

EUROPA LEAGUE

Uefa expects much more money but TV says it is being 'optimistic'

By Frank Dunne

Uefa, European football's governing body, said that it expected a "significant increase" in media-rights fees for the Europa League in the next cycle following the format and qualification changes agreed last week.

Uefa expects to earn at least 30 per cent more than the €250m (\$323m) per season it earns for all commercial income in the current three-year cycle, from 2012-13 to 2014-15. According to *TV Sports Markets* research, this is made up of about €235m per season in media-rights income and about €15m per season from sponsorship.

Uefa expects sponsorship income to enjoy a larger percentage increase than media-rights income, due to the expansion of the rights which are sold centrally (see panel, page 3). However, to hit an annual target in excess of €325m for the 2015-16 to 2017-18 cycle, it would need substantial

increases from broadcasters too.

Talking exclusively to *TV Sports Markets*, Guy-Laurent Epstein, marketing director of Uefa Events, said: "We are expecting a significant increase in the media-rights value. The product is maturing anyway, and the changes that have been made will increase the value further. Broadcasters will have the comfort of having more guaranteed teams from their markets in the group stages and knowing that teams will take the competition seriously."

The changes to qualification will mean more teams from Europe's major TV markets will automatically go into the group stage, without having to play qualification matches. Allowing the winner of the competition to qualify for the following season's Champions League will give clubs greater motivation to field their strongest teams.

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DIGITAL MEDIA

Transforming the second screen 'threat'

By Frank Dunne

Any assumption that the 'second-screen' activity of sports viewers is linked to the content being watched on television – to enrich, deepen or share the viewing experience – is blown apart by the findings of the *Global Sports Media Consumption Report 2013*.

The report shows that the use of an internet-connected device while watching sport on television is spreading like a bush

fire. However, in the vast majority of cases, what people are using their PCs, smartphones or tablets for has no relation to the sporting event they are viewing.

In the third annual survey into global sports media consumption, most fans said that they now use an internet-connected device while watching sport on television. Of these, however, only about 10 per cent

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FASTRACK

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bundesliga changes tack to 'follow the money'

German football's Bundesliga is adopting a more hard-nosed commercial approach to international media rights sales in order to hit ambitious rights fee growth targets.

Strong rights fees will be prioritised ahead of wide exposure in the next cycle, from 2015-16 onwards, Jörg Daubitzer, managing director of the league's commercial arm DFL Sports Enterprises, said last week.

"We will follow the money. That is the direction we will go in," he said. Daubitzer was speaking at the TVSM Live event in London on May 24, organised by *TV Sports Markets*.

A doubling of the league's international rights fee revenue from €70m (\$90m) per year in the current cycle, 2012-13 to 2014-15, to €140m per year in the next cycle, is understood to be the aim.

The international rights value of the English Premier League has grown strongly by favouring fee level over exposure. It earned about €556m per season in its most recent rights cycle, 2010-11 to 2012-13, by far the most among the big five leagues.

Of the other big leagues, Italy's Serie A earns international rights fees of €117m per season in 2012-13 to 2014-15; Spain's Liga is estimated to earn between €150m and €200m per season in 2012-13 to 2014-15; and France's Ligue 1 earns €32.5m per season in 2012-13 to 2017-18.

Privileging exposure over rights fees in some markets was part of the Bundesliga's long-term strategy to help build awareness of the league around the world. This has become less of a concern. Its reputation for high quality football is growing, and was boosted by the appearance of two clubs – Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund – in this year's Uefa Champions League final. In the annual BrandFinance Football 50 report, published this week, Bayern was rated the most valuable global club brand, ahead of Manchester United, Real Madrid and Barcelona.

Competition and the City

World Sport Group founder and chairman Seamus O'Brien is insisting he has not backed the wrong horse in the US by pumping his money into recently relaunched franchise the New York Cosmos. Some US football experts disagree.

They say that the high-profile launch of New York City, the franchise owned 75 per cent by English Premier League club Manchester City and 25 per cent by Major League Baseball's New York Yankees, can only be bad news for the Cosmos. NYC is expected to begin competing in the 2015 season.

The debut of the Cosmos in the second-tier North American Soccer League in August has been overshadowed by the launch. The long-term objective of the Cosmos was to join the top-tier Major League Soccer, but when New York City were unveiled last week as the MLS's 20th franchise, that avenue appeared to have closed.

The Cosmos are owned by O'Brien and Saudi Arabian sports marketing company Sela Sport. Each has a 50-per-cent stake in the franchise. It is understood that the investment is O'Brien's, rather than that of WSG.

The two New York franchises will go head to head for fans, sponsors and areas in which to develop a stadium. A key difference between them being that New York City is a top-tier team while the Cosmos is a second-tier franchise.

New York already has an MLS franchise in the Red Bulls, something which was never a concern to O'Brien. However, it is unlikely that he could have foreseen competing with a rival as fierce as the owner of Manchester City, Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the brother of the ruler of Abu Dhabi, the biggest of the United Arab Emirates. Under his brief ownership City have become a top European club.

Last week, O'Brien told *Forbes* magazine: "As far as I'm concerned, investment in the sport is a good thing,

wherever it is. To have another rival in New York, I'm delighted. I'd have it out with anyone who would surmise that New York couldn't support four teams."

Rai and Sky left at Lega table

Italian state broadcaster Rai and pay-television operator Sky Italia are the only broadcasters left in private negotiations for the rights to the country's top basketball league, Lega Serie A.

Informed sources say that the clubs would like to strike a deal which gives both broadcasters some live coverage. This way they could maintain media rights fees at their current level and protect the value of their sponsorship deals with wider exposure. However, Sky is only thought likely to invest in the property, with its high production costs, if it gets the live rights exclusively.

The market has become more difficult since the last time the league sold its rights, for the seasons 2011-12 and 2012-13. Then, four broadcasters were interested in the rights. Along with Rai and Sky, commercial broadcaster La7 and digital sports channel Sportitalia held talks with the league, and its adviser StageUp. Rai ended up acquiring the rights for the first-choice match and La7 for second pick.

Under its new ownership, La7 is targeting a more female audience and is gradually withdrawing from sport. Sportitalia is facing a serious financial crisis and is battling to avoid closure.

