami

Data source: Author

5.6 Potential Squad

An IPL auction is very dynamic, and it is very difficult to predict what would be the exact composition of the side. If the franchise has a good auction the following squad can be assembled.

Exhibit 61: RCB 2021 Potential Squad

Player	Role
Virat Kohli (c)	Batsman / Captain
Moeen Ali	Allrounder
Yuzvendra Chahal	Bowler
AB de Villiers	Batsman
Gurkeerat Singh Mann	Batsman
Atharva Ankolekar	Allrounder
Ishant Sharma	Bowler
Krishnappa Gowtham	Bowler
Devdutt Padikkal	Batsman
Parthiv Patel	Wicketkeeper Batsman
Karthik Tyagi	Bowler
Ravi Bishnoi	Allrounder
Aaron Finch	Batsman
Josh Philippe	Wicketkeeper Batsman
Dale Steyn	Fast Bowler
Mitchell Starc	Fast Bolwer
Ben Stokes	Allrounder
Navdeep Saini	Fast Bowler

Data source: Author

6.0 Conclusion

RCB for all the talent it possesses have not made the playoffs in the last 3 years. The reasons for the team faltering year after year is that it keeps on repeating the same mistakes. However, under the new leadership of Mike Hesson and Simon Katich this team which usually leaves it till the end to assure a playoffs place will want to peak early. Moreover, the franchise has not maximized the chances of winning its home matches and would want to address that.

However, if the 2020 auction is a metric to go by the team management has tried to address the areas of concern which have been its achilleas heel since IPL 2016. If the strategies mentioned through the course of this research paper were to be followed the team will be in a good shape to do well in the 2021 season.