

PREMIER LEAGUE

Agencies continue to play big role in in-house international rights sales

By Kevin McCullagh

Agencies are continuing to play a major role in the sale of Premier League rights, acquiring over €520m (\$676m) of rights from the league so far, according to research by *TV Sports Markets*.

The value of the rights sold to agencies in the coming cycle is far greater in absolute terms than in the last cycle, although much of that increase can be put down to one deal – that of the MP & Silva agency in the Middle East. The value of agency deals has also increased slightly in relative terms, compared to the value of direct broadcaster deals.

When the English Premier League took its international rights sales in-house nearly a decade ago, it was seen as a harbinger of doom for agencies in the football rights business.

The league was expected to eat up agency business by doing deals directly with broadcasters. In-house moves by

rights-holders including Fifa, world football's governing body, Uefa, European football's governing body, and the German Bundesliga have further chipped away at traditional agency business.

But agencies have maintained a strong position in the Premier League rights market, for several reasons. The most significant is the league's adherence to its policy of taking the most valuable offer in rights auctions in each market.

As one expert put it, "the idea behind taking the rights in-house was to get closer to the customers, get closer to the broadcasters, and do deals with them directly wherever you can. But underneath this, always take the biggest offer."

The Premier League's sales strategy continues to deliver extraordinary growth in international rights fees in 2013-16. Income of about £2.2bn (€2.6bn/\$3.4bn),

Continued on page 3 ►

EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS

RTL deal shakes up German market

By Frank Dunne

RTL's €110m (\$143m) deal this week for the live rights in Germany to the national team qualifying matches for Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup sent shock waves through the market.

The deal left state broadcasters ARD and ZDF, the traditional broadcasters of the *nationalmannschaft*, reeling. They were confident – over-confident, many are now saying – of landing the rights.

It also had rights-holders and their agencies celebrating the apparent opening up of Europe's biggest television market, which has become very difficult.

For several years, as the crisis in the advertising market has deepened, the state-funded ARD and ZDF have been able to squash their commercial rivals in the free-to-air market for top sport. Sky

Continued on page 5 ►

CONTENTS

- 1,3 Premier League in-house policy has not cut agencies out of international rights sales
Slovak Sport.TV takes aim

- 1,5 ARD/ZDF confidence over bid for qualifiers proves misplaced as RTL makes surprise last-minute push

- 2 Fastrack: Dentsu Olympic deal in Central Asia; Sky pays more for World Cup; Taj holds on to Sri Lanka cricket; Copa truce

- 6 MP & Silva and Pitch provide base for Al Jazeera in Asia but Premier League is the key

- 7 In its haste to exit the UK, ESPN may have missed an opportunity with its ESPN America channel

- 7 MP & Silva handball ambitions take on global dimensions with new Champions League deal

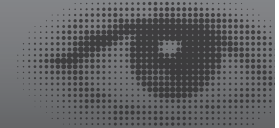
- 8 Lisicki timing is good for IMG in German Wimbledon talks

- 9 Sports Clips

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Watching Brief, including
analysis of Wimbledon and
the Lions down under



Dentsu beats ABU to Olympic rights in Asia

The Dentsu advertising agency's deal last week for the rights in Central Asia to the 2014 and 2016 Olympic Games is worth in excess of \$2m (€1.5m). It is understood that the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, the regional consortium, tabled a low bid for the rights.

The deal covers five countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The area is considered to be a rapid growth market, albeit from a very low base.

It is the first time Dentsu has acquired media rights to the Olympics. The agency will now begin the process of selling the rights on to broadcasters in the region.

For the 2010-2012 Olympic Games the rights were held by the European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters. ■

Sky pays more for World Cup

Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand last week paid an increase of 50 per cent on the previous rights fee to secure the 2014 Fifa World Cup rights.

Sky paid rights-holder Australian public-service broadcaster SBS a fee of about \$750,000 (€577,000), up from the \$500,000 it paid for the 2010 World Cup. SBS had initially asked for about \$1m but had to settle for less due to a lack of serious competition.

SBS had acquired the rights across Oceania – Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands – from Fifa covering the period 2007 to 2014, in a deal worth about \$20 million.

It is understood that both the IMG Media and MP & Silva agencies expressed an interest in acquiring the rights. Sommet Sports, a new digital free-to-air channel set to launch next week, is thought to have tabled a low bid last year. The broadcaster was only an online platform at the time of its bid.

Local sources say that Sky was keen

to wrap up the deal after it lost out on the Premier League rights last month to online broadcaster Coliseum Sports Media (*TV Sports Markets* 17:12).

