

TV EUROPE

EBU targets top rights and warns about the lure of 'strategic money'

By Kevin McCullagh

The European Broadcasting Union has reaffirmed its commitment to acquiring top sports rights on a pan-European basis and fired a warning shot at sports federations who are prepared to drop the EBU for the "strategic money" offered by sports-rights agencies.

The EBU's director of sports and business, Stefan Kürten, speaking exclusively to *TV Sports Markets* this week, said that it was "very clear" that public-service broadcasters would play "a major role in sports and that having sport on free-to-air television is of major importance for a society."

Despite the cracks which have emerged in the unity of the EBU in recent years over some major rights acquisitions, Kürten said that the EBU was still "extremely successful" as a pan-European consortium, pointing out that 80 per cent of its current rights contracts were done on this basis. "In the latest big contracts – and I think the [IAAF] athletics World Championships

is not the smallest contract – we were bidding, and we are winning the rights, for pan-Europe," he said.

The consortium is closing in on its eighth and ninth major rights deals of 2012 (see box, page 2), to cap what Kürten called "an extremely successful year in a challenging environment."

The EBU has had its rights portfolio chipped away in the last decade, leading to what it feels is an unjust media narrative of decline and eroded relevance. Kürten admitted that the EBU was not as powerful as it was several decades ago, but said the idea that it was in terminal decline was "ridiculous" and that the union still had a European rights portfolio to rival any agency. "We have lost and won back the [Fifa] World Cup. We have lost and won back the IAAF... The media is comparing us with 30 years ago. That is history," he said.

The consortium has faced a number of major challenges over the last 10 to 15

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BASKETBALL

Fiba bringing the game to the fans

By Frank Dunne

The International Basketball Federation (Fiba) believes that it can drive media-rights revenues through a calendar revamp which will take basketball 'out of the shadow of football' and 'bring national team matches home to the fans.'

Fiba, the sport's world governing body, believes that basketball is arguably the number two sport in the world after football but that this is not

properly reflected in the sport's media-rights and sponsorship revenues. This has been due in part to the way the sport's main national team competitions have been organised.

The key planks of the revamp, which will come into force from 2017, are: a switch in the year that the Basketball World Cup is played to avoid a clash with

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years, including a regulatory onslaught from commercial broadcasters, increasing competition from rights agencies for 'traditional' EBU rights, and the trend for rights-holders to pursue market-by-market sales strategies in Europe, often selling the most lucrative markets directly.

Kürten played down the idea that the EBU was now irrevocably split on major deals, with the members in the larger markets preferring to do direct deals with rights-holders. He said such deals reflected the way rights-holders now chose to sell their rights, rather than any split within the consortium. "There is nobody buying pan-European rights for the biggest properties. It is no longer a reality... we can only buy what is offered on the market," he said.

'Strategic money'

Two of its most high-profile losses in recent years were the IAAF rights – which it has since won back – and the rights to the Olympic Games for 2014-16, both of which were sold to agencies. In the last three years, the Sportfive agency has made a loss on the rights for the 2014 and 2016 Games in 40 European territories, and the IEC in Sports agency has struggled to generate profits on the 2010 and 2013 athletics World Championships. In both cases, the agencies struggled to find broadcasters to compete with EBU broadcasters for the rights.

Kürten warned rights-holders against accepting "strategic money" from agencies. "We are extremely clear and realistic in our offers," he said. "We have enormous market experience. I think what we are offering to the rights-holders reflects reality. If a sports federation wants to rely on strategic money, I don't know whether that is the right way. But looking at the very few properties we lost, we saw clearly that agencies were not able to make profits on them."

Top rights

Kürten said that national team football was still a "major priority" for the EBU. The consortium is expected to bid for the rights for Euro 2016 and its qualifiers, which are being sold by the CAA Eleven agency. The EBU

EBU gains and losses in watershed year

The European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters, is close to agreeing new rights deals with the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron, the international rowing federation, and the European Weightlifting Federation, both for the 2013 to 2016 period.

They will follow deals in the last year for: Fifa World Cup football in 2018 and 2022; the Vuelta a España and Vattenfall Cycloclassics cycle races; World Championship wrestling; and European Championship gymnastics, athletics and swimming.

The one major property the union lost rights for in 2012 was Union Cycliste Internationale World Championship cycling. The EBU's director of sport and business, Stefan Kürten argued that this was not a key part of its portfolio. The Infront Sports & Media agency outbid the EBU for the UCI rights in September (*TV Sports Markets* 16:17). In the bidding, the EBU is thought to have offered a rights fee close to the level of its existing deal.

Although the EBU "is focusing very much on cycling," it is more specifically focusing "on the top products," most importantly the Tour de France, which the union has the rights to from 2012 to 2015. Kürten said the EBU was "very happy" with its current cycling portfolio, which also

includes the Vuelta, the Vattenfall Classics, the Amstel Gold Race, and the Tour of Flanders.

The previous major loss – the French Open tennis tournament for the 2012 to 2015 period, for which it was outbid by the MP & Silva agency in June 2011, – had been, like all tennis properties, of declining importance to the EBU portfolio, Kürten claimed.

"The scheduling [of tennis in general] is extremely difficult... because you don't know how long matches will last," he added. "A couple of individual [EBU] members were clearly focused on the French Open, but we don't do tennis that much any longer. The strong countries like Spain are gradually pulling out of tennis on free-to-air." He added: "It might be that it is a sport which is not that interesting for free-to-air television in general in Europe."

Spain has been a strong territory for tennis rights due to the success of Spanish men's player Rafael Nadal. Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE had been one of the main guarantors of the EBU deal.

Despite the EBU's fading enthusiasm for tennis, it still bid competitively to keep hold of the French Open rights. Its losing bid was about \$18 million (€14 million) per year, less than 10 per cent below MP & Silva's winning offer, and up from the \$14 million per year it had been paying in its previous deal. ■

unsuccessfully bid for the newly-centralised Euro 2016 qualifiers when Uefa, European football's governing body, tendered them this year.

The EBU considers its deal with Fifa for the 2018 and 2022 World Cup rights a major endorsement of the consortium's abilities and the importance of free-to-air television in Europe. The EBU paid a 25-per-cent fee increase to land the Fifa rights in 37 European territories (*TV Sports Markets* 16:7). "To see that we are the ones that big sports federations trust in these difficult times is very reassuring for us," Kürten said.