The league is selling its rights for the two-year period, 2013-14 to 2014-15. It auctioned the rights with a deadline of April 10 but received no offers. It then entered into private negotiations. A deal is expected in about two weeks. Insiders say that the league is braced for a second consecutive drop in value. The Rai/La7 deals are understood to be worth less than the average of €2.7m (\$3.5m) per season which Sky paid for exclusive rights in the period 2009-10 to 2010-11. On top of the centrally-sold league deals, each club also does deals with local broadcasters. ■

EUROPA LEAGUE

Uefa says 2015 changes will increase media rights value

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Broadcasters were positive about the changes this week, but with a number of caveats. One said that the incentive of Champions League qualification would make teams take the competition more seriously once they had got through to the knock-out stages, and they were in with a reasonable chance of winning, but there was no guarantee this would apply to the early qualification and group stages (see box). Another said that it would want to look at the global impact of the changes over a three-year cycle before it was prepared to pay more.

A senior executive at one Europa League broadcaster said the impact of the changes would be different in each territory, and added that “individual conditions in both economic and football terms” made Uefa’s income projections “extremely optimistic.”

One rights trader agreed that results would vary. The current UK deal, for example, where commercial broadcaster ITV and pay-television operator ESPN pay a combined £12m (€14m/\$18m) per season, was “way undervalued.” It would have gone up anyway, and the changes may help it to go up further, he said. The rights in Italy, on the other hand, where commercial and pay-television operator Mediaset pays €30m per season, were overvalued. “The value was due to go down in Italy in the next cycle,” he said. “It may still do, but the changes may soften the blow.” He said that to expect increases across the board was “too simplistic.”

Uefa confident

Epstein said that broadcasters and fans in most markets had been “testing” the Europa League and now understood its value. “We are very confident that they are getting to like it and that broadcasters will not wait until the following cycle to place their bets,” he said.

He said that when Uefa created the

Uefa 'taking broadcaster concerns seriously'

Guy-Laurent Epstein, marketing director of Uefa Events, said that allowing the Europa League winner to qualify for the Champions League showed Uefa was taking seriously concerns from fans and broadcasters that teams were fielding weakened sides.

“We are working on it and trying to convince all the clubs to line up with the strongest team,” he said.

Epstein argued, however, that these concerns had been greatly overplayed and that the problem was largely confined to Italy.

“I’m not convinced that the practice of fielding weakened teams is widespread. It is certainly not the case in Spain. Atlético Madrid won the competition twice in a row by fielding their strongest team. This season, I don’t think teams like Chelsea, Tottenham and Newcastle

fielded second-string sides.”

Teams in key markets such as Spain, Portugal, Germany, England and Turkey, and those from the smaller markets in Europe, generally took the competition seriously, he argued. An exception to this may have been the very top teams when dropping down from the Champions League to the Europa League.

“In the 2011-12 season, Manchester United and Manchester City went out of the Champions League and we said ‘this is great for the Europa League’ but they lost in the first round.” Both clubs prioritised the battle for the league title.

He said that under the new system, when such teams go into the Europa League and have only nine games to play to get into the Champions League they “will look on it as a great opportunity.” ■

Europa League changes

Uefa has introduced three key changes to the Europa League beginning from the 2015-16 season. These are:

- the full centralisation of rights to perimeter advertising. Currently, Uefa only sells the rights for the knockout stages, with the clubs selling the rights in the qualification and group-stage games.
- the number of teams directly qualifying for the group stage will be increased to 16 teams from the top 12 associations,

compared with six teams from the top six associations at present.

- the winner of the Europa League will qualify for the play-offs to enter the following season’s Champions League. If the holder of the Champions League title is also eligible for qualification due to its league position, thus freeing up a Champions League place, the Europa League winner would go straight into the Champions League group stages.

Europa League in the 2009-10 season from the old Uefa Cup it was untested. There had been an immediate increase in media-rights value “because of the narrative which could be built around the new format,” he said. This trend would continue as the sporting value of the competition increased.

A like-with-like comparison between the media-rights value of the Uefa Cup and Europa League is difficult because of limited information about the value of Uefa Cup broadcast deals, for which the rights were sold individually by the clubs. Most clubs sold their rights en bloc to agencies like Sportfive. *TV Sports Markets* data suggests that the value may have

trebled as a consequence of the centralisation and rebranding.

Between the first three-year cycle, 2009-12, and the second, 2012-15, media-rights values increased by a further 20 per cent and sponsorship rights by 11.5 per cent.

Epstein argued that the competition would have had even greater impact as a television property had Uefa not been “unlucky” in ending up with two Portuguese teams – Porto and Braga – in the 2011 final and two Spanish teams – Atlético Madrid and Athletic Bilbao – in the 2012 final. “Having two teams from one country in a final is not the best outcome,” he said. ■

FOOTBALL

TVB lays down World Cup marker in Hong Kong

By Dan Horlock

Hong Kong broadcaster TVB last week paid just under \$40m (€31m) for the exclusive rights to the 2014 Fifa World Cup, an increase on the rights fee for the 2010 tournament, which was worth just under \$35m.

TVB will broadcast 22 live World Cup matches and daily highlights on its free-to-air channels. Its pay-television platform TVB Network Vision will broadcast all 64 games live.

The rights cover other events including the Confederations Cup and the U-20 World Cup which take place this year. But the vast majority of the value in the rights is for the 2014 World Cup.

The deal also includes radio, internet and mobile rights for next year's tournament. TVB said that it would invest just over \$10m in production and transmission costs.

The deal was brokered by Football Media Services, a joint venture between the Dentsu advertising agency and the Infront Sports & Media agency, which sells the rights in Asia, excluding Japan and Thailand, on behalf of Fifa, football's global governing body. FMS paid a minimum guarantee of \$350m for the 2007-2014 Asian rights.

There was no formal rights sales process. It is thought that incumbent rights-holder, pay-television operator i-Cable, tabled a bid but that it could not match TVB's opening offer. Pay-television rights fees in Hong Kong have stagnated in recent years due to the maturity of the market. Hong Kong has 2.4m television homes and pay-television has a penetration rate of about 90 per cent.

TVB defends position

TVB is by far the country's dominant free-to-air broadcaster and only a marginal player in pay-television. Local experts say that TVB's real strategic drive in the deal was to defend its position in

the free-to-air market. The deal had an important political dimension, in that it is designed to head off government plans to create new free-to-air licences.