The broadcaster had allowed negotiations to drag on due to the stranglehold it has over the national sports-rights market. Sky is said to have been haggling with SBS over clauses in the contract such as *force majeure*.

Sky would have been the preferred broadcaster of Fifa, world football's governing body, according to one source. It was the "natural choice" due to its wide reach. Sky has about 670,000 subscribers in a country with only 1.4m television households.

Sky is expected to sublicense some rights to public-service broadcaster TVNZ, for the fourth consecutive tournament. ■

Taj holds on to Sri Lanka rights

Indian subcontinent pay-television broadcaster Taj TV fought off competition from rival Neo Sports Broadcast to hold onto the Sri Lanka cricket board rights.

Taj TV paid \$60m (€46m) for the global rights over seven seasons, from 2013-14 to 2019-20. Almost half the value was attributed to India's tour of Sri Lanka in 2017. The figure also included production costs of about \$15m.

In the previous four-season deal, from 2009-10 to 2012-13, Taj was initially contracted to pay about \$65m, a fee which did not include production costs. However, it paid less after adjustments to the schedule. Sri Lanka Cricket historically does not deliver all of the tours that it puts into the original schedule, which allows it to inflate the size of announced deals.

India toured Sri Lanka in 2010 and also took part in a bilateral series in the country in 2012, which consisted of five One Day Internationals and one Twenty20 match. The value is heavily linked to the number of Indian tours in the contract. ■

Full Play and Traffic to share

The long-running dispute between the Brazil-based Traffic Sports agency and the Uruguay-based Full Play Group over the commercial rights to the Copa América has been resolved.

TV Sports Markets understands that the agencies have reached an agreement to commercialise the rights to the tournament together.

As a consequence, Traffic has dropped the lawsuit it filed back in November in the US against Full Play and South American football's governing body Conmebol, and its 10 member associations.

The rights to the Copa will be exploited by a new company comprising Traffic, Full Play and the Argentinian Torneos y Competencias (TyC) agency. The newco will handle the rights to the Copa covering three editions – 2015, 2019 and 2023. The deal will also include a 2016 centenary tournament should it go ahead.

Each company will own a third of the newco. It is thought that Full Play will handle the television rights contracts, Traffic will take the lead on sponsorship and advertising, while TyC will handle the production.

There are still some issues to resolve regarding rights deals that have already been signed. Full Play and Traffic were out in the market at the same time selling the rights to the tournament (*TV Sports Markets* 16:2).

The compromise does not entirely satisfy either Full Play or Traffic, who both claimed to own the rights to the tournament outright.

In June 2011, Conmebol awarded the rights to the Copa to Full Play for the 2015, 2019 and 2023 tournaments. Traffic claimed it already had an agreement with Conmebol for the 2015 Copa rights and a matching right for the 2019, 2023 and 2027 editions of the tournament.

Neither Traffic nor Full Play responded when contacted by *TV Sports Markets* this week. ■

PREMIER LEAGUE

Agencies continue to play big role in international rights

Continued from page 1 ►

with several territories still to be sold, represents an increase of over 1,100 per cent on the £178m earned in 2001-04, the cycle prior to the in-house switch.

At the time, some observers interpreted the shift as being linked to the high profile failures of the ISL agency in 2001 and Germany's Kirch Group in 2002, which highlighted the risk of a federation selling its global rights to a single agency. This was not the case. The decision was a purely commercial one. This is underlined by the fact that ahead of the 2004-07 and 2007-10 cycles, the league discussed doing a single global rights deal with the IMG Media agency. IMG was not prepared to meet the league's valuation.

Winners and losers

MP & Silva secured the most, and the most valuable, Premier League rights deals among agencies in 2013-16, with five deals, covering 28 territories, worth over €351m over the three years. Its Middle East and North Africa package accounted for the vast majority of the territories – 23 – and value, at around €246m.

However, the sales round was not entirely successful for MP & Silva, as it lost the rights in the two territories it had in the last cycle, Japan and Vietnam. It was outbid in both by IMG.

IMG retained its rights in the Balkans, although it was forced to pay an increase of over 100 per cent. It also acquired the rights in Spain and Andorra, after initial buyer Multimedia Sports (MMS), a Spain-based agency, failed to agree a deal with broadcasters.

IMG had bid for many more territories, its initial bid being for a package covering 27 territories in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including the Balkans and high-value markets Poland, Romania and Russia.