Getting the rights back for the Olympics from 2018 onwards is also likely to be a priority for the EBU. The EBU feels that the job its broadcasters did in broadcasting and contributing to the production of the London 2012 Olympics set a very high standard, which could also help when it comes to bidding for the rights in the next cycle.

"When we look at London, I think we have done a fantastic job to deliver one of the biggest sports events and made it a big success, while others still have to deliver operationally [on 2014-2016]," Kürten said. "Whether that is good

enough to be of interest for the IOC is to be seen. They will have to take political decisions on their leadership and then I think the discussion will begin again." The IOC elects its next president at the 125th IOC Session in September 2013 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

EBU sports rights acquisitions will continue to focus on "the traditional free-to-air Olympic sports, winter sports and summer sports," Kürten said.

Sources close to the EBU in January 2011 told *TV Sports Markets* that the consortium was considering broadening the scope of its acquisitions, and that motorsport and combat

sports properties were among those that could be targeted.

Kürten said that the EBU was "always looking at new properties," but would be focusing on the 'traditional' sports and was not planning on acquiring any motorsport or combat sport rights.

"We are not going on paths where we think others probably have better skills," he said. "We are always focusing on sports where we have a very solid and clear understanding, and therefore those sports are not part of our strategic direction."

The EBU helped the Fédération Internationale d'Automobile produce

and sell motorsport's World Rally Championship rights in the 2012 season, after the collapse of a deal with the previous championship promoter, the North One Sport agency.

Several EBU members wanted to extend the deal and the EBU had talks with the FIA about extending the contract to 2013 and beyond. It is understood that the EBU was unwilling to meet the FIA's demands about the television coverage of the championship. Kürten said the consortium had not been prepared to take a financial risk to land the property. ■

FOOTBALL

Concacaf secures its future and looks for growth abroad

By Dan Horlock

Spanish-language broadcaster Univision's 10-year deal last month for the Spanish and Portuguese-language media rights in the US to tournaments operated by Concacaf has secured the future of football in North and Central America and the Caribbean, according to Concacaf's general secretary Enrique Sanz.

Sanz told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "This was an important move and gives us stability. Univision is a good partner. It is a win-win situation, and great for football in the region."

The deal appears to be a good one for Univision. The broadcaster has been able to secure valuable rights over a long contract period at a time when the US media market is heating up and competition for football rights, in particular, is very strong.

Sanz said that the size of the fee was the reason the governing body decided to commit its rights in its most lucrative territory for such a long period. The deal runs from the 2012-13 season until 2021-22 and is understood to be worth well in excess of \$100 million (€79 million).

Univision paid about \$25 million in the previous two-tournament deal for the 2009 and 2011 editions of the Gold Cup. It paid a further \$4 million per season in a four-year deal, from 2008-09 to 2011-12, for the rights to the Concacaf Champions League. Therefore, at flat growth, the new deal, which includes five editions of the Gold Cup and 10 seasons of the Concacaf Champions League, would be worth just over \$100 million.

The rights also included national team events such as the biennial Concacaf men's and women's U-17 and U-20 competitions and the quadrennial Concacaf Futsal Championship. Univision acquired the Portuguese-language rights as part of the deal to protect its investment due to the similarity between the Spanish and Portuguese languages.

Concacaf did not tender the rights to the market as Univision had a preferential negotiation clause in its previous deal.

Sanz, who was appointed general secretary in July, was previously vice-president of the Traffic Sports USA agency.

Other deals

In August, Concacaf signed a deal in the US for English-language rights to the same competitions with the incumbent-rights-holder, pay-television broadcaster Fox Soccer.

The four-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2015-16, was done at a "significant increase" on the previous value of about \$2.2 million which covered the four-year

period 2008-09 to 2011-12, Sanz said. "Football is growing at such a pace in the US, which is being reflected in the size of English-language television rights deals for the sport."

Fox also holds the rights in central America and has the Concacaf Champions League rights in South America.

In September, Concacaf agreed a joint two-year deal for its international rights with the Traffic Sports and World Sport Group agencies. Sanz said that the reason for signing a short-term deal, from 2012-13 to 2013-14, was because the international market still had a lot of growth potential. He expected to continue signing short-term deals until the rights gained sufficient traction outside of the Americas.

"Our rights are not well positioned. The international market does not know the product. In the Americas, in recent years, the Gold Cup has generated big numbers both in those watching and attending matches," he said.

Traffic will market the rights to the 2013 Gold Cup in South America and some southern European countries. It has already completed a deal in Brazil with pay-television broadcaster SporTV. It will also market the Concacaf Champions League rights in southern Europe only.

WSG will market the rights to the 2013 Gold Cup and the Concacaf Champions League in northern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania. The agency previously held the global rights, outside of North America. ■

PREMIER LEAGUE

Asia continues to deliver massive rights fee increases

By Dan Horlock

The English Premier League has continued to secure big increases in the value of its rights across Asia in a fresh round of deals signed this week for the period 2013-14 to 2015-16.

The standout deals include:

- over a 450-per-cent increase in rights value in Thailand
- a 300-per-cent increase in Vietnam
- a 200-per-cent increase in the Indian subcontinent
- and increases of over 100 per cent in both Indonesia and South Korea.

The league's only setback in Asia came in the cooling Hong Kong market, where it suffered a small drop in value (see table).

The league also agreed deals covering Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. One of the more interesting subtexts to the recent negotiations was a battle between the MP & Silva and IMG Media agencies for rights in strategic territories (see box, page 5).

Thailand

The league's most dramatic increase was in the competitive Thai market where pay-television operator Cable Thai Holdings paid about \$105 million (€83 million) per season, up from between \$18 million per season and \$20 million per season, for the rights in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

CTH fought off competition from several other bidders to win the rights in the second round. It is understood that pay-television operators GMM Grammy and the incumbent rights-holder TrueVisions tabled bids of over \$90 million per season.

The other bidders included: pay-television broadcaster the RS Group, the IMG Media agency and a joint bid from commercial broadcaster BBTB and IPTV operator Cubic Associates Group.