In 2010, pay-television operators i-Cable, PCCW and Hong Kong Television Network submitted applications for free-to-air licences. In July 2011, the country's Communications Authority recommended that the licences be granted.

One of the arguments in favour of creating new licences is that too much top sport is available exclusively on pay-television. If the main pay-television players had licences for free-to-air television as well, they would be more likely to split the content across both platforms, and make it available to a much wider audience.

TVB and commercial broadcaster ATV are opposed to the new free-to-air licences. By putting 22 live World Cup games on free-to-air television, TVB is demonstrating that the new licences are not necessary.

In January, TVB applied for a judicial review of the decision. The broadcaster said that the authority had made an unlawful recommendation. It said that there was a lack of advertising revenue to support more free networks.

Sublicensing problem

Another reason that TVB wanted to acquire the exclusive rights was due to its difficult relationship with the 2010 rights-holder i-Cable.

For the 2010 tournament, i-Cable held exclusive rights but was required by Fifa and the government to make key games available to free-to-air television. Negotiations were fraught. i-Cable offered some matches, but only if the broadcasters carried the i-Cable feed, complete with its advertising and commentary.

In April, less than two months before the tournament began, a compromise was found by which the two broadcasters agreed to take the i-Cable feed but only for distribution on their digital-terrestrial channels, as opposed to their wider-reaching analogue channels.

ATV and TVB showed the opening match, both semi-finals and the final, plus highlights and magazine programmes.

Rights fee growth

Between the 2006 and 2010 tournaments, the rights fee increased more than threefold, from \$10m for 2006 to just under \$35m for 2010, due to intense competition between the two pay-television operators, i-Cable and PCCW (*TV Sports Markets* 11:11).

The scale of the increase also owed a great deal to i-Cable being able to acquire the rights for the 2006 tournament in favourable conditions in 2003. At that time the Hong Kong economy was flat. Also, the Infront Sports & Media agency, which was in the process of taking over World Cup rights from the bankrupt Kirch Sport, needed cash quickly. ■

TV GERMANY

Sky growing but looking to pay less for most sport

By Kevin McCullagh

Sky Deutschland's renewal of its English Premier League rights deal earlier this month was done at about the same value as the previous cycle.

Sky is understood to be paying either the same as, or just below, the €3.6m (\$4.6m) per season it paid in the last cycle, from 2010-11 to 2012-13. The new cycle runs from 2013-14 to 2015-16. No other bids close to this value are thought to have been made. Both deals cover Germany and Austria.

The broadcaster is trying to control spending on rights after having almost doubled its investment in the Bundesliga, the German football league. It is able to do this because of a lack of competition.

Sky is currently the only pay-television broadcaster buying content at the premium end of the sports rights market in Germany. There are smaller pay-television operators, such as Sport1, but they cannot afford rights worth millions of euros per year.

Only content that is of interest to both Sky and the country's major free-to-air broadcasters has been generating strong rights fees in Germany. Properties such as the Uefa Champions League have

enjoyed strong fee increases in recent years, but international football leagues have struggled.

Sky has been taking a tough bargaining position in rights renewals. It is understood to have pushed hard to negotiate down the value of three golf majors it recently renewed – the US Open, the British Open and the US PGA Championship. However, it is thought to have agreed deals worth around the same as the previous cycle. The deals covered exclusive live rights for each tournament from 2013 to 2015, and were brokered by the IMG Media agency.

For the new domestic football Bundesliga rights deal, Sky is paying an average of €486m per year, from 2013-14 to 2016-17 – a 94-per-cent increase on what it paid in the cycle which has just ended, from 2009-10 to 2012-13.

Sky's big year

Absorbing the cost of the new Bundesliga deal is the biggest challenge facing Sky. Its business has been steadily improving, but it still made a loss in 2012. It is forecasting a positive ebitda in 2013.

"It needs to prove it can pay the fee without needing intervention from shareholders," one expert said this week. News Corporation, the majority owner of Sky, with a 54.5-per-cent stake, has invested heavily in the business to help it move towards profitability after years of losses.

Sky would need to add 593,000 subscribers at its current revenue-per-subscriber level to cover the increased cost of the Bundesliga rights, not counting costs related to obtaining or retaining new subscribers. Sky had 3.4m subscribers in the first quarter of 2013.

Volker Winter, Sky's senior vice president sports rights, said this week: "The Bundesliga and our other premium football content, such as the DFB-Pokal, Uefa Champions League, Uefa Europa League and Premier League, will bring us many new subscribers." The DFB-Pokal is the German domestic football cup.

Winter said that Sky's growth in the last two years indicated a shift in the German market, where consumers have long been considered unwilling to pay for premium pay-television.

"The continuous growth of the past 24 months clearly shows that the

German viewers want pay-TV," he said. "At the moment, a shift in media consumption is taking place. More and more German viewers are willing to pay for premium content because it gives them added value."

Strong performances by Germany's top football clubs Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund domestically and in European competitions were a big lift for Sky in the 2012-13 season.

The two clubs contested the Champions League final last Saturday. As well as this, "the Bundesliga was tremendous, with Dortmund and Bayern playing the best football ever seen in Germany. Bayern are in the cup final – there were a lot of great stories Sky could tell," one local industry expert said. "The core content performed extremely well."

New channels

New pay-television channels emerging in Germany are thought to have played a role in propping up the value of the golf majors rights that Sky renewed.

Commercial broadcaster Sat.1 is planning to launch a pay-television sports channel, ran+ HD, either this year or next, as well as an older-male-focused basic-tier pay-television channel, ProSieben Maxx, in the last quarter this year. Sat.1's main commercial rival RTL is also said to be considering more niche channels so as not to be left behind by its rival.

Such channels will be positioned in a lower-cost area of the market than Sky and are not expected to pose a major challenge to it in the sports rights market. They were considered potential bidders for the golf rights because golf is a small sport in Germany and the rights are relatively inexpensive. Sky is understood to be paying a low six-figure euro fee per year for each major.

Demand for new niche pay-television channels is coming from cable-television platforms migrating customers to digital subscriptions. German households have been slow in moving from analogue to digital television and are still doing so.

