

# TVSPORTS MARKETS

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## TV JAPAN

### Fox plans to do for baseball what BSkyB did for English football

By Dan Horlock

Fox Sports Japan, the new sports pay-television channel, is looking to bring an entirely new approach to coverage of the Nippon Professional Baseball league, the top-tier of Japanese baseball, as it gears up to its launch date on March 28, the eve of the 2013 season.

Fox Sports Japan's chief executive Rik Dovey told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "Baseball is the number one sport here and is the key to get the channel going. We will provide a completely new, much more comprehensive offering [than our competitors], which viewers haven't seen here before."

The channel will be spearheaded by local baseball content but the company is also targeting other top sports rights, and has already made some acquisitions. It is expected to shake up a sports-rights market which has consolidated in recent years. The IMG Media agency's high winning bid in November for the Premier League rights was based on the belief that there would now be increased competition in the market (*TV Sports Markets* 16:21).

In December, Fox signed media rights

deals with two top-tier baseball teams – the Chiba Lotte Marines and the Orix Buffaloes. It signed three-season deals, from 2013 to 2015, with both clubs.

It also holds the rights to a third club, the Fukuoka Softbank Hawks, which it inherited as part of its agreement with the club's owner, Japanese telco Softbank. Fox Sports Japan is a joint venture between News Corporation's syndication arm Fox International Channels and Softbank-owned TV Bank. The Hawks' rights deal was an important part of putting the joint venture together.

Fox will broadcast both pre- and post-match shows for its live coverage. It also plans to show an hour-long highlights programme from 9.30pm to 10.30pm each weeknight, with a comprehensive round-up of all the games played that day.

The broadcaster will next month begin making 30-minute magazine shows featuring each of its three baseball teams. In March, Fox will show live coverage of 19 practice games involving its three clubs on its general-entertainment channel BS238.

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## SKIING

### Infront one step closer to monopoly

By Kevin McCullagh

Infront Sports & Media moved aggressively last month to outbid the European Broadcasting Union for skiing rights in Finland, and move a step closer to a global monopoly on World Cup skiing rights. The agency is now only one federation – Austria – away from having carried out a de facto centralisation of

World Cup international rights.

Infront acquired domestic and international rights for Federation Internationale de Ski World Cup events hosted in Finland in a five-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2017-18, with the Finnish ski association. The agency told *TV Sports*

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## FASTRACK

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### IEC makes breakthrough WTA deals in Europe

The IEC in Sports agency has closed deals in the Nordic region for Women's Tennis Association Tour rights in the period 2013 to 2016, in addition to agreeing a good deal late this week in the UK.

The deals in the Nordic region are worth around \$900,000 (€682,000) per year. They include a deal with international broadcaster Modern Times Group for Denmark thought to be worth about \$500,000. Interest in women's tennis in the market is strong thanks to Caroline Wozniacki, the Danish former world number one women's player.

MTG acquired the rights for its TV3 Sport pay-television sports channels, formerly known as TV2 Sport. The company in December completed the acquisition of the 50 per cent of TV2 Sport that it did not already own from local commercial broadcaster TV2. It rebranded the channels as TV3 Sport on January 7.

The rights in the other three Nordic markets – Norway, Sweden and Finland – were acquired by pay-television broadcaster C More Entertainment.

In the UK, during the 2013 season the rights will be held jointly by pay-television broadcaster BT Vision and sports broadcaster Eurosport. From 2014, they will be exclusively owned by BT.

UK industry sources put the value of the deal at about £2 million (€2.5 million/\$3.2 million) per year. If that figure were confirmed, it would be an extremely high fee for the UK market. Eurosport paid \$9 million for the pan-European rights in 2012, and the UK would have accounted for only a small fraction of this, as women's tennis is not that strong in the market.

The fee is likely to have been boosted by BT's strong need for good sports content. It launches two new pay-television sports channels this summer,

and still needs plenty of strong, live content to fill its schedules. The 800 hours per year of live content in the WTA deal will help. Another factor that could have boosted the fee is that UK interest in women's tennis is increasing on the back of good performances by top 50-ranked players Heather Watson and Laura Robson.

IEC is negotiating the sale of the WTA television rights in all territories outside North America under a partnership with digital media specialists Perform Group, the WTA's cross-platform media rights partner for the territories. ■

### Hearn looks no further than the BBC

World Snooker chairman Barry Hearn said this week that UK public-service broadcaster the BBC had paid an increase to renew its rights with the body that was "financially fair" in the current climate.

"The BBC has been loyal to snooker over the years and so we were delighted to secure the deal," he told *TV Sports Markets*. He said that the increase in the rights fee was "testament to the increasing ratings we've been getting and shows that we [World Snooker] are doing a good job."

The BBC this week extended its contract for a further three years until 2017-18 with World Snooker, the sport's commercial arm. Its current deal, from 2011-12 to 2013-14, is thought to be worth about £3 million (€3.7 million/\$4.8 million) per year. An informed source said that reports that the corporation had paid a big increase in the renewal deal were inaccurate.

Hearn said that he did not "tout the rights around" and that he had never contemplated selling the rights to any other broadcaster. "Snooker's relationship with the BBC goes back to the seventies when I first became involved with the sport. You just can't underestimate how important it is being shown on the national broadcaster for our sponsors and advertisers." The UK is the sport's biggest market.

The rights are for World Snooker's three major championships, which are: the World Championship, the UK Championship and the Masters.

The BBC has been under pressure to reduce its budget by 20 per cent by 2017 due to a government-imposed licence-fee freeze. The sports rights it has held on to have seen flat or marginal growth in rights fees. ■

### TV4 sports cost-cutting done

Swedish commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV4 Group's offloading of domestic ice hockey league rights this week, in a sublicensing deal with basic-tier broadcaster SBS, marked the end of a sports rights costs-cutting programme driven by chief executive Carsten Almquist.

SBS is paying just over SEK40 million (€4.6m/\$6.1 million) in the deal, which covers free-to-air rights for one quarter-final, one semi-final and the final of the Elitserien league playoffs in 2012-13. Talks are continuing for the same rights in 2013-14, the last year of TV4's deal with the league. TV4 is understood to have been losing money on the rights.

A local source said this week the deal was part of Almquist wanting to "put his mark on the business" following his taking over of the chief executive role from Jan Scherman in January 2012. Scherman had overseen heavy spending on sports content.

The ice hockey deal is TV4's second major sports sublicensing deal in the last few months – in November 2012 it sold five Sweden national team football matches to SBS.

TV4 is not thought to have a strong interest in bidding for the Elitserien free-to-air rights in the next cycle, from 2014-15 to 2017-18. The league launched a tender for the next period on January 3. Bids are due by January 31.