CTH will open eight channels to

Territory	2013-14 to 2015-16		2010-11 to 2012-13		Percentage Increase/Decrease
	Buyer	Fee per year (\$m)	Buyer	Fee per year (\$m)	
Thailand, Laos, Cambodia	Cable Thai Holdings	105	TrueVisions	19	453
Malaysia	Astro	80	Astro	56.7	41
Singapore	SingTel	80	SingTel	80	0
Hong Kong	PCCW	65	i-Cable	68.3	-5
Indian subcontinent	ESS	48	ESS	16	200
Indonesia	MP & Silva	30	ESS	13.3	126
Japan	IMG Media	16.7	MP & Silva	12.3	36
Australia	Fox Sports	16	Fox Sports	15.5	3
South Korea	SBS	15	ESS	5.7	163
Vietnam	IMG Media	12	MP & Silva	3	300
	Total	467.7		289.8	61

Source: TV Sports Markets Footnote: Rights fees for new deals signed in China, Myanmar, Mongolia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands were not available as TV Sports Markets went to press

broadcast all 380 Premier League matches. The channels are expected to be sold as part of a football package at a price of about 300 baht (€7.71/\$9.80) per month, on top of the basic package costing 300 baht per month. The broadcaster said it was open to working with another operator to share the cost, although any deal would be dependent on the league's approval.

CTH, which was set up in 2009, is made up of around 345 local cable television operators and is backed by the Thai media group Siam Sport Syndicate. CTH chairman Wichai Thongtang told the press this week that bank loans would be the key source of funding for the rights. He said that CTH had not expected to win the rights but joined the bidding to try to build the reputation of CTH internationally. He expects CTH to break even on the investment.

The acquisition will now form part of the broadcaster's plan to enter the triple-play market next year. It has allotted 20 billion baht (€514 million/\$654 million) to upgrade its fibre-optic network for cable television, broadband internet and telephony services. The network is scheduled to be ready by February 2013.

CTH currently has about 3.5 million subscribers spread amongst its local partner operators. The company said that with the addition of Premier League rights it planned to double that number by 2015.

Indian subcontinent

Pan-regional sports pay-television broadcaster ESPN Star Sports renewed its rights in the Indian subcontinent for \$48 million per season, an increase of 200 per cent on the \$16 million per season it pays in the current deal.

ESS fought off strong competition from media company Sony to land the rights in the second round. Pay-television broadcaster Neo Sports, owned by the Nimbus Communications agency, also bid. Pay-television broadcaster Taj is thought not to have submitted an offer.

The Premier League is by far the most popular football competition in the territory. ESS will continue to complement its Premier League coverage with content from Italy's Serie A and Spain's La Liga. It holds the rights to the two other leagues until the end of the 2014-15 season.

Sony was aggressive in the bidding as it is looking for premium content for its sports and entertainment pay-television channel Six, which it launched in April.

Indonesia

The MP & Silva agency acquired the rights in Indonesia in a deal worth about \$30 million per season, more than double the \$13.3 million per season paid by ESS in the current deal.

The agency will look to exploit competition between the two main media groups in the country, Media Nusantara Citra (MNC) and Elang Mahkota Teknologi. It will sell the league

IMG 'dents' MP & Silva's football rights dominance in Asia

One of the interesting back stories to the current crop of Premier League deals in Asia is the battle between the IMG Media and MP & Silva agencies for the rights in several key territories.

IMG this week landed a blow on MP & Silva by picking up the rights in Vietnam and Japan, both markets currently held by MP & Silva, as well as the rights in Mongolia.

IMG is thought to be paying about \$12 million (€9.4 million) per season for the rights in Vietnam, compared to the \$3 million per season currently paid by MP & Silva. It is understood to be paying about \$17 million per season for the rights in Japan, compared to MP & Silva's current fee of just over \$12 million per season. All the new deals are for three years, from 2013-14.

TV Sports Markets understands that there was very little difference between IMG's winning bids and those of MP & Silva in the final round of negotiations.

MP & Silva hit back by beating IMG, among others, to the rights in New Zealand and 15 Pacific Islands. The agency also picked up the far more

important market of Indonesia, where it is paying about \$30 million per season, more than double the existing fee paid by pan-regional sports broadcaster ESPN Star Sports.

One expert said that the loss of the rights in Vietnam and Japan will "put a dent in MP & Silva's dominance in football rights in the region but will not alter the overall market situation."

MP & Silva chief executive Andrea Radrizzani told *TV Sports Markets*: "The bidding in the Japanese and Vietnamese markets reached such high levels that we decided to give up and change strategy and invest in Indonesia. We didn't want to buy the rights at any cost and then risk ruining our relationships with the broadcasters in those territories."

MP & Silva has built itself a powerful position in Asia and will be disappointed to have lost out on two markets which were of strategic value and where it is thought to have turned a good profit. The agency had planned to bundle the rights to the league with those of the FA Cup and League Cup in selected Asian territories.

Insiders say that the agency had made a big profit on Vietnam in particular. "They recognised before anyone else the potential of Vietnam and got in there when prices were low. They got the Premier League for a very low price."

IMG is thought to have bid in eight territories. In addition to the three where it won the rights, the agency also bid in: Thailand, the Pacific Islands, New Zealand, Myanmar and South Korea. These follow unsuccessful bids for the Premier League rights in Latin America and the US.

Vietnam has become a more collusive market over the past 18 months and Japan a market where rights growth has slowed. But one expert said IMG would be confident of getting a return, despite the high fees it has paid. He said that Vietnam was a "young emerging market, with several media players" and a big population, and that the impending launch of News Corporation's Fox Sports channel in Japan would inject some dynamism into the pay-television market. IMG already has a strong portfolio of sports rights in Japan. ■

rights together with the English FA Cup and League Cup, for which it acquired the rights earlier this year (*TV Sports Markets* 16:5).

In the current agreement, ESS sold a package of English football rights to the MNC group, which included both the Premier League and the FA Cup, in a deal worth about \$11 million per season. MNC exploited the rights on its commercial channels and its pay-television broadcaster SkyVision.

Malaysia

Pay-television operator Astro renewed its deal in Malaysia at an increase of 41 per cent, from \$56.7 million per season to about \$80 million per season. It will sublicense some rights to ESS, as in the current three-year deal.

Astro faced strong competition for the rights from telco Telekom Malaysia, which continues to bid aggressively for

premium sports content to support its triple-play ambitions.

TM is the dominant operator in the Malaysian broadband market, with a market share of close to 90 per cent. It had 1.63 million broadband subscribers at the end of 2010, compared to 1.43 million in 2009. The company was granted a monopoly on the high-speed broadband network – HSBB – until September 2015 by the government.