Digital platforms can carry more channels. The platforms are interested in high definition sports channels that they can bundle together and sell to basic-tier customers for an additional fee. ■

FOOTBALL

CAA Eleven rejects pan-Nordic consortium offer

By Robin Jellis

The CAA Eleven agency has rejected a pan-Nordic broadcaster consortium offer for Euro 2016 and European Qualifiers rights to go with a market-by-market sale.

The consortium, which bid for both properties, is understood to have been comprised of seven broadcasters across the four Nordic countries. These were:

- Sweden: public-service broadcaster SVT and commercial broadcaster TV4
- Denmark: public-service broadcaster DR and commercial broadcaster TV2
- Norway: public-service broadcaster NRK and commercial broadcaster TV2
- Finland: public-service broadcaster YLE.

CAA Eleven rejected the bid as too low. A source close to the talks said the agency's valuation of the rights was "far beyond" the consortium's offer. In Sweden, the agency is understood to be seeking about €750,000 (\$967,500) per Sweden national team qualifier – so about €15m for the 20 Sweden qualifying matches on offer.

By selling market-by-market, CAA Eleven will hope to pitch the consortium bidders against other potential buyers in the region, including free-to-air and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group, and basic-tier broadcaster SBS. Both operate across the entire region.

MTG are thought to be bidding for both the Qualifiers and Euro 2016 on a pan-Nordic basis; SBS is said to be bidding for at least some of the rights; and NRK and TV2 are understood to be bidding jointly for both properties in Norway only.

Other rights-sellers have increased the value of their properties by moving from pan-regional to market-by-market deals in the Nordics. Most notably, the value of English Premier League football rights in the region went up by about 125 per cent in market-by-market sales over the past two cycles, following more than a decade in which it was sold in a pan-Nordic deal.

However, one broadcast source said that individual market bids so far for Euro 2016 and the European Qualifiers have been lower than the consortium bid in each territory.

CAA Eleven last month tendered in the Nordics the rights to Euro 2016 and the European Qualifiers for Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup. First-round bids were due by May 14. A second-round bidding deadline ended on May 30. Deals are expected to be announced for both properties in the coming weeks.

CAA Eleven is selling the global rights on behalf of Uefa, European football's governing body.

Nordic consortiums

Consortium deals are common for major international football properties in the Nordics.

The Euro 2012 rights in Denmark, Norway and Sweden were acquired by TV4, SVT, and pay-television platform Canal Digital, which is owned by telecommunications company Telenor, in a deal worth around €42m. The rights in Denmark were sublicensed to DR and TV2, and the rights in Norway were sublicensed

Sony beats Neo Sports to grab Euro 2016

Media company Sony is understood last week to have paid between \$18m (€14m) and \$20m to acquire the exclusive broadcast rights across the Indian subcontinent to Euro 2016.

The fee represents an increase of at least 38 per cent on the deal for Euro 2012, which was worth about \$13m. The deal was brokered by the CAA Eleven agency on behalf of Uefa, European football's governing body.

Sony is understood to have faced competition from the incumbent rights-holder pay-television broadcaster Neo Sports, owned by the Nimbus Communications agency. Pay-television broadcasters Star and Taj are also thought to have bid for the

rights, but not strongly.

Sony was aggressive in the bidding, as it continues to look for premium content to add to its portfolio for the sports and entertainment pay-television channel Six, which it launched in April 2012. Six will broadcast live all 51 games from the national team competition.

In November, it lost out to Star for the Premier League rights covering the period 2013-14 to 2015-16. The Premier League rights are by far the most coveted football content in the territory. The intense competition pushed the rights fee up by 200 per cent, from \$16m per season to \$48m per season. ■

to NRK and TV2. YLE acquired Euro 2012 rights in Finland through its membership of the European Broadcasting Union.

The same seven broadcasters that made a consortium bid for Euro 2016 and the qualifiers also teamed up to acquire the

World Cups in 2010 and 2014, in a deal worth €71m. The Swedish broadcasters are understood to be contributing 35 per cent of the fee, the Danish and Norwegian broadcasters 25 per cent each, and YLE 15 per cent. ■

FOOTBALL

Federations try to cook up value with leftover friendlies

By Frank Dunne

Europe's football federations and the industry's major sports-rights agencies are facing the challenge of how to increase the media-rights value of national team friendly matches. It is widely agreed that there is margin for growth but there are also many obstacles.

Ideas under discussion include a more coordinated friendly calendar, with small groups of national teams playing what are effectively mini-tournaments, and the big nations playing each other more frequently than in the past.

Presently, less than half of Europe's 53 federations are thought to have deals in place with agencies for the second- and

third-party media rights (those outside their domestic market) to their friendlies beyond 2014.

From the 2014-15 season, their competitive matches – and a small number of friendlies – will be absorbed into the central European Qualifiers package which is being sold by the CAA Eleven agency.

Of the three agencies – Sportfive, Kentaro and IMG Media – which dominated the federation rights business before centralisation, Sportfive is thought to have the largest portfolio. It maintained the friendly rights to between 10 and 15 federations from long-term deals signed before the centralisation. All three agencies are currently in talks to try to sign up the remaining federations.

A two-year cycle of friendly rights is worth, at an absolute maximum, half the value of a package of competitive games for the same period. However, friendly games are notoriously difficult to put a media

value on. Frequently, they are covered by reciprocal agreements between federations and never come on to the market.

Tournaments

Friendly national team tournaments already exist but their value tends to be concentrated in the markets of the competing teams. One way to move beyond that, according to one rights expert, would be to host mini-tournaments of two to four invited teams in developing football markets such as the US, Asia or Australia, where broadcasters would have a greater appetite for football. The groups could be organised to include at least one major football nation and one or two nations with a big expatriate population in the host territory.

"If it's planned, consistent and not organised at the last minute, broadcasters and sponsors would have something to hang their hat on," he said. "One of the main reasons that friendlies have a low commercial value is that they are random and frequently organised at the

last minute,” he said.

He said that an ad hoc friendly match involving a small nation which might normally bring in no more than \$100,000 (€78,000) in rights fees, could be worth two or three times that amount as part of a mini-tournament.

Elite teams

Another way for the big federations to increase value is for the top eight to 10 national teams to play each other more frequently, reducing or eliminating matches against federations from low-value television markets.

There were conflicting signals from the market this week about how far advanced such plans are. A senior executive at one of the big five federations said that the idea was being taken seriously. An executive at another major federation said that nothing had changed – the big European nations had been making sure that they played each other regularly for many years.