However, TV4's premium pay-television arm C More Entertainment is thought to be interested in retaining its pay-television rights covering the rest of the Elitserien matches. ■

## TV JAPAN

## Revolution in baseball coverage at heart of Fox plan

*Continued from page 1 ►*

Broadcasters have previously shown only the live regular-season games with a 15-minute pre-match show, dependent on whether the broadcaster had time in its schedule. Highlights of the other matches would be covered briefly in late night news programming.

Dovey drew a comparison with the way that UK pay-television operator BSkyB revolutionised football coverage in the UK 20 years ago by introducing hour-long pre-match shows, focusing on the upcoming match but also including action from around the division.

Dovey, the former deputy managing director at BSkyB, said that in a “fairly tough” market the channel’s competition would come from the other broadcasters that hold top-tier Japanese baseball teams’ media rights. They include: pay-television broadcasters J Sports and Gaora, and cable and satellite channels owned by commercial broadcasters NTV, Fuji TV and TBS.

The three teams that Fox holds the rights to play in the Pacific League, which is regarded as the weaker of the two leagues. Dovey said that the broadcaster planned to strengthen its offering by also acquiring teams from the stronger Central League.

There are 12 top-tier baseball clubs, six in each league. Each team plays 72 home matches per season. The regular season begins on March 29 and runs until October. The play-offs, which involve the top three teams from each league, consist of five games, with the final game – the Japan Series – played between the winners from each league at the end of October or the beginning of November.

Getting hold of a large amount of premium primetime content through baseball club rights was crucial to Fox’s entry into the market and reflects News Corp’s wider strategy in the region since it bought out ESPN from their joint venture

ESPN Star Sports last year. News Corp plans to bid more aggressively for key rights and adopt a more local content strategy in lucrative Asian markets.

Fox is also interested in acquiring sports rights and domestic leagues that are popular in the local market such as volleyball. Dovey said that the channel would be looking at broadening its rights portfolio both locally and internationally.

### Shake-up

The arrival of Fox will add some dynamism to a pay-television market that has become stolid. The three main pay-television broadcasters – Sky PerfecTV, J Sports and Wowow – rarely compete against one another. Sky PerfecTV has a 15-per-cent stake in J Sports, and J Sports’ channels are shown on its platform. Previously, Wowow competed with Sky PerfecTV for premium European football rights but it has now become more cautious, with little growth in the pay-television sector due to strong free-to-air content. Japan is the second-most valuable advertising market in the world behind the US only but that sector has also been under pressure in recent years.

A key facet to the channel launch was News Corp’s relationship with Softbank. News Corp has previously worked with Softbank in other joint ventures including the creation in 1996 of pay-television broadcaster Japan Sky Broadcasting, which later became Sky PerfecTV. Neither company now holds an interest in Sky PerfecTV. In August 2003, News Corp sold its 8.1-per-cent share in Sky PerfecTV to the broadcaster’s three largest shareholders at the time – Fuji TV, Sony and Itochu Corp.

News Corp’s most recent channel launch was in Brazil. Its aggressive approach to rights acquisitions, which started before its launch in February last year, sparked a boom in rights values in the country, specifically for football rights. Experts don’t expect this to happen quite so dramatically in the more mature Japanese market, but prices could begin to rise steadily as Fox looks to acquire more baseball rights, rights to football, Japan’s second-most popular sport, and other popular local sports.

### Football

Football is Japan’s second most popular sport after baseball. The country has a healthy domestic league – the J-League – which means that, unlike in other Asian countries, there is less emphasis on European football.

Dovey said that the J-League rights were of interest to the channel. It is widely regarded as Asia’s best football league at least in terms of operation, administration and organisation. The World Sport Group agency has a three-year deal, until 2014, to distribute the league’s international media rights. South Korea’s K-League, which has provided three out of the last four winners in the pan-regional club competition the AFC Champions League, would be its nearest rival.

Sky PerfecTV is the incumbent rights-holder for the league. It pays ¥5 billion (€44 million/\$58 million) per season in a three-season deal which expires next year. Dovey said that Fox would be interested in entering into discussions with other broadcasters to share the high cost of the rights, but would probably not bid for them exclusively.

Fox has already acquired exclusive rights to the English FA Cup for three seasons, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, from the MP & Silva agency. MP & Silva acquired the rights from the English Football Association in Asia, except Thailand, in a deal worth \$20 million (€15 million) per season. Fox will begin its coverage of the competition this season from the semi-final stage in April.

Fox also agreed a deal with MP & Silva for a package of live football rights, including Italy’s Serie A, Germany’s Bundesliga, and 50 Premier League matches in the 2012-13 season.

Fox is currently in negotiations with IMG, which acquired the Premier League rights for the new cycle, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, in November last year, and is understood to want to buy a similar number of games. Dovey played down the importance of the Premier League’s rights to the new channel. He said that the value of the rights in Japan, where the matches are often shown during the night, was “way out of proportion. It is more important for us to make certain we have decent baseball rights, as it has a much better value.” ■

PREMIER LEAGUE

# Digital windfall expected as market heats up

By Frank Dunne

English football's Premier League is set to enjoy a sharp increase in the value of its near-live and digital clips rights, according to industry experts. This is due to two changes in market conditions.

First, the arrival of BT Vision has provided a well-funded rival to BSkyB in the UK pay-television market, putting the kind of competitive pressure on Sky for Premier League content which has not existed since the demise of the Setanta pay-television operation in 2009. Second, the rapid growth of the digital rights market in the last three years means that clips are now viewed by digital specialists and broadcasters (if not by mobile operators) as potential revenue-drivers rather than purely marketing tools.

The near live and clips rights for the next three-year cycle, 2013-14 to 2015-16, will be awarded in the coming weeks. In the current cycle, from 2010-11 to 2012-13,

the league earns a total of £63 million (£78 million/\$102 million), or £21 million per season, from its near-live and digital rights (see table). That represented a drop of 53 per cent from the £135 million, or £45 million per season, it earned for the same rights in the previous cycle, 2007-08 to 2009-10.

The scale of the drop led some in the industry to predict that standalone clips packages had no future. The mobile rights value alone has dropped to well below half of what the rights brought in when they were first sold, in the 2001-02 to 2003-04 cycle. By the most recent cycle, mobile-only operators, like O2 and Vodafone, had dropped out of the bidding altogether.

The league has stuck to its underlying strategy this time but did make two changes to the way the rights are packaged. The rights to the 226 near-live games on offer were split into two separate packages, one for linear transmission and one for video-on-demand. For the clips rights, which cover all 380 matches per season, as last time, the distinction between mobile and internet rights has been dropped. The rights can be used on any device.