Local sources said that Astro would be prepared to pay significantly over market value for premium content in order to maintain market position. The company has over three million subscribers, more than half of the country's 5.1 million television households. The management is very aware of the situation that has developed in neighbouring Singapore, one source said.

In Singapore, telco SingTel used premium sports content, especially football, to gain a

strong foothold in the pay-television market. It has led to a situation whereby the previously dominant pay-television broadcaster StarHub has all but pulled out of acquiring premium sports rights.

Hong Kong

Incumbent rights-holder pay-television broadcaster i-Cable lost the rights to the league in Hong Kong after it bid considerably below the \$68.3 million per season it pays for the rights in the current deal.

The rights were won by rival pay-television broadcaster PCCW in a deal worth about \$65 million per season, down five per cent from the current deal. PCCW held the rights in the previous three-year period, from 2007-08 to 2009-10.

Local sources said that i-Cable had to lower its bid to meet new budget requirements. It is understood that the broadcaster expected PCCW to also lower

its bid from the previous rights tender. However, PCCW is thought to have increased the offer it made at the time of the last rights cycle by around 10 per cent in order to win the rights.

The mature nature of the Hong Kong pay-television market means that there are not enough potential new subscribers to sustain significant future growth for either PCCW or i-Cable. Hong Kong has 2.4 million television homes and pay-television has about a 90-per-cent penetration rate. Both broadcasters have proved they can survive without the Premier League rights.

Australia

Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports renewed its rights in Australia at an increase of just over three per cent, from \$15.5 million per season to \$16 million per season.

Fox is understood to have faced competition for the rights from IPTV broadcaster Fetch TV. Pay-television broadcasters ESPN and Setanta did not bid for the rights.

The pay-television market has cooled since the previous negotiations when Fox won back the rights from ESPN, paying an increase of over 70 per cent, from \$9 million per season to \$15.5 million per season.

South Korea

Media group SBS acquired the rights in South Korea in a deal worth about \$15 million per season, more than double the \$5.7 million per season that ESS pays in the current deal.

In the current deal, ESS sold on the rights to the pay-television channel SBS-ESPN, a joint venture between SBS and ESS, for about 10 billion South Korean won (€7.2 million/\$9.2 million) per season. Therefore, SBS will pay a net increase of over 60 per cent, from \$9 million to \$15 million.

The rights sale has caused a dispute between SBS and its partner in the joint venture ESS, now wholly owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation after it bought out Disney-owned sports broadcaster ESPN (*TV Sports Markets*

16:11). SBS-ESPN obtains a lot of its programming courtesy of ESS but the Premier League rights were never included as part of the wider sharing agreement. One well-placed source said that SBS had believed that SBS-ESPN had acquired the rights at face value from ESS in the current deal. However, a few months ago, it discovered that the joint venture was paying close to a 60-per-cent increase on the fee ESS had agreed with the Premier League. As a consequence, SBS decided to bid for the rights independently of the joint venture.

As in the current deal, SBS will show some matches on its commercial free-to-air channel but most games will be shown on SBS-ESPN.

In the current deal, SBS-ESPN sublicensed internet rights to the portal Daum in a deal worth between \$1 million and \$1.5 million per season.

The MP & Silva, IMG Media and IB Sports agencies, and sports marketing company Eclat, which owns IPTV broadcaster Spo TV, also bid for the rights. ■

BASKETBALL

Fiba revamp should boost media rights value

Continued from page 1 ▶

the Fifa World Cup; an increase in the number of competing teams from 24 to 32; a reduction in the number of continental championships from one every two years to one every four years; the introduction of a two-year qualification cycle for the World Cup, with home and away matches; and a distribution of qualification matches throughout the year, rather than just in summer tournaments.

Frank Leenders, the director general of Fiba Media & Marketing Services, Fiba's commercial subsidiary, said that it was "obvious" that the sport's major global competition had to be moved away from the year in which Fifa World Cup finals

take place, as happens at present.

"The problem we have as a sport is that when you talk to broadcasters and sponsors about a [Fiba] World Cup in Spain in 2014 or in Turkey in 2010 many will tell you that all of their budgets, resources, and focus are already gone," he said.

The basketball World Cup does not clash directly with that of football. It takes place late in August and early September, whereas Fifa's event takes place in June and July. But this makes little difference, Leenders said. "Sponsors invest in campaigns leading up to the event and often invest their entire budget – sometimes even years before – on the Fifa World Cup. After which, everyone goes on holiday. Then we have our event. The same thing applies to broadcasters, in terms of giving production and editorial support to it."

After the 2014 World Cup in Spain, the next World Cup will not be in 2018, as originally planned, but in 2019, and every four years thereafter.

The increase in the number of teams competing in the World Cup from 24 to 32 will provide Fiba with an additional eight television markets where there will be strong interest in the competition.

Fiba v Fiba Europe

Currently, the World Cup is sandwiched between biennial continental, or 'zone,' championships, which act as qualifiers. In the new calendar, zone championships will take place every four years, interspersed with a two-year qualification match cycle for the World Cup, along the lines of the major football tournaments such as the World Cup and Uefa European Championship.

Fiba will sell the media rights to the qualification games, as it does to the zone championships, and redistribute the income to national federations.

These changes have not been universally well received within the sport. Some of the continental federations object to the reduction in the number of zone championships. Fiba

Europe has been particularly vocal in its concern about the loss of one of its EuroBasket zone championships in each four-year cycle. It is also understood that some of the larger federations would prefer to sell the media rights to the new qualifier matches directly.

Leenders said that there would inevitably be further discussions between Fiba, the continental federations and national federations about the detail of the plan. Of Fiba's role in selling the rights centrally, he said that there was a broad understanding that "to build and develop a strong product, also in terms of production and branding, you need to have a centralised approach to it."

'We're an indoor sport and we play our tournaments in summer, when most people are on the beach'
Frank Leenders, Fiba

There were several other clear advantages of the new system, he said. First, the qualification cycle means that for the first time, teams will qualify for the World Cup by playing in their own country, as opposed to qualifying via a one-off zone tournament.