An agency insider said that smaller federations would be very unhappy about such a development. “Many small federations already feel that the differential between what Uefa has guaranteed them and what it has guaranteed the bigger federations [for the centralised rights] is too great,” he said. “Some of them are only getting €4m to €5m per four-year cycle, against the €80m to €115m that the big federations have been promised. They don’t want to get squeezed again on the friendlies.”

National team coaches would also be opposed to the idea as it would limit their ability to choose suitable opponents.

Uefa interest

Uefa, European football’s governing body, would like to add friendly matches to the centralised rights package from the next rights cycle, from 2018, according to one federation executive. When it centralised the qualifier rights for the period 2014–18, it considered including all friendlies. In the end, it backed away because not all federations were in favour.

By centralising the rights and coordinating the calendar, Uefa could, in theory, increase the value per match. Selling both competitive and friendly matches together would give CAA Eleven

a much stronger bargaining position with broadcasters than agencies selling small packages of friendly rights.

Further, Uefa could be sure that groups of federations and sports-rights agencies could not use friendly matches to set up parallel tournaments to the Euro and World qualifying tournaments, thus undermining the commercial value of the European Qualifiers rights.

However, adding the friendlies would not be simple. First, Uefa would have to compensate the federations for the rights and make sure that they did so at market value. Second, there are currently so many commercial models for friendlies – differing ways of handling event promotion, hosting and appearance fees, ticketing and hospitality, as well as the sale of commercial rights – that it would not be easy to integrate the matches into a single, centrally sold product. Agencies have far greater flexibility in this area. ■

DIGITAL MEDIA

The second screen: from threat to opportunity for sport

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are accessing some kind of sports content online.

In traditionally strong television markets like the US, Germany, the UK and France, the number falls to about four per cent. It is counterbalanced by higher proportions in growth markets like Turkey, Indonesia, Russia and China.

One major rights-holder, the International Basketball Federation (Fiba), this week spoke of the ‘threat’ represented by the rapid growth in second-screen activity.

Frank Leenders, director general of Fiba Media & Marketing Services, Fiba’s commercial subsidiary, said: “The threat is that traditional audience figures may stay the same, but the quality and intensity of viewing becomes diminished. This will have an impact on the value of commercial airtime.”

The challenge for sport is to find a way to increase the amount of second-screen

activity which is linked to the main television viewing experience, rather than being a distraction from it.

There is, theoretically at least, commercial potential for rights-holders and broadcasters in creating a more interactive experience around the live event. But at the moment the opportunities remain largely untapped and the business model undeveloped. Those broadcasters creating specific content for additional screens are generally incurring a cost without seeing any direct revenue for that content.

John Kristick, global chief executive of GroupM Entertainment & Sports Partnerships, the entertainment and sports consultancy unit of WPP’s media investment company GroupM, said: “The victorious brands will be those who create unique, topical second-screen platforms that empower consumers to have truly shareable experiences that can drive volume and tap into the magic of viral.”

Kristick, formerly executive director of the Infront Sports & Media agency, added: “The second-screen content must be relevant to that device; it is not a one-size-fits-all approach. How mobile is leveraged versus digital or tablet should be distinctive. Properties must also adapt more for second-screen consumption. It’s more than just a place for statistics. Today’s multi-tasking audience is easily distracted and craves compelling content.”

Fifa, football’s world governing body, is launching second-screen applications for the 2014 Fifa World Cup in Brazil which are directly linked to the event and matches. “These services will be easy for media-rights licensees to use and adopt if they so choose,” Niclas Ericson, Fifa’s director of television, said this week.

Ericson pointed out, however: “To drive the connection between the first screen and the second screen, the sector needs to develop further. Social media platforms and our applications need to be better aligned.”

Social media

Another trend which has been confirmed by the 2013 report – which covers all forms of consumption, from text to audiovisual – is the exponential growth in the use of social media platforms by sports

fans, particularly in developing economies.

In Turkey, 66 per cent of sports fans surveyed consume sport via a social networking site. In India, the number is slightly lower, at 63 per cent, in Indonesia 57 per cent and in Brazil 49 per cent. In Russia, 61 per cent of those surveyed said they now watch live streaming of sport on social websites.

This growth, and its potential commercial value, has not gone unnoticed by sports bodies. Ericson said that Fifa was developing social media guidelines for its media rights licensees "to further enable them to increase income related to the rights. At our recent Fifa World Broadcaster

Meeting for the 2014 Fifa World Cup, we presented a large package of services in the multimedia area including how social media can be integrated into the media presentation of the event by our media rights licensees," he said.

For Fiba, social media is proving to be a vital platform in driving take-up of the small-sided, community-based version of the sport, 3x3.

"This is something outside of the typical confederation-federation-league pyramid structure," Leenders said. "The 3x3 planet is an open system. Anybody who plays basketball can register; you don't have to be a member of a club. If you go online

and see that a few guys are playing in your neighbourhood, you can go and play them and get points according to the result and work your way up the ladder.

"The idea is to bring together a worldwide community of 3x3 players through the internet and allow them to communicate through social media, uploading photos and game reports and so on," Leenders added.

• *The Global Sports Media Consumption Report 2013*, a collaboration between digital sports media company Perform, research agency Kantar Media Sport and *TV Sports Markets*, will be published in June. ■

FRENCH OPEN

Talks for free-to-air rights in Spain drag on into week two

By Dan Horlock

Coverage of the 112th edition of the French Open began last weekend without a free-to-air deal in Spain, as state broadcaster TVE's last-minute bid was rejected by rights-holder the MP & Silva agency.

Last Saturday, TVE is understood to have raised its bid for the rights to €500,000 (\$645,000) plus broadcast sponsorship or airtime before the tournament began on Sunday, May 26. It had previously had an offer of €300,000 rejected.

The latest rights fee offer represented a decrease of close to 70 per cent on last year's fee. In 2012, commercial broadcaster Mediaset paid about €1.5m for the rights. In the previous four-year contract, from 2008 to 2011, TVE paid €4.6m per year as part of a European Broadcasting Union deal.

Mediaset's acquisition was seen as a stop-gap deal, with the agency banking on the situation in Spain improving. However, the crisis has worsened. The value of the country's television advertising market fell by 15.7 per cent to €409.3m in the first quarter.