MMS also acquired the rights in Romania but the agency is thought to be close to handing back the rights after

Premier League agency deals, 2010-2016		
2013-14 to 2015-16		
Agency	Territory	Value (3-year total, €m)
AMI	Czech Republic, Slovakia	6
IMG Media	Balkans	18.9
	Japan	39
	Mongolia	n/a
	Spain	n/a
	Vietnam	27.7
MP & Silva	Indonesia	69
	Middle East and North Africa	246
	Netherlands	30
	Ukraine	6
	Philippines, Chinese Taipei	n/a
Multimedia Sports	Romania	n/a
OSMI	Sub-Saharan Africa (free-to-air rights)	n/a
Pitch International	Italy	36
Saran Media	Eastern Europe, Central Asia	6
	Turkey	25
Super Sports Media	China	19
Total		529
Footnotes: Multimedia Sports also acquired rights in Spain in a deal worth €13.5m, but handed the rights back to the league. The rights in the Philippines and Chinese Taipei were originally acquired by the KJ Sports agency, which handed them back to the league. The deal in China is for six years; the figure represents half the value of the deal.		
2010-11 to 2012-13		
Agency	Territory	Value (3-year total, €m)
AMI	Eastern Europe, Central Asia	6
	Russia	3.9
IMG Media	Balkans	9
Important Media House	Czech Republic, Slovakia	8.5
	Hungary, Romania	25
Medge Consulting	Nordics	120
MP & Silva	Japan	28.5
	Vietnam	6.9
OSMI	Nigeria (free-to-air rights)	9.2
	Sub-Sahara ex-South Africa (free-to-air rights)	9.2
Saran Media	Turkey	14.2
Total		241
Footnotes: The Multimesh agency acquired the free-to-air rights in South Africa in a deal worth about €6m, but handed the rights back to the league. Source for both tables: TV Sports Markets		

again struggling to find a buyer.

Turkish agency Saran Media beat IMG and incumbent rights-holder Advisers Media International to a swathe of territories covering the Baltic states and Central Asia – a region including countries such as Armenia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Afghanistan.

AMI lost both packages it held in 2010-13 – a package covering Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and another for Russia. A direct deal was agreed by the Premier League in Russia this time, with pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus, which bought the rights from AMI in 2010-13. A

fee increase for the league thought to be around 475 per cent, from €3.9m to €22.5m, vindicated the direct approach. AMI secured one package of rights this time, covering the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In the last cycle, Bucharest-based agency Important Media House won the Czech Republic and Slovakia rights, along with Romania and Hungary.

Important Media House was sold in 2011 after its founder, Dana Iancu, moved to pay-television operator RCS-RDS to help it expand its Digi Sport-branded sports channels into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. RCS-RDS had bought the

Premier League rights in the two countries, plus Hungary and Romania, from Important Media House.

African agency Optima Sports Management International (OSMI) retained its free-to-air rights in sub-Saharan Africa under pressure from a rival bid from broadcaster StarTimes.

Attraction for agencies

For sports rights agencies, the league remains one of a diminishing number of major football properties they can acquire. The league is also among a dwindling number of top football properties whose rights can be bought outright, enabling agencies to benefit from unlimited upside.

There are markets around the world where agencies can make strong margins on the Premier League rights. Agencies can also use the rights to help shift less attractive content by bundling or otherwise using the rights as leverage.

Another benefit is that the league is a prestigious property, and can be helpful in attracting new business. "You always need a few crown jewels," as one expert put it. Some rival agencies say this encouraged IMG to bid more aggressively than usual for the 2013-16 rights – the company is being put up for sale, and Premier League contracts are attractive assets.

Agencies are able to exploit advantages over the Premier League in some territories, such as deeper market knowledge and contacts, an innovative exploitation plan, and the ability to wait for a better moment to sell the rights.

MP & Silva's splitting of the Vietnam rights in 2010-13 into several packages when no broadcaster was willing to buy all the matches is one example of an innovative exploitation that worked.

The agencies' advantage in being able to wait comes about because the league works to a fairly strict timetable as it sells the rights around the world.

The Premier League may never be able to match agencies' knowledge of certain markets. As one agency boss put it, "you can't blame the Premier League for not going deep into every single market, knowing the value of advertising time, churn rates, etc.

You have to find a compromise with

Slovak Sport.TV trumps Nova and Digi

A surprise bid by a relatively small and new pay-television broadcaster, Slovak Sport.TV, is understood to have boosted the Advisers Media International agency's income in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The Pragosport agency worked with AMI on the sale of the rights, after AMI acquired them from the Premier League in a deal worth about €6m (\$7.8m).