"This is a key Fiba objective, to make sure that federations have some home games," Leenders said. "If you're a fan in Greece, or Turkey or Italy, you never see your national team play in your own country. They play at the Olympics or the European championships, but if these are not held in your country – and they might not be for 50 years – you can't see your team playing at home. That's an enormous weakness, an enormous limitation."

He said that the new system would benefit national federations, most of whom have no experience in organising competitions. Some, like the Spanish or French federation, were already "well developed, with solid structures," but many others were "struggling."

Fiba facing crunch talks in key markets

The International Basketball Federation (Fiba), the sport's world governing body, is entering a period of crucial negotiations for its next three-year rights cycle, from 2013 to 2015, which includes the 2014 World Cup in Spain.

The markets where the rights remain unsold include some of the most valuable for the sport, such as Spain, Italy, Germany, Greece, China and Russia.

Spain, Italy and Greece, in particular, have become extremely tough markets to sell into due to the economic crisis engulfing southern Europe.

Frank Leenders, the director general of Fiba Media & Marketing Services, said that while Fiba was not being "naïve" about the impact of the economic crisis, it was confident about the outcome of the talks. "In Greece and Spain basketball has must-have status. Spain is number two in the world and will host the World Cup in 2014. Basketball is high on the priority list of sports broadcasters. We're not

naïve but we are not desperate. We're aware of the power the sport has in those countries."

Leenders said that the governing body was about two thirds of the way through the sales process and on current projections was heading for a 25-per-cent increase in media-rights income. Fiba does not publish information about its commercial income but independent basketball rights experts consulted by *TV Sports Markets* estimated that the total value of media rights in the last three-year cycle, from 2010 to 2012, was about \$50 million (€39 million).

Deals have been done for the next cycle in many other key markets including: the US (with ESPN); Brazil (ESPN and SporTV); Argentina (DirecTV and the TyC agency); Turkey (NTV); France (Canal Plus); sub-Saharan Africa (SuperSport); the Philippines (Solar); Scandinavia and the Baltic States (Viasat); and the Middle East (Al Jazeera). ■

Year-round visibility

A second major advantage of the new qualification cycle is that it throws up matches right across the calendar year, as opposed to being concentrated into one-off tournaments, which are always held in summer.

"At the moment, national team basketball is stuck – to some extent hidden – in summer. We're an indoor sport and we play our tournaments in summer, when most people are lying on the beach," Leenders said.

The proposed qualification calendar has six windows throughout the year in which teams play a double-header, making a total of 12 matches per federation per year – the "minimum frequency necessary to have some exposure and visibility for the federations," according to Leenders. He said that spreading the matches across the calendar year, and including home and away fixtures, was "great news" for national federations as it would "help

them to develop real sponsorship programmes." Sponsorship rights are sold locally for all Fiba events.

Agreeing the windows with the national leagues, where clubs are concerned about the demands being made on their players, is thought to have been the most complicated part of drawing up the new calendar.

Last week's ratification of the revamp by Fiba's central board completed a process that Fiba began in March 2011. Leenders and Thomas Klooz, two former executives of Team Marketing, Uefa's sales agent, were initially brought in as external consultants on the changes. In May this year, they were appointed to run the newly-created commercial subsidiary, Fiba Media & Marketing Services (*TV Sports Markets* 16:9). As part of the revamp process, accountancy firm Deloitte was commissioned to look at the economic impact of the proposed changes on the whole system of basketball. ■

FOOTBALL

Fox and SBS pay big fees to help develop A-League

By Dan Horlock

The large rights-fee increase paid by News Corporation's Australian pay-television subsidiary Fox Sports for the country's A-League and national team rights – coupled with a first-ever rights fee for the league rights from the national broadcaster SBS – cannot be explained in terms of competition for the rights. There was none. The deal is all about long-term development.

Ken Shipp, head of sport at public-service broadcaster SBS, told *TV Sports Markets* this week that the new deal was about supporting the growth of Australian football. "This is a long-term investment. We are all investing in the future of the sport. Fox understands the sport and wants to improve the domestic league in particular." SBS will be providing the first-ever live free-to-air coverage of the league in Australia.

Football Federation Australia last week signed a deal worth A\$160 million (€131 million/\$166 million) over four seasons, a 115-per-cent increase in the value of its current media rights deal (see panel). It did so despite offering a shorter contract duration – four years compared to the seven years in the current deal – and removing exclusivity from its long-standing rights partner, Fox.

The A-League, Australia's top-tier league, has enjoyed growing television audiences and stadium attendances this season and is attracting marquee players at the end of their careers such as former Juventus and Italy forward Alessandro Del Piero and former Liverpool and England striker Emile Heskey.

As one example of the league's growth, Shipp pointed out that the new franchise team Western Sydney Wanderers FC, which this season took the league place of North Queensland Fury, which had financial problems, had been successful in building a strong fan base. The first ever Sydney derby last

Australian football's new deal	
<p>Football Federation Australia signed a joint four-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2016-17, with Fox Sports, which is currently the incumbent exclusive rights-holder, and public-service broadcaster SBS.</p> <p>The deal, covering the rights to the A-League and the national team, is worth A\$160 million (€131 million/\$166 million), or A\$40 million per season. It is understood that SBS will pay about A\$8 million per season and Fox will pay about A\$32 million per season.</p> <p>The total fee is made up of A\$148 million in cash plus A\$12 million marketing support.</p> <p>In its current seven-year deal, from 2006-07 to 2012-13, Fox pays A\$120 million over the duration of the contract plus A\$10 million in contra arrangements, a total of A\$18.6 million per season.</p> <p>The annual value of the new deal is therefore more than double the current deal value, with Fox's investment</p>	<p>increasing by over 70 per cent.</p> <p>Pay-television platform Foxtel will also provide sponsorship and promotional support during the duration of the contract. Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation owns 50 per cent of Foxtel and 100 per cent of Fox Sports.</p> <p>The new deal also provides Fox and SBS with non-exclusive internet and mobile rights. The federation will also be able to exploit digital rights directly.</p> <p>The potential value of the digital rights was strengthened in September when the country's High Court threw out telecommunications company Optus's appeal against a ruling stopping it from streaming recorded sports content to mobile devices via its TV Now service.</p> <p>In June 2011, the federation signed a deal with Optus under which Optus creates, operates, manages, and markets the federation's websites, mobile websites and mobile phone applications.</p>

month, between Wanderers and Del Piero's Sydney FC, had a sell-out attendance of close to 20,000. The average attendance for the league last season was just over 10,000.