Rolling the clips into one package was simply an inevitable response to the way that technology, and the way people use it

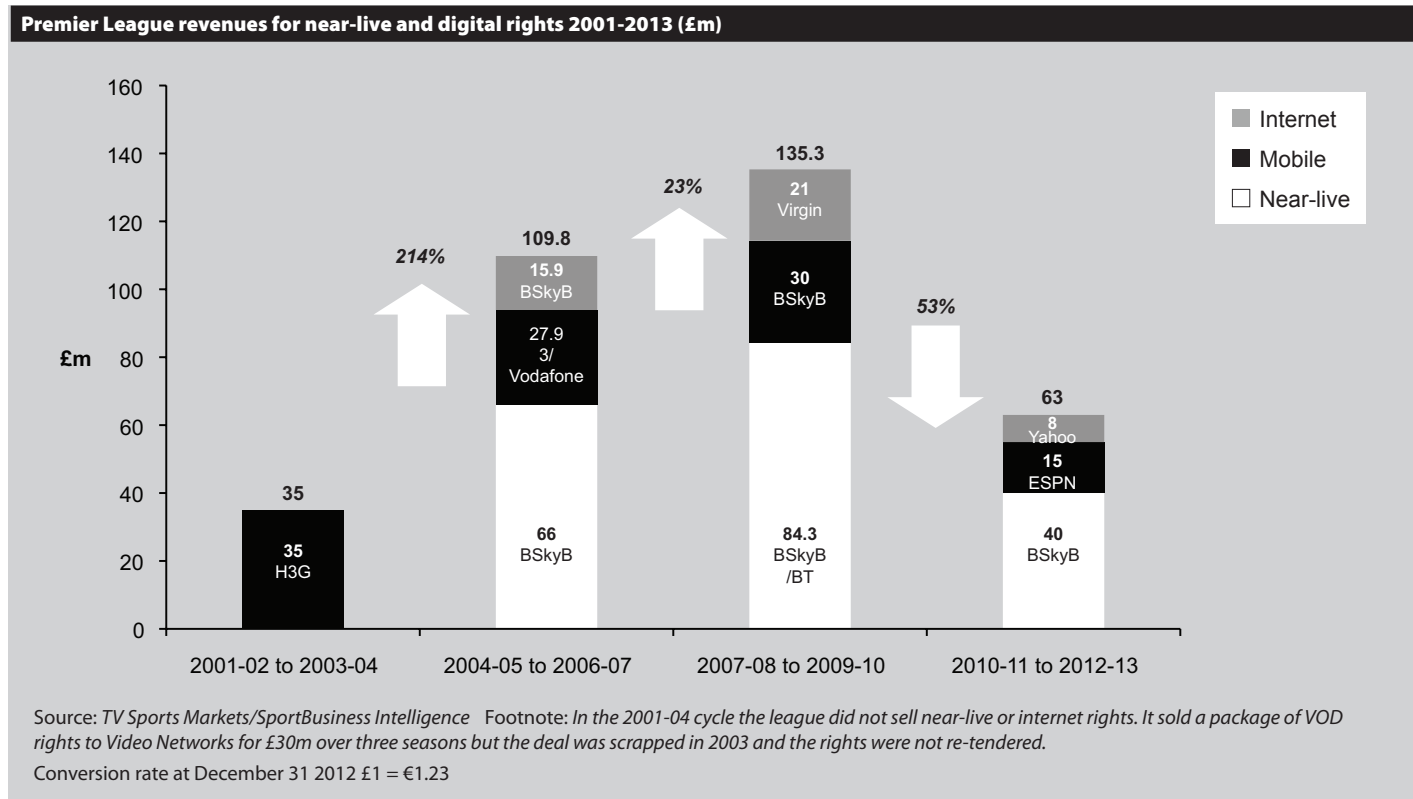
to access content, has changed due to the explosion in the take-up of tablets and smartphones in the last few years. There is no longer a meaningful separation between mobile and internet platforms.

Creating a second near-live package, however, was clearly designed to boost the value of the rights. As one insider put it, "it puts a bit more pressure on Sky – it gives BT an extra opportunity to ambush them."

BSkyB and BT are widely considered the favourites for all three packages, ahead of mobile or internet operators or digital specialists like the Perform Group. Several industry experts predicted that the determination of Sky and BT to get all rights could push the price up dramatically.

A source at one potential bidder said that in the light of the intense competition between the two companies, the marketing advantage in being the only place where you can see every Premier League goal had become much greater. So the absolute minimum target would be one package of near-live rights plus the clips.

He argued that although the league was inviting separate bids for each package – with the linear near-live matches to be awarded first, then the VOD near-live rights, then the clips – the broadcasters would look to offer a premium to secure all





three packages. “It will be a real stretch for any of the digital specialists to win the clips,” the source said.

### Near-live doubts

Not everybody accepts that BT and Sky will get drawn into a bidding war for the near-live rights because, beyond its marketing value, the inherent value of the content to a pay-television operator – in terms of driving subscriptions – is not that great. BT has already tried once, and failed to make a go of near-live games. It held the rights jointly with BSkyB in the 2007-08 to 2009-10 cycle, but did not bid at all last time. With no competition from ESPN, BSkyB was able to pick up the near-live rights at a big discount in the current cycle, paying just over £13 million per season, compared to the £28.1 million per season paid in the previous joint deal.

The rights give Sky a lot more Premier League content around its live matches, and valuable content for things like news and round-up programmes. Having had the content as a staple of its programming for years, Sky would be reluctant to lose it but few experts think that the matches are a subscription driver. Audience ratings are modest, around 100,000 to 110,000 for its Game of the Day. The peak audience across this season and last season was 239,000 last February. The Game of the Day, a full re-run chosen by Sky, is broadcast at 8.25pm on Saturdays. From 10.15pm onwards viewers can choose extended highlights of other matches, through to 1.10am.

### Clips bidders

Along with digital specialists such as Perform and the MP & Silva-backed operator Rightster, the other companies thought certain to target the clips include the incumbent mobile clips rights-holders, ESPN.

In the current deal, ESPN’s rights include: eight ‘near-live’ clips per match, each lasting up to 30 seconds, while matches are in play; a half-time round-up of the clips produced in the first half; post-match highlights lasting up to two minutes: round-ups, featuring highlights from several matches; and match previews. The rights enabled ESPN to launch its Goals mobile app which the company

considers to have been highly successful. The broadcaster could also use the content in its ESPN FC website and app.

There has been speculation about the future of ESPN’s premium sports channels in the UK, following the loss of the live Premier League rights for the next cycle, which has led some observers to assume that the broadcaster won’t bid for the clips rights this time. However, the company is heavily committed to building its digital sports offerings outside the US and will almost certainly launch a bid in the first round. Should the price be forced up by Sky and BT in subsequent rounds, however, ESPN is unlikely to stay at the table.

### No YouTube?

One possible deflationary factor for the clips rights could be the absence of YouTube from the bidding. The company has been tipped by many in the industry as favourite to win the rights, a sensation reinforced by its acquisitions of rights to several other European football leagues. However, there are two reasons why a YouTube bid is extremely unlikely.

