

CRICKET FACES A \$5.5mil LOSS!

By JOHN TAYLOR

Benson and Hedges' \$5.5m sponsorship of Australian cricket could go up in smoke if bans on cigarette and tobacco advertising are introduced nationally.

If a Private Member's Bill to prevent all forms of tobacco advertising is passed by the West Australian Parliament, major cricket and other sports, such as pacing and motor racing, will be dealt a deadly blow in that State.

The first big event in jeopardy is the first cricket Test between Australia and England, due to start in Perth on November 12.

There are also two World Series Cup matches scheduled for Perth in February.

And Western Australia's Shef-

field Shield matches may have to be switched interstate.

Benson and Hedges fears the worst if the Bill is passed.

"We would have to take a very hard look at cricket if it was no longer viable on a national basis," a spokesman for the Benson and Hedges company said last night.

"If there was a ban in Perth and it spread to South Australia, as it could, I'm sure that would be the end of cricket as far as our company is concerned."

Fear of big backing going up in smoke

Benson and Hedges has just renewed a three-year sponsorship deal with the ACB and the first year of the contract is worth \$1.8m.

Australian Cricket Board executive director Mr David Richards said last night the board should be free to accept sponsorship from any source.

Richards said that if the West Australian Bill became law, the first Test against England could be moved to one of the other Test centres which could handle a late switch.



Mr David Richards

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