The league, which began in 2005-06, has 10 teams, nine in Australia and one in New Zealand.

Shipp said that the improvements to the league meant that SBS was now willing to pay a significant fee for the rights as it would be able to attract higher ratings and generate better advertising revenues. In January, he said that SBS would not have the financial capacity to acquire the rights in part due to low A-League television audiences (*TV Sports Markets* 16:1).

SBS will show non-exclusive live coverage of one A-League match per week – it will be shown simultaneously on Fox – and coverage of all finals matches with a one-hour delay. It will also show all of Australia's Fifa World Cup qualification matches until 2017 on a one-hour delay.

"We will have the Friday night A-League game," Shipp said. "It is a great traditional slot for sports viewing in Australia with the NRL [National Rugby League] shown on Friday night

in winter. As well as football fans we will be able to attract general sports fans over the summer," he said. The Friday night game was guaranteed to include at least one of the big teams, he said.

Last season the A-League shifted to a summer season, moving the start of the season from August to October to avoid scheduling clashes with the other more established sports – Aussie Rules football, rugby league and rugby union.

Fox will continue to show live coverage of all five A-League matches per week, as well as exclusive live coverage of the national team. The deal also includes live and exclusive coverage of every match from the 2015 Asian Football Confederation Asian Cup, which will be held in Australia.

In 2010, the national team's qualifier rights, the core component of the federation's rights, were added to the list of sports events which cannot be shown exclusively live on pay-television. SBS provided free-to-air coverage of the last two 2014 Fifa World Cup Asian qualification matches – against Jordan on September 11 and Iraq on October 16 – under interim agreements. ■

SPORTS CLIPS: News highlights from November 8 to November 21

TV RIGHTS 1

Football: Concacaf, English Premier League, A-League and more

- **Football:** Brazilian pay-television broadcaster SporTV acquired the rights to the 2013 Concacaf Gold Cup from the Traffic Sports agency (page 3).
- **Football:** Football Federation Australia agreed domestic rights deals with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Australia and public-service broadcaster SBS, for four years, from 2013-14 to 2016-17 (page 8).
- **Football:** The English Premier League agreed rights deals for three seasons, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, with: pay-television broadcaster Cable Thai Holdings in Thailand, Cambodia and Laos; pay-television broadcaster Astro in Malaysia; pay-television operator PCCW in Hong Kong; sports broadcaster ESPN Star Sports in the Indian subcontinent; the MP & Silva agency in Indonesia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands; the IMG Media agency in Vietnam, Japan and Mongolia; pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports in Australia; the SBS media group in South Korea; state-owned broadcaster S Media in Myanmar; and basic-tier broadcaster SBS in Denmark. The companies acquired live television, online and mobile rights for 380 matches per season, apart from Denmark's SBS, which acquired non-exclusive rights for 100 matches per season (page 4).
- **Football:** BBC Alba, the Gaelic-language channel operated by UK public-service broadcaster the BBC, acquired live rights to the Scottish Premier League for two seasons, 2012-13 and 2013-14. BBC Alba will show three exclusive live matches per season with Gaelic-language commentary, and 35 delayed matches per season, usually at 5.30pm on Saturdays.
- **Football:** The MP & Silva agency acquired the global rights for live coverage of the Venezuela v Nigeria friendly match on November 14 in Miami, the US. The deal, which excluded the markets of the competing countries, was struck with the Univa Sports company, which has a three-match deal – including two games next year against yet-to-be-identified opponents – with the Federación Venezolana de Fútbol, the Venezuelan Football Federation.

SINCE LAST TIME

- US media and entertainment company Discovery Communications plans to pay “several hundred million dollars” for a minority stake in international sports broadcaster Eurosport, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Discovery said it had entered exclusive negotiations to establish a strategic alliance with Eurosport's parent company, the French media company TF1 Group.
- Media conglomerate Lagardère plans to list its 20-per-cent stake in French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus by June. The company's sports marketing division, Lagardère Unlimited, reported net sales of €320m (\$406m) for the nine months to the end of September, down 4.5 per cent on a like-for-like basis. Lagardère general and managing partner Arnaud Lagardère said that the division was gradually moving away from big sports media-rights acquisitions – which he described as “extremely risky” – towards athlete representation and event ownership.
- An Indian tribunal ruled that the Board of Control for Cricket in India must pay Rs1.2bn (€17.2m/\$21.8m) in damages to Asian pay-television operator Zee for “arbitrarily” terminating its five-year rights deal, from 2006 to 2011, for India national team cricket matches played overseas.
- Ingrid Deltenre, the director general of the European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters, said that listed-events legislation which prevents sports events from being exclusively shown on pay-television should be applied more broadly to avert a “bubble” in the value of sports media rights. Deltenre said the strategies currently being deployed in the sports industry put too high a value on fast profits.
- A majority of the clubs of Italy's top division, Lega Serie A, voted in favour of a proposal outlined last week on a system for sharing income from the sale of media rights for the period 2012-13 to 2014-15. Of the 20 clubs, 16 voted in favour of the proposal. Two clubs – Palermo and Chievo – voted against, and a further two – Fiorentina and Napoli – abstained. The new system maintains the basic split of income along the 40:30:30 lines established in the ‘Melandri Law’ of 2008, in which 40 per cent of media-rights income is divided equally, 30 per cent on supporter base and 30 per cent on sporting results. Two changes have been introduced. From this season, €30m (\$38.1m) will be set aside as a parachute payment for the three clubs relegated to Serie B, up from the current maximum of €22m. In the following two seasons, the additional income from the increase in the annual value of the rights will be used to provide an extra merit award for clubs finishing in the top 10 positions, with the top club receiving an extra €2.8m, down to €800,000 for the 10th club.