The first regards YouTube’s business model. In order to acquire the rights, it would have to pay the league a rights fee backed by an upfront guarantee. The league does not do revenue-sharing deals. Although YouTube has included an upfront payment in some of its other clips deals, such as that with the French football league, the company’s core business model remains one of partnerships based on sharing of advertising revenue.

Even if YouTube were prepared to pay a rights fee, there is a major stumbling block to any commercial arrangement between the two parties: the league’s copyright claim against YouTube and its owner Google in the US courts.

Informed sources say that the league and YouTube have discussed an out-of-court settlement to the case on several occasions but have always been a long way apart on the value of any compensation to be paid to the league. The league cannot simply drop the case in order to accept an offer from YouTube. Its US lawyers, Proskauer Rose, took the case on a no-win no-fee basis which means that the league would have to pay the firm’s fees to extricate itself from the case.

The fees are understood to be in the tens of millions of dollars, dwarfing the value of the UK clips rights. One insider said: “It would probably only make sense for the two parties to do a deal for the clips rights on a global basis but even then, YouTube would have to put down a massive guarantee to make it worth the league’s while.” ■

## SKIING

# Infront one step closer to monopoly

*Continued from page 1 ►*

*Markets* this week: “The Nordic events in Finland are among the highlights of the FIS Nordic World Cup season and highly appealing media content. With the media rights to the Finnish events complementing our portfolio, we are now able to offer almost the entire FIS Alpine and Nordic World Cup series on a collective base – to the benefit not only of the broadcasters, but also to the individual events, each reaching maximum exposure.”

The agency is understood to be paying about €11.5 million (\$15.2 million) over the five years. As there are no events in the second half of the 2016-17 season – due to Finland hosting the 2017 Nordic Ski World Championships – Infront is effectively paying for a four-and-a-half year deal. The fee per year, over the four-and-a-half years, is about €2.6 million.

The EBU, the consortium of European public-service broadcasters, currently pays just under €2 million per year for the global rights in a deal from 2010-11 to 2012-13. The EBU sold on the rights outside Europe in piecemeal deals with broadcasters in the few countries where there is strong interest in skiing, such as Japan and the US.

The rights in Europe carry the vast majority of the value – the EBU is thought to have generated less than €50,000 per year from the deals outside its footprint.

World Cup rights are sold individually by the ski federations of the countries in which they are hosted. Infront now has

deals for the international rights of all federations hosting World Cups with the exception of Austria. It also sells the domestic media rights for Canada (alpine skiing World Cups only), France, Italy, Slovenia and Sweden.

The Austrian federation opposes the agency's stranglehold on the rights, and currently has a deal with the EBU. Austria can take this stance as it is one of the few federations with enough big events to attract interest from several bidders when it puts its rights on the market. For many smaller ski federations, Infront is the only realistic option.

As one of the biggest federations, Austria is also one of the most professional and commercially astute. In many national ski associations, the president or the secretary-general alone will handle the sale of commercial rights. "In many countries, the knowledge is fairly limited... and it is difficult to value the rights," one source said. Infront is an attractive option for the smaller federations, as it offers long-term deals and pays good money.

However, the aggressive Finnish bid suggests that Austria's loyalty to the EBU will be tested when the rights eventually come on the market again.

Over the years, senior figures at Fis have harboured concerns about Infront's growing control of World Cup skiing. As world governing body for the sport, it would prefer that centralisation – which it strongly believes in – took place under its aegis rather than that of a private company. Some Fis executives also fear that some federations might not be getting the best deal by continually renewing with Infront. However, it is difficult to find alternatives. Infront's domination of the market discourages other bidders. And the agency's deals usually include matching-rights options, making it even more difficult for other bidders to break in.

One skiing rights expert said taking control of the World Cup rights was still the "million dollar question" for Fis, and remains a topic of discussion among its leaders. Fis turned down an opportunity to take control of the World Cup rights in 2006, when Media Partners – the Italian agency which then controlled most of the

rights and was later acquired by Infront – was put up for sale. Fis considered buying the agency, but eventually decided not to. One possible reason is that it was put off by the expected €90 million-€100 million cost of the acquisition. Infront eventually paid €130 million to acquire Media Partners in June 2006.

Infront now has deals with 22 skiing federations: Andorra, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the US. Most run to the 2015-16 season.

There are World Cups in each of the major ski disciplines – alpine skiing, cross country skiing, ski jumping, Nordic combined skiing, snowboard and freestyle skiing. Each World Cup is a series of competitions that runs across each ski season. There are separate World Cups for men and women.

### Gap too big

In the final round of bidding in which both Infront and the EBU were involved, each made an offer for a four-year deal, 2013-14 to 2016-17. The EBU bid €8 million and Infront bid €9 million. In later talks, Infront and the association agreed to add the extra year, for a five-year deal.

The Finnish association has been struggling financially for over a decade, but, despite this, Infront still had to outbid the EBU by a substantial margin in order to win the rights.

"If [the difference between the Infront and EBU bids] was just ten thousand or a hundred thousand euros, we would have stayed with the EBU," Mika Kulmala, the association's executive director, told *TV Sports Markets* this week. "The EBU has been a very good partner for us. But the final gap [between the bids] was too big."

A decade-old doping scandal that reared its head again last year limited the amount of money the EBU was prepared to put on the table, sources close to the talks said this week. But experts say Infront's bid was so aggressive that the consortium would not have been able to beat it anyway.

The EBU stood by the association after

a devastating doping scandal at the 2001 Fis Nordic World Ski Championships in Lahti, Finland. Six Finnish skiers at the championships tested positive for banned drugs. The association subsequently had its public funding cut and lost sponsorship revenues.

The issue re-emerged last year when a Finnish television documentary alleged that doping had been more widespread among Finnish skiers than previously thought.

### Not a 'strategic' price

Several skiing rights experts said that Infront had paid a strategic price for the rights, and would find it difficult to earn the money back had it been a standalone deal. However, Infront will be able to sell the rights bundled with those from other federations, and mitigate any loss.

One expert said that such a strategic acquisition was unusual for Infront, and perhaps reflected the increasing influence of its private equity owner Bridgepoint Capital. He claimed that Infront had been more cautious in previous World Cup ski rights acquisitions, in order to protect a profit margin of 10 to 20 per cent.

The deal follows a marquee acquisition of Union Cycliste Internationale global rights last year – in which Infront also outbid the EBU – which has also boosted the agency's portfolio, increasing Bridgepoint's chances of making a decent margin when it eventually decides to sell the agency. Bridgepoint acquired Infront in 2011, and is thought to have planned to sell it within four or five years.

The agency, however, rejected the claim that it was paying strategic fees. It said: "We do not cost out strategic prices. The acquisition costs were in line with the rights' market value based on our evaluation of the market."