Mediaset decided not to renew the rights as it lost money on the acquisition

despite the low rights fee and Spaniard Rafael Nadal retaining the title (*TV Sports Markets* 17:8).

In the bidding process, commercial broadcaster Antena 3 is understood to have made the agency a verbal offer of €1.2m for the rights in an attempt to make Mediaset pay more. However, it withdrew its offer when it found out that Mediaset was not bidding. This left only cash-strapped TVE at the table.

One local expert said that he believed an agreement for this year's tournament rights with TVE would be reached by the second week of the tournament. Half of the advertising value is said to be in the men's final, if a Spanish player is involved. He pointed to a recent deal by the broadcaster for Euroleague basketball matches involving Real Madrid. TVE secured coverage of the latter stages of the 2012-13 season paying a small rights fee, production costs, and providing airtime.

Listed event

Roland Garros is the most important tennis tournament for Spanish fans, which is reflected by the participation of Spanish players in the semi-finals and final being covered by listed-events legislation.

One expert said that a key question was whether there was a clause in pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus's contract giving it the right to show the semi-finals and finals if no free-to-air deal was reached.

Last year, Mediaset showed one match per day via its digital-terrestrial channel

Energy. It showed the quarter-finals and semi-finals on its commercial channel Cuatro and the final on its flagship commercial channel Telecinco.

Prisa exclusivity

As a result of the free-to-air stand-off, Canal Plus, owned by the Prisa media group, is enjoying greater exclusivity of the 2013 French Open rights.

Prisa signed a three-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, last year with MP & Silva for the rights to both the French Open and Italy's top-tier football league Serie A.

The deal, which included two editions of the French Open, 2012 and 2013, was worth a total of about €2.8m per year, but the majority of the value was allotted to the football rights. Experts estimate that the French Open rights are worth about €300,000 per year.

The broadcaster is exploiting the rights across multiple channels. Canal Plus had a satellite subscriber base of 1.691m at the end of the first quarter.

It does not have total exclusivity. Pan-regional pay-television broadcaster Eurosport shows over 200 hours of live coverage from the tournament. Eurosport is carried by pay-television operators Movistar TV, Euskaltel, Telecable, and R. Movistar TV is by far the biggest of the four. It had 659,000 subscribers at the end of the first quarter.

Eurosport's two channels are not available on the Canal Plus platform. Their carriage agreement was not renewed after it expired on January 1, 2013. ■

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 16 to May 29

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: World Cup, European Qualifiers, international friendlies and more

- **Football:** Hong Kong broadcaster TVB acquired domestic free-to-air and pay-television rights for the 2014 Fifa World Cup (page 4).
- **Football:** Uefa, European football's governing body, concluded deals for the European Qualifiers, covering European qualifying matches for Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup, with: the Saran Media agency in Turkey; pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports in the US; and pay-television broadcasters Sky México and DirecTV in Latin America. The deals were brokered by the CAA Eleven agency, Uefa's exclusive marketing agency for media and sponsorship rights for national team football in Europe.
- **Football:** Indian pay-television broadcaster Sony acquired exclusive rights to Uefa Euro 2016 in the Indian subcontinent (page 6).
- **Football:** Norwegian commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 acquired rights for the 2013 Uefa U-21 European Championship in a deal with Uefa, brokered by the CAA Eleven agency. Coverage will be on pay-television channel TV2 Sport.
- **Football:** Irish pay-television broadcaster Setanta Sports secured the rights to two Ireland international friendly matches – against England in London on May 29, and against Spain in New York on June 11. Setanta outbid Irish public-service broadcaster RTÉ to secure the rights for the England game.
- **Football:** French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sport acquired rights to the next three editions of the Trophée des Champions – the opening match of the French season between the winners of the domestic league and the Coupe de France – from 2013 to 2015. BeIN Sport will pay about €360,000 (\$395,000) per year, a 25-per-cent increase on the fee paid by commercial broadcaster M6 from 2010 to 2012. BeIN Sport struck the deal with the Ligue Professionnel de Football, the French league.
- **Football:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven acquired rights for two friendly matches featuring English Premier League teams in Australia this summer. The game between an Australian A-League all-star team and Manchester United on July 20 and the match between Melbourne Victory and Liverpool on July 24 will be shown live on free-to-air television and streamed online.
- **Football:** The Pitch International agency renewed its exclusive deal with Tottenham Hotspur to distribute the English Premier League club's weekly international programming block for the next three seasons, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. The programming includes full delayed match coverage of Tottenham league games plus news, behind-the-scenes coverage and archive footage.

SINCE LAST TIME

- The Formula One motor racing series is considering retaining live streaming rights in its media rights deals in order to launch its own online streaming platform, according to the Autoweek website. The rights to broadcast Formula One races live online currently lie with the series' broadcast partners. They have to geo-block the footage to ensure it cannot be accessed by viewers outside the country in question.
- South African communications minister Dina Pule proposed regulations forcing pay-television sports broadcaster SuperSport to make its exclusive sports content available to rivals. SuperSport is part of pan-regional pay-television operator MultiChoice, the market-leading pay-television operator in South Africa, and has exclusive deals for the country's top sports properties.
- The Sportsman Media agency and Red Bull Media House formed WRC Promoter, a new company to market the commercial rights for the World Rally Championship. WRC Promoter will be based in Munich, Germany, and will be responsible for marketing the championship under a rights deal Sportsman and Red Bull Media House reached in October 2012 with the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile, motorsport's world governing body. Oliver Ciesla of Sportsman and Jona Siebel of Red Bull Media House will lead the new venture as managing directors.