TV INTERNATIONAL

- Media conglomerate News Corporation completed a deal to buy out Disney-owned sports broadcaster ESPN's stake in their jointly-owned pan-Asian sports broadcaster ESPN Star Sports. ESPN Star Sports, which had previously been a 50:50 joint venture, is now a wholly-owned subsidiary of News Corp.
- UK telecommunications company BT will launch at least two pay-television channels, and possibly a third for on-demand and pay-per-view events, to exploit the sports rights it has acquired, according to the *Financial Times*. In other news, BT chief executive Ian Livingstone said the company may appeal a court decision that blocked efforts to force rival pay-television broadcaster BSkyB to lower wholesale prices for its sports programming. BT has until November 26 to appeal the decision

SPORTS CLIPS: News highlights from November 8 to November 21**TV RIGHTS 2****Action sports, American football, baseball, basketball and cricket**

- **Action Sports:** The IMG Media agency agreed a deal with Vans, the action sports and youth lifestyle brand, to distribute the rights to its events portfolio, which includes skateboard and surfing competitions. Events covered by the deal include the Vans Triple Crown of Surfing, in Haleiwa, Hawaii, and the Coastal Edge East Coast Surfing Championships. IMG will also help develop feature content for Vans' offthewall.tv digital network.
- **American Football:** US cable-television channel the CBS Sports Network, which is operated by the CBS network, acquired rights for the Arena Football League, the US indoor American football league, in 2013 and 2014. CBS Sports Network will show 19 regular-season games in the 2013 season, including the league's Saturday 'game of the week' in primetime, as well as two playoff games. The main CBS network channel will show the ArenaBowl championship game.
- **Baseball:** US regional cable-television channel Yes Network acquired rights for matches of Major League Baseball team the New York Yankees until 2042, extending an existing deal that ran to 2021. Media conglomerate News Corporation, which this week acquired a 49-per-cent stake in the Yes Network, is paying the Yankees a \$420m (€331m) rights fee for the extension. The fee is to activate three successive five-year extension options contained in the existing Yes Network-Yankees deal, and to add rights for a further five years, to take the deal to 2042.
- **Basketball:** Cypriot pay-television broadcaster Cyta agreed a deal with the Asociación de Clubes de Baloncesto, the Spanish basketball association, for rights to all ACB competitions in the 2012-13 season. Cyta will show two matches per week, drawn from the ACB Liga and Copa del Rey competitions, plus a weekly magazine show.
- **Basketball:** Video-sharing website YouTube agreed a deal with US league the National Basketball Association for the live streaming of more than 350 games from the second-tier Development League (D-League) during the 2012-13 season. YouTube is reported to have paid a fee in the low six figures for the rights. The rights fee is said to be the video-sharing platform's biggest-ever for a professional sports league. The live matches will be shown on a D-League channel on YouTube, and the NBA's website.
- **Basketball:** Chinese state broadcaster CCTV renewed its rights for US league the National Basketball Association in a multi-year deal. CCTV, which has shown the league since 1987, will continue to show live, delayed and highlights coverage on the CCTV-5 channel, and other NBA programming.
- Live coverage will include regular season and play-off matches, the Eastern and Western Conference Finals, the NBA Finals and NBA All-Star events including the All-Star Game, State Farm NBA All-Star Saturday Night and the BBVA Rising Stars Challenge.
- **Basketball:** Italian commercial broadcaster La7 sublicensed non-exclusive, simulcast rights for Italian Lega Basket Serie A matches to digital sports broadcaster Sportitalia, after gaining permission from the league to sublicense rights for the 2012-13 season. Sportitalia's deal covered Trenkwald Reggion Emilia v Scavolini Banche Marche Pesaro on November 11, Acea Roma v Montepaschi Siena on November 12, and Vanoli Cremona v EA7 Emporio Armani Milano on November 19. The matches were shown on the Sportitalia 2 channel, as well as La7. The deal may involve further matches being shown by Sportitalia.
- **Cricket:** Pay-television broadcaster Neo Sports acquired rights for the West Indies national team's tour of Bangladesh in a deal with the Bangladesh Cricket Board. The rights cover the Indian subcontinent and the US and include two Test matches, five One Day Internationals and a Twenty20 international. The first Test of the series began on November 13. Coverage is on the Neo Prime channel.

by the UK Competition Appeal Tribunal, which overturned a ruling by UK media regulator Ofcom. Meanwhile, BT's IPTV service, BT Vision, struck a carriage deal for the British Eurosport and British Eurosport 2 channels operated by sports broadcaster Eurosport.

- US network CBS has less than five per cent of its advertising inventory left to sell around next year's National Football League Superbowl. The average price of a 30-second spot is a record \$3.8m (€3m), up from \$3.5m last year, when the NBC network showed the match. CBS expects to earn more than \$225m in advertising revenue from next year's match.
- Russian state broadcaster VGTRK is preparing to launch a new sports channel to cover what it called "socially important and national kinds of sports."

TV RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- Singapore pay-television platform StarHub is interested in acquiring non-exclusive rights for the English Premier League, as long as it can break even on the investment, according to the broadcaster's chief executive Neil Montefiore. StarHub has not started talks over the rights yet as rival pay-television operator SingTel is still in an exclusive negotiating period with the league after acquiring non-exclusive rights for three seasons, from 2013-14 to 2015-16.
- Thai pay-television operator Cable Thai Holdings said it was planning a bid for the domestic rights to Thai Premier League football. The bidding for the rights for the three seasons from 2014 to 2016 is expected to open in January 2013.