The agency also played down the impact of the Bridgepoint takeover on its valuations of rights. "This rights acquisition is only linked to, and a continuation of, Infront's existing, long-term strategy to further develop a strong media-rights portfolio in winter sports, adding value to both the events we represent and being a one-stop-shop for media-rights licensees for key winter sports rights," Infront said. ■

## MOTORSPORT

## New promoter to revamp WRC media product

By Kevin McCullagh

A revamp of the media product for the Fédération Internationale d'Automobile World Rally Championship in 2014 is at the heart of plans by its new promoter, a joint-venture between Sportsman Media Group and Red Bull Media House, to make the series profitable again.

Extensive live coverage of each rally, improved production quality and 'television-friendly' competition format changes are all in the pipeline.

The championship has been loss-making for years, and interest and media rights fees in key markets including the UK have fallen away over the last decade. Some industry experts say what's been outlined so far by the new promoter offers little new, and bigger changes are required to rebuild WRC's profile and media rights value. But the promoter is optimistic about its prospects for success.

"It is the second-biggest FIA world championship [after Formula One], with huge potential," Oliver Ciesla told *TV Sports Markets* this week, speaking on behalf of the new promoter, which will be a joint-venture company set up by Sportsman, the Germany based sports media group, and Red Bull Media House, the media arm of the energy drinks brand. "But it needs time and investment. Both shareholders are prepared for this. Both shareholders have the intention to make it profitable over the term [of their deal]."

Sportsman and Red Bull have a six-year promoter deal, from 2013 to 2018, with the FIA. The companies are responsible for all commercial aspects of the championship, including exploiting the global media rights.

The FIA cancelled the previous promoter deal with North One Sport at the end of 2011, claiming breach of contract. The deal was a loss-maker for North One Sport, a division of UK television producer North One Television. Its revenues didn't cover the

heavy costs of the deal, which included paying for television production and the vehicle timing and tracking system.

North One generated just over €5 million (\$6.6 million) from media rights and about the same again from sponsorship in 2011. It lost £2 million (€2.5 million/\$3.2 million) to £3 million on the deal that year.

### TV changes

Sportsman and Red Bull plan a major increase in live television coverage, although the details of this will only be finalised this year. Live coverage of WRC in recent years has generally been limited to single stages at a handful of rallies each season.

Ciesla said more live coverage will raise the profile of the sport, and bring greater revenues from commercial partners, and was worth the high cost. "It is expensive, especially if you are dedicated to high quality, like we are. But this provides so much more value to the sponsors, car manufacturers and other stakeholders."

Some other motorsports experts have their doubts. One said: "We are always told live is the great future, and that is where we need to head. But there was a lot of live coverage 10 years ago."

Rally is notoriously difficult to produce for live television. An executive at one major agency said they had turned down several opportunities to bid for the WRC promoter contract because they always doubted they could create a strong live offering.

Live coverage is tricky partly because the cars do not race head-to-head. This makes it more difficult for the casual viewer to understand which car is winning than, for example, in motorsports like Nascar or Formula One. And because the cars take turns to race each stage, rallies take many hours per day to complete. A Formula One race lasts only an hour-and-a-half.

The new promoters believe competition format changes could make a difference here. Many other sports have boosted their popularity and media rights value by altering formats to make them more spectacular and viewer friendly.

A North One effort to do so was not entirely successful. It introduced 'power stages' at several rallies in 2011 which were

designed for live television. They were raced over short distances, so more cars could be featured in a short, live television show. But as the stages were at the end of rallies, the top drivers sometimes missed them because of crashes or mechanical problems. And the stages were not always fiercely competitive, as only a small number of championship points were on offer to the winners.

Rally production is hugely expensive due to the large area and frequently tough terrain and weather conditions in which rallies are staged. North One spent £7.5 million on production in 2011, £2.5 million more than 2010 due to the introduction of the live power stages.

"The new promoters face a steep learning curve," one motorsports expert told *TV Sports Markets*. "It will be a couple of years before they get up to speed with Eurosport." Eurosport is the market leader in live rally coverage. It has been producing extensive live coverage of several rallies per year from its own series, the Intercontinental Rally Challenge, since 2009.

Scheduling WRC television coverage at the same time, on the same day, for each rally – creating an 'appointment to view' – is another priority for the new promoter. "Our objective is to have regularity, so fans know when it is coming in, and where it is coming in," Ciesla said.

Improving the television product is one element of a much broader strategy to revitalise WRC, the promoter says. Sportsman and Red Bull "have expertise in sponsorship sales and activation, new media exploitation, event management, even PR. All these will be made available to the promoter," Ciesla said.

### Transition year

Between 20 and 25 one-season television rights deals are in place for 2013. There is also a one-season deal with production companies HBS and Filmworks to produce television coverage of this year's rallies.

The rights deals agreed so far represent 20 per cent of those that will be agreed this season, Ciesla said. The rest will be closed in the next three weeks. The first rally of the season, the Monte Carlo rally, the sport's most famous, begins next week, on January 15.



One-season deals are being agreed because 2013 is a “transition year,” Ciesla said. The promoters were only appointed in October 2012, and need time to finalise their plans for the development of the championship. Those plans need to be approved by the sport’s stakeholders, which include the FIA, the competing car manufacturers and event organisers. The promoters plan to come to market with their new model, and the media rights for 2014 onwards, at this year’s Sportel Monaco trade fair, in October.

Ciesla said the rights fees for 2013

were hit by the turmoil following North One’s contract termination. The FIA failed to find a promoter for the 2012 season, and was forced to take on the role itself. It agreed deals with Eurosport, and then the European Broadcasting Union, during the season to help it with television production and media rights distribution.

The promoters were happy with the level of the rights fees for 2013 considering this, and were encouraged by the response from broadcasters, Ciesla said.

The deals agreed for 2013 include a set

of four deals in Germany. Basic-tier sports broadcaster Sport1 will show the main body of the coverage. Ancillary deals for highlights and news clips have been done with commercial broadcaster RTL and news channel N-TV. There will also be some coverage on Red Bull-owned regional channel Servus TV.

Deals have also been agreed with: Swedish public-service broadcaster SVT, for pan-Scandinavian rights; Italian public-service broadcaster Rai; and French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus, among others. ■

## FOOTBALL

# FA joins other top football properties on the subs’ bench

By Kevin McCullagh

The FA Cup third round went untelevised in several major Western European countries last week, in a sign of the increasingly tough market conditions on the continent.

Viewers in Italy, Spain, Sweden, Greece and Finland were unable to watch the third-round matches played on January 5 and 6. The FA Cup is the English Football Association’s flagship competition and the third round is crucial as it is the stage at which Premier League clubs join lower division clubs in the competition.

The rights in Western Europe for the 2012-13 to 2017-18 seasons are being sold by the Pitch International agency. It is paying the FA \$87 million (€67 million), or \$14.5 million per season, for the rights, which include England national team home matches as well as FA Cup matches. The agency has sublicensed the rights in some territories, including Italy, to the MP & Silva agency.