FOOTBALL

- English Premier League champions Manchester United received record broadcast-related payments of £60.8m (€72.4m/\$93.4m) for the 2012-13 season. Relegated Queens Park Rangers received the lowest sum of £39.8m.
- Javier Tebas, president of the Liga de Fútbol Profesional, the Spanish football league, said that the country's two biggest clubs, Barcelona and Real Madrid, would only consider switching to a collective rights model for the top-tier Liga if their rights income did not decrease. Tebas said that the Liga's annual rights revenues could increase from €800m (\$1.03bn) to over €1bn under a collective model.
- Spanish Liga football clubs Atlético Madrid and Real Sociedad were ordered by Spanish courts to pay Mediapro compensation for breaking rights deals with the agency. Sociedad will pay €7m (\$9m) after an earlier ruling was reversed, while Atlético will pay €5.4m.
- Madrid Deportes Audiovisuales, a holding company set up in 2007 by the Caja Madrid bank and regional public-service broadcaster Telemadrid to acquire rights for games featuring Spanish Liga clubs Atlético Madrid and Getafe, filed for bankruptcy in March with debts of €72m (\$93m).
- This year's all-German Uefa Champions League final between Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund drew a record audience

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 16 to May 29

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

Archery, Asian Games, basketball, cricket, golf, ice hockey and more

- **Archery:** Sports broadcaster Eurosport signed a multimedia rights deal with World Archery, the sport's global governing body. Live coverage of the Archery World Cup Final and the World Archery Championships will be shown on Eurosport 2. Highlights of the earlier World Cup stages will be broadcast on Eurosport and Eurosport 2. The length of the deal, which started immediately, was not disclosed.
- **Asian Games:** Indian subcontinent pay-television broadcaster Taj Television acquired rights for the 2014 Asian Games, along with four other events run by the Olympic Council of Asia, in a deal with the council brokered by the MP & Silva agency. Coverage will be on the Taj's Ten Sports channels. The deal includes the Asian Youth Games, Asian Games Centennial Festival and Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, which all take place in 2013, plus the 2014 Asian Beach Games.
- **Badminton:** The Badminton World Federation agreed a global rights distribution deal with the IMG Media agency covering the four years from 2014 to 2017. IMG will sell rights for the federation's championships as well as the Superseries and Grand Prix Gold events. The federation said its media rights earnings would increase fourfold following the agreement. It will be the first time that the federation has worked exclusively with one agency for its media rights properties.
- **Basketball:** Russian pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus acquired rights to Spain's Liga Endesa. The deal started immediately with the 2012-13 season play-offs and will run until the end of the 2013-14 season. NTV Plus will broadcast two games per week.
- **Cricket:** The International Cricket Council agreed three video news highlights distribution deals for the 2013 Champions Trophy One Day International tournament. International news agency Reuters News, digital sports media company Perform, and SNTV, the sports video news agency run by the IMG agency and the Associated Press, all agreed deals with the ICC. The three companies will distribute news highlights from matches, press conferences, interviews and event-related stories to global broadcasters for use on television and online.
- **Equestrian:** The European Broadcasting Union and its member broadcaster France Télévisions, the French public-service broadcaster, were appointed host broadcasters of the 2014 World Equestrian Games in a deal with the event's organising committee, Normandie 2014. The EBU's Eurovision Production Coordination unit will work with France Télévisions on the broadcast.
- **Golf:** Japanese website Golf Digest Online agreed a three-year deal, from 2013 to 2015, with the Asian Tour to show video highlights of tournaments. The website will also offer live scores and statistics.
- **Ice Hockey:** The Austrian Eishockey Liga agreed a three-year extension to its exclusive media rights deal with the Sportsman Media Group, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. Sportsman has sold the domestic media rights to Servus TV, the broadcaster owned by energy drink brand Red Bull. Sportsman's Laola1.tv website will provide live streaming of one game on Friday evenings, along with highlights of other matches. There will also be coverage available via Laola1.tv mobile applications.
- **Ice Skating:** US broadcaster NBC agreed a rights deal with the US Olympic Committee for coverage of the 2014 US Olympic team trials. Thirteen hours of coverage will be shown across NBC's main network and pay-television channel NBC Sports Network from December 27 until January 1, 2014.

for the tournament in Germany. An average of 21.6m, a 62-per-cent audience share, watched on public-service broadcaster ZDF in Germany, the biggest ever German television audience for the tournament. The previous record was 16.8m for last year's final between Bayern Munich and Chelsea.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- International cable-television company Liberty Global put its Chellomedia television channel business up for sale, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. Chellomedia's channels include the Sport1-branded pay-television channels in the Netherlands, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania. Talks are underway with potential buyers, and could lead to a partial or full sale, a joint venture, or no deal at all, the newspaper reported. It said Chellomedia could be valued at between \$800m (€620m) and \$1bn.
- Turkish media groups Doğan Holding and Doğuş Group will jointly launch a new sports pay-television channel, showing eight matches per week from Spanish football's Liga, and coverage of Euroleague basketball. NTV Spor Smart, a brand spun off from Doğuş's commercial channel NTV, will be available to subscribers of Doğan's pay-television broadcaster D-Smart. NTV Spor Smart is due to begin broadcasting by July.
- US pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN is reducing the size of its workforce by about 400 – a figure that includes some unfilled positions. ESPN said the move was designed to “enhance our continued growth while smartly managing costs.”
- Sports broadcaster Eurosport renewed a multi-year carriage deal with Cypriot pay-television operator Cablenet Communications Systems, covering the Eurosport, Eurosport 2 and Eurosport HD channels.
- US pay-television operator Comcast did not discriminate against pay-television broadcaster Tennis Channel by placing it in a different cable television subscription tier than Comcast's own sports networks, a US federal appeals court ruled. The court reversed a July 2012 decision from media regulator the Federal