SPORTS CLIPS: News highlights from November 8 to November 21

TV RIGHTS 3

Cycling, darts, ice hockey, lacrosse, MMA, motorsport and rugby union

- **Cycling:** South African commercial broadcaster E.tv acquired rights for the 2012 Momentum 94.7 Cycle Challenge, an annual mass-participation event. It showed a one-hour highlights programme covering the event, which took place in Johannesburg on November 18.
- **Darts:** UK pay-television broadcaster ESPN renewed its rights to the British Darts Organisation World Professional Darts Championships to cover the 2013 event in a sublicensing deal with the BBC, the public-service broadcaster. The BBC holds the rights to the Championships in a five-year deal with the BDO, from 2009 to 2013. ESPN will show exclusive live coverage of the evening sessions from the first nine days, including the opening weekend, and the second semi-final on the Saturday of the concluding weekend. It will show highlights of the final. It will also show live coverage of the final and other matches from the women's championship.
- **Ice Hockey:** Canadian pay-television broadcaster TSN extended its media rights deal with the Hockey Hall of Fame for 10 years, until 2022. TSN will continue to hold the broadcast rights to all Hockey Hall of Fame events, including the Hockey Hall of Fame Inductee Announcement, the Hockey Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, and the annual Hockey Hall of Fame Legends Classic.
- **Lacrosse:** The National Lacrosse League, the sport's top indoor league in North America, agreed a deal with YouTube to make live and on-demand games available on the video-sharing website in the 2013 season.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** The ESPN International division of sports broadcaster ESPN acquired rights for the Legend Fighting Championship, the Hong Kong-based series. The deal covers television and internet rights in 109 countries in the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Oceania and the Caribbean, and includes rights on cruise ships in those regions. The agreement begins immediately and will run for two years, until the end of 2014.
- **Motorsport:** Finnish commercial and pay-television broadcaster MTV3 renewed its rights for the Formula One series for the 2013 to 2015 seasons. MTV3 will maintain its level of coverage, which includes live coverage of all races, qualifying and practice rounds – which amounted to 200 hours of live coverage in 2012 – as well as analysis and feature programmes, and a website allowing viewers to follow coverage via multiple broadcast feeds. MTV3 is paying close to what it does in its current deal, for 2010 to 2012 – between €11m (\$14m) and €14m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 16:20).
- **Motorsport:** UK pay-television broadcaster Premier Sports renewed its rights deal with the Nascar series for the top-tier Sprint Cup competition for two years, 2013 and 2014. The deal also includes live rights for selected races from the Nascar Truck Series. The broadcaster plans to allow viewers to choose via social media-based voting which Truck Series races are shown live.
- **Motorsport:** German-based pay-television broadcaster Motorvision TV renewed its rights deal for the Nascar Sprint Cup series for a further two years, 2013 and 2014. The channel will show live coverage of all 25 races per season, plus a regular one-hour highlights show.
- **Rugby Union:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand acquired live rights to the New Zealand national team's away Test match against Italy on November 18.
- **Rugby Union:** Pay-television operator Sky New Zealand acquired live rights to the New Zealand Maori v Canada match being played on November 24 in Oxford, the UK. Sky also showed live coverage of New Zealand Maori v Champion Select XV on November 17 and delayed coverage of New Zealand Maori v Leicester on November 14. State broadcaster Māori Television acquired live rights to the matches involving Leicester and Champion Select XV. It will show delayed coverage of the Canada match.
- **Rugby Union:** The English Rugby Football Union agreed a deal with video-sharing website YouTube to live stream all of the England national team's autumn internationals in markets outside the UK in which the games are not currently broadcast. The agreement, which was activated before the England v Australia game on November 17, covers 28 countries.
- Bolivian state-owned telecommunications company Entel is set to renew a domestic rights deal for the Liga del Fútbol Profesional Boliviano, the Bolivian football league. The five-year deal, from 2013 to 2017, would be worth \$3.5m (€2.76m) per year. The deal was negotiated by league president Mauricio Méndez Roca, who is seeking approval from the league's clubs.
- SporTV is expected to sign an agreement with rival Brazilian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Brasil to exchange football rights. Fox Sports Brasil will hand SporTV rights to second-choice games from the Copa Libertadores, the South American equivalent of the Uefa Champions League, in exchange for rights to the Campeonato Série A, the top division of football in Brazil.
- Sales negotiations for the rights in Nigeria for the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations football tournament reached an impasse as free-to-air broadcasters refused to meet the €6m (\$7.6m) rights fee being asked by the LC2-Afnex agency, which is selling the rights in the territory on behalf of the Sportfive agency.

SPORTS CLIPS: News highlights from November 8 to November 21**TV RIGHTS 4****US college American football, the Winter Games NZ and more**

- **US College Sport:** US sports broadcaster ESPN acquired rights for the Sugar Bowl and Orange Bowl college American football games in 12-year deals, from 2015 to 2026. The broadcaster will pay \$80m (€63m) per year for the Sugar Bowl rights and an average of \$55m per season for the Orange Bowl rights. Both deals include rights for television, internet and mobile, rights to show matches in 3D, and rights outside the US. ESPN agreed the Sugar Bowl deal with the Southeastern and Big 12 college sports conferences, and the Orange Bowl deal with the Atlantic Coast Conference.
- **US College Sport:** US broadcaster Fox Sports, a division of the US Fox network, acquired rights for sports events featuring Oklahoma State University teams in a deal with the Learfield Sports agency. The length of the multi-year agreement was not disclosed. Fox Sports will show one of the university's American football games per year live, as well as basketball and Olympic sports, on one of its regional sports networks and its national channel Fox College Sports. The university retained online streaming rights, for exploitation via its own website, for events not selected by Fox Sports.
- **US College Sport:** Sports and entertainment group IMG's college sport division, IMG College, renewed its media rights deal with the Texas Christian University for a further 12 years, beginning immediately.
- **Winter sports:** The IMG Media agency agreed a deal with the organisers of the 2013 Winter Games NZ to distribute media rights for the New Zealand-based event. IMG will distribute a series of 14 daily 22-minute highlights programmes, plus a 52-minute film and daily video news releases, in a minimum of 25 targeted countries.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The Deutsche Fussball Liga, the German football league, will decide on December 12 whether to accept an internal proposal to change the media rights revenue split between its top division, Bundesliga 1, and second division, Bundesliga 2, from the 2013-14 season. The proposal would see Bundesliga 1 take 80 per cent of the revenues and Bundesliga 2 the remaining 20 per cent, compared to the current 79-21 split in favour of the top division.
- The Infront Sports & Media agency created a new French subsidiary. Infront France will be based in Paris and led by managing director Jean-François Jeanne, who previously served as senior vice-president and deputy managing director at the Sportfive France agency.
- The World Sport Group agency renewed a deal with the Singapore Golf Association to promote the Singapore Open golf tournament for five years, from 2013 to 2017. The renewal covers the tournament's worldwide commercial rights. Talks for the worldwide broadcast rights are still underway.
- French sports news channel Sport 365 will show its first live sports event on November 25 – a rugby union match between the French Barbarians and Japan in Le Havre, France.
- Saran Online, a sister company of the Saran Media agency, acquired Turkish sports news website Ajansspor.com.
- Two of German commercial broadcaster Sat.1's top sports executives are leaving the station. Sven Froberg, who is head of production and editorial for sports coverage, and Jörn Radtke, vice president of sports and sports rights acquisitions and deputy director of sport, will both leave at the end of the year. Froberg's role will be taken over on a temporary basis by Zeljko Karajica, a Sat.1 board member.
- US media group NBCUniversal appointed Jim Bell as the full-time executive producer of its Olympics coverage. Bell was the executive producer of the 2012 London Games.

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