Pitch and MP & Silva are understood to be confident of securing deals in all outstanding territories before the end of this season, but in some territories these may be with internet operators rather than television broadcasters.

Poor economic conditions in Europe, and other local factors, have led to broadcasters bidding below the agencies’

valuations of the rights.

In Sweden, where English football is huge, one local source said the rights were already considered over-valued in the last deal, and broadcasters were not prepared to pay the fee increase Pitch was seeking.

The previous rights-holder, commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group, placed a high value on English football at the time it acquired the pan-Nordic rights – covering Denmark, Norway and Finland, as well as Sweden – because its main rival Canal Plus had pan-Nordic rights for the English Premier League.

MTG has since acquired English Premier League rights in Sweden, as well as Denmark, for the current cycle and has little need for another expensive English football property. C More – previously called Canal Plus – is not thought to be interested in acquiring the rights. It has other strong sports content in Sweden, including domestic league football and ice hockey. Basic-tier broadcaster SBS is thought the most likely buyer in Sweden.

In Italy, the FA rights were acquired by pay-television operator Sky Italia in the last two cycles. In the last cycle, 2008-09 to 2011-12, the broadcaster is thought to have paid about €700,000 per season. MP & Silva are thought to have been asking for just over €1 million per season.

One local broadcast source said that with the third round having been missed there would almost certainly be no deal this season. “That ship has sailed,” he said.

Italy was a reasonably healthy market to sell premium football rights into until quite recently. But now the two main

pay-television operators – Sky and Mediaset Premium – along with digital sports broadcaster Sportitalia, are all looking to cut costs. Pay-television growth has slowed and rights fee spending is focusing on the very top, subscription-driving properties, which the FA rights are not considered to be.

“It’s a different world; pay-tv in Italy is not growing as it has been in the last decade,” one local expert said. “It’s not that they [MP & Silva] are asking a huge percentage increase, but in the current climate any increase for a non-core property is too much. When you are looking to trim a bit of fat, this is the kind of thing that can go.”

The Greek and Spanish rights markets are probably the worst-hit in Europe by the wider economic problems. One rights expert said Greece was so bad that the agencies will be concerned about the ability of prospective buyers to pay up over the course of the deal.

Deals in all other Western Europe markets are thought to have been completed. The agencies have achieved increases in some. In the Netherlands, pay-television broadcaster Eredivisie Live is thought to be paying about 15 per cent more than it did in the last deal, in a new deal worth about €225,000 per season.

The FA Cup is not the only premium football going untelevised around Europe. There has been no television deal for the Spanish Liga in Germany for several seasons. In Italy, Sky dropped both the Liga and the German Bundesliga from this season after having broadcast both for many years. ■



## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 20 to January 9

### TV RIGHTS 1

## Football: Africa Cup of Nations, Gulf Cup of Nations, FA Cup and more

- **Football:** South African public-service broadcaster the SABC acquired broadcast rights in the country for all 32 games in the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations national team tournament, which starts on January 19. The SABC struck the deal with the local organising committee for the tournament in South Africa. SABC, which was also appointed as the host broadcaster of the tournament, will pay a fee of R65m (€5.85m/\$7.66m).
- **Football:** Pay-television sports broadcaster SuperSport, which operates in sub-Saharan Africa, acquired rights for all friendly matches featuring the South Africa national football team. The deal, which was agreed with the South African Football Association, the sport's governing body in South Africa, will run for the duration of 2013. SuperSport acquired exclusive South African pay-television rights plus exclusive pay-television and free-to-air rights in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. The rights can be exploited on internet and mobile platforms. The deal includes rights for South Africa women's team games and youth team fixtures.
- **Football:** International broadcaster Fox International Channels acquired exclusive rights in Japan for the English FA Cup for three seasons, from 2012-13 to 2014-15. FIC will use the rights on Fox Sports Japan, a new sports channel it is launching in the country on March 28 2013 (page 1).
- **Football:** Spanish broadcaster Mediaset acquired live rights for five of the remaining matches in the 2012-13 Copa del Rey domestic club competition. Mediaset will exploit the rights on its commercial channel Telecinco. The deal covered a match between Barcelona and Córdoba on January 10, both legs of one of the quarter-finals and both legs of one of the semi-finals. According to the Europa Press news agency, Mediaset will pay nearly €2 million (\$2.62 million).
- **Football:** State-owned sports broadcaster the Bahrain Sport Channel acquired domestic rights for the 2013 Gulf Cup of Nations tournament, which is taking place in Bahrain and will run until January 18. Bahrain Sport Channel struck the deal with the World Sport Group agency, which is distributing rights for the competition. The tournament that features national teams from member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, a regional confederation.

### SINCE LAST TIME

- German telecommunications company Deutsche Telekom agreed a carriage deal to show pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland's coverage of the Bundesliga, the top two divisions of football in the country. The agreement will run for the duration of Sky's four-year rights deal to show the Bundesliga, from 2013-14 to 2016-17. Telekom will be able to carry Sky's Bundesliga programming, as well as the Sky Sport channel's coverage of other football events such as the DFB-Pokal domestic German cup competition and the Uefa Champions League and Europa League, on its IPTV platform Entertain.
- US network NBC attracted a record audience for its 'Sunday Night Football' NFL American football programme on January 6. Live coverage of the Washington Redskins v Dallas Cowboys game drew an average of 30.28 million viewers, according to audience measurement company Nielsen, beating the previous record for the programme of 27.62 million for the New York Giants v Cowboys game on January 1, 2012. The game also attracted the largest US television audience for a regular-season NFL game since November 18, 1996, when an average of 31.5 million watched the Cowboys v Green Bay Packers game on the ABC network.
- Mauricio Méndez, the chief executive of the Liga del Fútbol Profesional Boliviano, the Bolivian football league, said that a proposed rights deal with state-owned telecommunications company Entel would not be finalised by the start of the 2013 season on January 14. Méndez, who negotiated the deal directly with Entel, was unable to secure approval from the league's 12 clubs to ratify the renewal of the domestic rights for five years, from 2013 to 2017.
- Atlético Paranaense rejected an offer from an affiliate of free-to-air channel Rede Globo for the rights to its games in Campeonato Série A, the top division of football in Brazil, and is planning to start the 2013 campaign without a broadcast partner. The club will produce its own coverage of games and special reports, but it is not clear where the footage will be made available.

### TV INTERNATIONAL

- US pay-television broadcaster beIN Sport struck a carriage deal with regional telecommunications company Advanced Cable in Florida. BeIN Sport's English-language channel was added to Advanced Cable's Digital Plus package, while the Spanish-language channel was added to the Advanced en Español package.
- US network Fox showed live coverage of the English FA Cup, English club football's top knockout tournament, for the first time this month. The network provided live coverage of the West Ham United v Manchester United third-round match on January 5. The network also said it would show live this season's FA Cup final on May 11, 2013.