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 16 to May 29

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

Mixed martial arts, parasport, rugby union, tennis and US college sport

- **Mixed Martial Arts:** The Playbook International agency struck a deal to distribute global media rights to the Superkombat championship. The agency will sell exclusive and non-exclusive rights.
- **Parasport:** UK commercial broadcaster Channel 4 acquired rights for a number of parasport events in a deal with British Athletics, the governing body of athletics in the UK. The deal includes live rights for the inaugural International Paralympic Committee Athletics Grand Prix Final on June 29 in Birmingham, the UK, and the third day of the Anniversary Games in London on July 28. Channel 4 will also provide coverage of this summer's IPC Athletics World Championships from July 19-28 in Lyon, France.
- **Parasport:** The Asian Paralympic Committee struck a distribution agreement with the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, the consortium of free-to-air broadcasters, for events including the Asian Para-Games, Asia Open Winter Games and the Asian Youth Para-Games.
- **Rugby Union:** The Pitch International agency signed a three-year extension to its international rights distribution deal with Premiership Rugby, the top league in England. Pitch will sell media rights for Premiership Rugby and the Premiership Rugby 7s event in all markets outside the UK and Ireland from 2013-14 to 2015-16.
- **Rugby Union:** Irish-language free-to-air broadcaster TG4 secured the exclusive rights in Ireland for a number of senior and junior national team matches in June. TG4 will broadcast the senior team's games against the US on June 8 and Canada on June 16 during a tour of North America. It will also provide live and exclusive coverage of the 2013 Junior World Championship, which will take place in France from June 5-23.
- **Tennis:** The US Tennis Association sealed 11-year rights deals for the US Open grand slam with US pay-television broadcaster ESPN and Canadian pay-television broadcasters TSN and RDS. ESPN acquired exclusive US rights from 2015 to 2025 in a deal worth about \$825m (€640m), or \$75m per year. TSN and its French-language arm, RDS, extended its rights for the same period, with the deal including exclusive domestic coverage of the finals for the first time.
- **US College Sport:** DirecTV Sports and its Root Sports regional pay-television channel agreed a multi-year rights deal with the Mountain West US college sports conference. The Root Sports Rocky Mountain channel will annually produce and show 10 American football games featuring Mountain West teams and a minimum of 25 intra-conference and non-conference men's basketball games, beginning with the 2013-14 season.
- **US College Sport:** The Sun Belt Conference agreed a one-year extension with Cox Sports Television and Comcast Sports Southeast to continue broadcasting the Sun Belt Network pay-television channel, a joint venture between the conference and the two broadcasters. The Sun Belt Network will continue to show American football, men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball, volleyball and softball for the 2013-14 season.

Communications Commission ordering Comcast to place Tennis Channel on its digital basic tier.

- Brazilian satellite television operator Sky Brasil agreed a five-year deal, from 2013 to 2017, with pay-television broadcaster Bandsports to carry coverage of the French Open tennis grand slam. Sky agreed to show the tournament on a dedicated channel that will be available at no extra cost to its subscribers. The agreement was struck ahead of the 2013 French Open, which started on May 26.
- Pan-Asian sports broadcaster ESPN Star Sports struck a multi-year carriage agreement with Airtel Digital TV, the satellite television arm of telecommunications company Bharti Airtel, covering six channels in India. Airtel Digital TV will carry the Star Cricket, Star Sports, Star Sports 2, ESPN, Star Cricket HD and ESPN HD channels.
- Malaysian pay-television operator Astro launched a pay-per-view sports service, Live Events, for subscribers to its Astro On-The-Go mobile service.
- Kazakhstan's first sports-dedicated television channel, KazSport, will launch on July 1. The channel will produce original programming and show domestic and international sport.
- Austrian public-service broadcaster ORF is considering not renewing its rights for the Formula One motor-racing championship beyond 2014 due to cost-cutting measures. ORF's chief financial officer, Richard Grasl, said that the broadcaster needs to focus on its core activities and reduce costs.
- French digital-terrestrial television channel TMC will broadcast the 2013 Fifa Confederations Cup in France, after its parent company, commercial broadcaster TF1, tried and failed to sell the rights on, according to French newspaper *Le Parisien*. TF1 was reported to have rejected as too low a bid by pay-television broadcaster beIN Sport.
- Wananchi Group, which owns East African pay-television operator Zuku, defended its rights deal with Kenyan Premier League football club AFC Leopards by insisting that the arrangement does not interfere with the league's rights agreement with rival pay-television broadcaster SuperSport. The league said that the club would be suspended unless it terminates its deal with Zuku.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 16 to May 29

■ Australian commercial broadcaster Ten Network is in talks to renegotiate a rights deal for Australia's National Basketball League. Ten has a three-year deal for the league's rights, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, with Basketball Australia. At the start of May, Basketball Australia agreed to hand over management of the league to a new organisation established by the clubs.

■ Aussie rules club Collingwood, which competes in the Australian Football League, said it is considering launching its own television channel within the next two years. Australian newspaper the *Herald Sun* reported that the club has had talks with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports about the plan.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

■ France's Sports Minister, Valerie Fourneyron, warned the French Tennis Federation that the French Open grand slam "must be accessible to all," on free-to-air television, as the federation prepares to launch a tender for its next domestic rights contract. French newspaper *Journal du Dimanche* reported that pay-television broadcaster beIN Sport is set to bid.

■ Swiss public-service broadcaster SRF apologised after fake crowd noise was added to its highlights coverage of the FC Zurich v Grasshoppers domestic league football match on May 12. Fans of both teams agreed to enter the stadium 10 minutes after the match started to protest against tighter security measures, but viewers of the highlights still heard chanting in the near-empty Letzigrund stadium.

■ Golf's European Tour launched a free online video platform, European Tour TV, providing on-demand highlights. Live streaming of tournaments in territories that do not have television rights deals will follow later in the year. Over 100 hours of highlights going back to 1987 are currently available, and there are plans to increase this to over 500 hours. The platform was developed in partnership with the Tour's digital media services provider Deltatre and IT company Microsoft.

■ The Australian government will ban the promotion of live odds and restrict betting advertisements during live television and radio coverage of sports events. Such advertising will remain permitted during breaks in play, such as half-time, and before or after a game. South Australia's regional government plans to introduce its own legislation to ban live odds advertising.

INDUSTRY MOVES

■ Kevin O'Connor stepped down from his role as Lagardère Unlimited's chief operating officer in the US and South America with immediate effect. O'Connor will remain as a senior adviser to Arnaud Lagardère, the general and managing partner of the Lagardère conglomerate. O'Connor was one of Lagardère Unlimited's three most senior managers alongside Alain Lemarchand, the chief operating officer for Europe and Africa, and Seamus O'Brien, the chief operating officer for Asia-Pacific and the Middle East.

■ Jean-Thierry Augustin, the new chief executive of Eurosport, made several managerial changes at the sports broadcaster. Julien Bergeaud has been appointed development director and will report directly to Augustin. Eurosport France managing director Arnaud Simon has extended his responsibilities to include international versions of the Eurosport channel, while technical director Vincent Gérard-Hirne will be in charge of production and distribution technology for the different language versions of the group's channels.

■ Peter Hutton was appointed as the new chief operating officer at the MP & Silva agency. Hutton will be based at MP & Silva's London office from July. He joins from News Corporation's international channel operator Fox International Channels. He has previously worked at Indian pay-television broadcaster Taj Television, the IMG agency, UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB, UK commercial broadcaster ITV and UK public-service broadcaster the BBC.

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