### FOOTBALL

- The Argentinian government spent ARS\$1.287bn (€199m/\$261m) on its 'fútbol para todos' ('football for everyone') scheme to show domestic league matches on free-to-air television

**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from December 20 to January 9**TV RIGHTS 2****Baseball, basketball, cricket, cycling, darts, golf, ice hockey and lacrosse**

- **Baseball:** US broadcaster Fox Sports Media Group purchased the Cleveland Indians' regional cable-television sports channel SportsTime Ohio, along with the broadcast rights to the Major League Baseball team. Fox Sports will pay \$230m (€175.5m) for SportsTime Ohio and \$400m for the team's broadcast rights over 10 years, from 2013 to 2022.
- **Basketball:** UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB acquired live rights for basketball's NBA, the sport's top competition in North America. The deal will run for the remainder of the 2012-13 campaign, with Sky showing the NBA London Live event on January 17 and then two games on most weekends before broadcasting the playoffs, the eastern conference finals and the season-ending NBA finals. The rights for the London event also cover online, mobile and tablet devices.
- **Basketball:** US Spanish-language broadcaster Univision acquired live rights from the MP & Silva agency for tournaments operated by the ACB, basketball's governing body in Spain. Univision will show two games per week, including contests from the top-tier Liga Endesa, and coverage of the Copa del Rey and Supercopa tournaments, plus a magazine programme. The deal started immediately and will run for two-and-a-half years until the end of the 2014-15 season.
- **Basketball:** US regional sports network Fox Sports Midwest acquired live rights for NBA basketball games featuring the Indiana Pacers. The deal will run until the end of the 2012-13 season, with 38 of the team's remaining 50 games set to be shown.
- **Cricket:** South African public-service broadcaster the SABC acquired live rights for three One-Day International and three Twenty20 matches between South Africa and New Zealand in December and January. Under the deal with the Cricket South Africa national governing body, the SABC also agreed to show a two-hour programme comprising live action and highlights in the afternoons of two Test matches between the teams, as well as evening highlights.
- **Cycling:** Canadian pay-television broadcaster Sportsnet acquired exclusive domestic rights for the Tour de France cycling event in a six-year deal, from 2014 to 2019. The deal includes television, online and mobile rights for all 21 stages of the annual tour. Telecommunications company Rogers Communications, which owns Sportsnet, acquired the rights from Amaury Sport Organisation, the operator of the tour.
- **Darts:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC extended a rights deal for the British Darts Organisation's World Championships. The extension will run for three years, from 2014 to 2016. The BBC struck the deal directly with the BDO governing body.
- **Golf:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland retained rights in Germany and Austria for events organised by the US PGA Tour. The deal, including live rights and highlights, will run for three years, from 2013 until the end of 2015. The rights cover television, online, IPTV and mobile platforms.
- **Ice hockey:** Swedish basic-tier broadcaster SBS acquired rights for Swedish Elitserien playoff matches in 2012-13 in a sublicensing deal with commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV4 Group (page 2).
- **Lacrosse:** Canadian pay-television broadcaster TSN acquired rights for games featuring the Toronto Rock National Lacrosse League team. TSN will show 10 live matches in a deal that will run for the duration of 2013. The coverage will also be available via the TSN Mobile TV service.
- Canadian cable-television broadcaster CTV will stream live coverage of American football's NFL play-off games and Super Bowl for the first time this year. The broadcaster, which also has rights for television coverage of the Super Bowl, will make the action available via its official website.
- German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF sold out their inventory of programme sponsorships for their coverage of the remaining 2012-13 International Ski Federation World Championship events.
- The Italian antitrust authority, l'Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato, extended its deadline for its investigation into the sports-rights acquisitions of pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia for a second time. The deadline was extended from December 31, 2012 to April 30, 2013 after having previously been extended from June 30, 2012. The investigation covers deals for the Fifa World Cup and the Uefa Champions League.
- French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sport renegotiated a live rights deal for coverage of Ligue 2, football's second division in the country, after accepting a request by the Ligue de Football Professionnel, the French football league, to push back kick-off times on Fridays from 6.45pm to 8pm. BeIN Sport will pay the league €9m (\$11.8m) per year over four years, from 2012-13 to 2015-16 – €3m less per year than the fee originally negotiated, for a deal which included simultaneous coverage of eight games kicking off at 6.45pm every Friday and a game on Saturday afternoons.
- TF1 president and director general Nonce Paolini said that the French media company planned to retain a 49-per-cent stake in Eurosport despite agreeing to sell a 20-per-cent stake in the pan-European sports broadcaster to US media and entertainment company Discovery Communications. The deal includes an option for Discovery to increase its stake to 49 per cent in two years' time, at which point TF1 has an option offload the

## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 20 to January 9

### TV RIGHTS 3

## Motorsport, skiing, snooker, speedway, tennis and more

- **Motorsport:** Sportsman Media Group and the Red Bull Media House, the promoters of the World Rally Championship, agreed one-year rights deals for the series covering the 2013 season with the following broadcasters: Sport1, N-tv, RTL and Servus TV in Germany; Rai in Italy; SVT in Scandinavia; and Canal Plus in France (page 7).
- **Skiing:** The Infront Sports & Media agency acquired rights for Fédération Internationale de Ski World Cup events and other competitions in Finland in a five-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2017-18, with the Finnish ski association (page 1).
- **Skiing:** Video-sharing website DailyMotion will provide live coverage of all six stages of the 2013 edition of the Freeride World Tour skiing and snowboarding series. DailyMotion agreed the deal directly with the tour after having shown selected stages over the past two years.
- **Snooker:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC extended its rights deal to three major snooker championships operated by World Snooker, the sport's commercial arm. The BBC will continue to show the World Championship, UK Championship and Masters for three years, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. The rights cover television and online platforms as well as the BBC's iPlayer internet catch-up service. The broadcaster will also continue to act as the tournaments' host broadcaster (page 2).
- **Speedway:** Pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired rights for the Speedway European Championships in a three-year deal, from 2013 to 2015, with the series' promoter One Sport. Eurosport will show all four of the series' annual events on its main channel.
- **Tennis:** Indian subcontinent pay-television broadcaster Taj Television acquired rights for all top-tier Premier tournaments organised by the Women's Tennis Association, the top professional tour in women's tennis, in a four-year deal, from 2013 to 2016. The rights cover India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Taj will exploit the rights on its Ten Sports channels, and the deal includes mobile and online rights. Ten Sports will broadcast the semi-finals and finals from each Premier event, including the year-ending WTA Championships. The deal was brokered by the IEC in Sports agency.
- **Tennis:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Vision acquired rights for the WTA Tour in 2013-16. Sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired rights in the UK for the tour in 2013 only. BT will show live coverage from 21 tournaments each year (page 2).
- **Tennis:** The IEC in Sports agency brokered deals in the Nordic region for the WTA Tour in 2013-16 with pay-television broadcasters Modern Times Group in Denmark, and C More Entertainment, in Norway, Sweden and Finland (page 2).
- **US College Sport:** The IMG agency's college sports division, IMG College, extended its multimedia rights deal with Georgia Tech Athletics, the sports department of the Georgia Institute of Technology university in the US. The new agreement will run until 2021, although the length of the extension was not disclosed. IMG College will continue to produce, manage and distribute coverage of games on television and digital platforms.

remaining 51 per cent to Discovery. Paolini said that Discovery would help Eurosport "to better negotiate the distribution of our premium channels."

- Sports broadcaster Eurosport launched a multi-screen subscription package, allowing viewers to access the Eurosport Player online and mobile streaming service across various tablet, smart phone and smart television devices. Subscribers to the Eurosport Player, which costs €5.90 (\$7.73) per month, can register to access the content on multiple platforms online.
- Eurosport blamed the economic downturn in Spain for the pan-European sports broadcaster being removed from the Canal Plus pay-television platform. Eurosport's chief executive for Southern Europe, Luis Fuentes, blamed cost-cutting measures at media company Prisa, which owns Canal Plus in Spain.
- Pan-Nordic television operator Modern Times Group completed its buy-out of Danish pay-television sports broadcaster TV2 Sport after the deal was approved by the Konkurrencestyrelsen, the Danish competition authority. MTG, which controlled 50 per cent of TV2 Sport, acquired the remaining 50-per-cent stake from state-owned basic-tier pay-television broadcaster TV2. The payment comprised an undisclosed sum plus the transfer of the exclusive Danish broadcast rights for the 2016 and 2018 editions of the European Handball Championships national team tournament from MTG to TV2.
- The Poland national football team's game against Russia during the Uefa Euro 2012 tournament attracted more television viewers in Poland than any other sporting event last year, according to audience measurement company Nielsen. The game on June 12 attracted 13.4 million viewers to TVP1. Poland's other Euro 2012 matches, against Greece on June 8 and Czech Republic on June 16, were second and third in the rankings with audiences of 12.8 million and 12.6 million respectively on the public-service broadcaster's main channel.
- Polish cable-television operator Multimedia Polska agreed carriage deals for Eurosport 2 HD, a channel from pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport, and fight sports pay-television channel FightBox. Polish cable-television operator Aster also announced that Eurosport 2 would be added to its BasicPlus package in February, with Eurosport 2 HD set to follow on its expanded high-definition package.



## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 20 to January 9

- Telecommunications company Portugal Telecom agreed a deal to acquire a 25-per-cent stake in Portuguese pay-television broadcaster Sport TV. Media company Zon Multimedia will also own 25 per cent, with fellow media company Sportinveste controlling the remaining 50 per cent. The deal is worth €67m (\$87.8m). It is subject to the approval of Portugal's competition authority, the Autoridade da Concorrência.
- Sony-owned broadcaster Multi Screen Media will simulcast the 2013 season of the Indian Premier League Twenty20 cricket tournament on its Hindi film channel Max and its sports and entertainment channel Six.
- The operators of the Australian V8 Supercars motor-racing series scaled back ambitions for a five-year rights deal, from 2013 to 2017, and halted attempts to sell digital rights. V8 is hoping to secure a 'stopgap' free-to-air television rights deal before restarting negotiations over digital rights for the next cycle. Commercial broadcaster the Seven Network and pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports are in talks with V8 over an interim deal to show races on Seven's secondary digital channel 7mate and Fox Sports' motorsport-dedicated channel Speed.
- Pan-American football channel Go!TV is in talks with the Federación Peruana de Fútbol, the Peruvian football federation, to acquire the rights to the country's top league, the Copa Movistar Torneo Descentralizado, from 2017. The rights for league matches are currently sold by clubs on an individual basis but the federation will centralise the rights from 2017 when the existing deals between individual clubs and broadcasters will have expired.

### TV RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The Deutsche Tennis Bund, the governing body of tennis in Germany, took control of marketing the German media rights for the Davis Cup, Fed Cup and Hopman Cup national team tennis tournaments. The governing body will sell the broadcast and online rights in Germany for the international competitions after agreeing a deal with the International Tennis Federation, tennis' global governing body, which operates the events.
- British Triathlon signed up the Upsolut Sport UK agency to assist the sport's national governing body in selling its media rights. The length of the deal, which started immediately, was not disclosed. Upsolut, which is owned by the Lagardère Unlimited sports marketing division of French media and defence conglomerate Lagardère, has served as British Triathlon's event delivery partner since 2009.
- Seven US universities that plan to leave the Big East conference and form their own conference expect to double their broadcast rights revenues from the move. The Fox network tabled a bid of more than \$500m (€382m) for a 12-year deal with the new conference, which would comprise the DePaul, Georgetown, Marquette, Providence, Seton Hall, St John's and Villanova universities. The presidents of the seven universities decided that they would retain the services of lawyers from Proskauer Rose and Pilsen Communications for broadcast negotiations following a meeting on January 4.

### ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- BT appointed production company Sunset+Vine to produce the telco's coverage of the English Premier League, the top division of football in the country, and English club rugby union's top-tier Premiership. The contract is worth between £100m (€124m/\$162m) and £132m over three years, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. The agreement covers BT's three-year rights deal for live domestic rights to the Premier League, and the first three years of the company's four-year rights deal for the Premiership.
- Production company Black Dynamite was appointed by the French Olympic Committee to serve as the executive producer of the governing body's programming, which will be used on *L'Équipe 21*, a joint venture digital-terrestrial television sports channel set up by the committee and sports newspaper *L'Équipe*. Black Dynamite will also produce content for a yet-to-be-launched online video service operated by the committee.
- The Kentaro agency appointed Lasse Eckartsberg as its new head of global media sales. Eckartsberg, who joined Kentaro in 2009, succeeded Olaf Jochmann, who left the agency at the end of last year. He will report into Kentaro chief executive Philipp Grothe and Kentaro Germany managing director Stefan Fueg.

#### EDITORIAL

Editor	Frank Dunne @frankdunneTVSM
Digital News Editor	Kevin McCullagh @kevinmccullagh
Reporter	Dan Horlock @DanHorlock
Telephone	+44 (0) 20 7954 3506
Fax	+44 (0) 20 7954 3511
Email	tvsm@tvsportsmarkets.com

#### DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Designer	Stewart Henson
Production Assistant	Carianne Whitworth
Email	carianne@tvsportsmarkets.com

#### SALES & COMMERCIAL

Telephone	+44 (0) 20 7954 3483
Fax	+44 (0) 20 7954 3511
Email	sales@tvsportsmarkets.com
Paul Santos	Head of Sales & Commercial
Email	paul.santos@tvsportsmarkets.com

#### TV Sports Markets

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For more information, contact Paul Santos by email on paul.santos@tvsportsmarkets.com