Digi Sport and Nova, the two biggest pay-television sports broadcasters in the territories, had made a joint offer to the agencies, thought to be worth around

€7m. Slovak Sport.TV is understood to have outbid them.

Slovak Sport.TV launched in July 2012. It currently has one channel, available in the two territories, with sports content including NHL ice hockey, International Basketball Federation events, tennis from the WTA women's and ATP men's tours, and English second-tier football from the Championship. It plans to launch another pay-television channel to accommodate the Premier League football, and convert its first channel to a free-to-air channel. ■

practicality and efficiency."

The big potential downside for agencies is paying too much for the rights.

Agencies outbid local broadcasters and then have to try to make a profit by selling the rights to those same broadcasters.

Two agencies have already handed back rights for the 2013-16 cycle to the Premier League after failing to agree deals with broadcasters – MMS in Spain and Andorra, and KJ Sports in Philippines and Chinese Taipei. MP & Silva has picked up the rights dropped by KJ Sports.

Handing back rights can be costly. Under the European tender for 2013-16, the league can keep the three per cent upfront payment required from all buyers.

League benefits

The most obvious benefit for the Premier League from agency interest in its rights is increased competition – having more parties bidding will inevitably lead to higher rights fees.

Agencies can also extract more value from markets where the value is being suppressed by factors the league is unaware of. Medge's acquisition and sale of the 2010-13 Nordic rights is a classic example. One broadcaster, pay-television operator Canal Plus, had held the pan-Nordic rights for about a decade prior to this. By selling market by market, Medge made a huge profit, even after paying a 100-per-cent increase for the rights in its deal with the league.

This did not go unnoticed by the

league. It is understood to keep an eye on agency profits and to try in the following cycle to achieve similar results by itself. In the Nordics in 2013-16, the league achieved a 50-per-cent increase in deals agreed directly with broadcasters.

The disadvantages for the league include a loss of control over which broadcast platform the rights end up on. As one expert said this week, "who makes the call whether to go with an established broadcast platform as opposed to a start-up IPTV operator who may or may not get traction with viewers or subscribers? It should be the league, but in fact it will be the agencies, desperate to recoup up-front guarantees."

China provided an example of how it can go wrong in the 2006-09 cycle. Pay-television broadcaster WinTV won the rights with a big fee in a market that has traditionally been tough for rights-holders. But the broadcaster failed to attract subscribers, and the league had little exposure during the contract period. League clubs, keen to tap into the growing passion for football in the world's most populous country, were said to have been unhappy with the level of exposure.

The financial risk for the league in dealing with agencies appears to be no greater than those involved in dealing with broadcasters. The league requires bank or parent company guarantees and front-loaded payment schedules in cases where it believes there is greater risk of a company failing to meet its commitments. ■

EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS

RTL shocks ARD and ZDF with aggressive last-minute bid

Continued from page 1 ►

Deutschland has faced little competition in the pay-television market. Both have been able to set a low cap on rights deals, secure – until this week – in the knowledge that their rivals couldn't get close.

The question now being asked, one which will determine the significance of this deal in the longer term, is whether RTL's investment represents a change of strategy by the commercial broadcaster or is a one-off.

Because the split of the fee between live rights and rights for a daily highlights programme is not available, it is not possible to put a precise figure on RTL's valuation per live match, but it looks to be over €5m. That is bullish, given that it is acquiring the live rights non-exclusively. A pay-television operator will still be able to acquire live rights to Germany games.

The assumption in the market until now has been that football matches costing above €4.5m could not be refinanced from advertising. RTL either believes that conditions in the advertising market over the next four years will improve, or it is prepared to lose money in order to have a flagship sports property.

RTL overtakes on the final bend

RTL and ARD/ZDF both made bids for the rights in July last year, when Uefa first put them on the market.

ARD/ZDF made two bids – one as part of a wider European Broadcasting Union bid, and one outside the EBU. They are thought to have bid between €80m and €90m, a valuation of €4m to €4.5m per match. This was in line with what the two broadcasters had been paying agencies for the away qualifiers of the national team.

They are thought to have paid a higher fee – over €6m per match – for the rights to Germany's home games, in a deal with the football association, the Deutscher Fussball Bund. However, because the deal

contained many other elements, a precise figure has never been available.

Uefa is said to have valued the rights in Germany at €5.5m per match – an average of what ARD/ZDF paid for home and away matches – and was said to have been determined not to drop below this figure. Its sales agent, the CAA Eleven agency, held talks with the two broadcasters over the last year. In March, it told ARD/ZDF that its offer had been rejected.

Last month, CAA Eleven asked both broadcasters to make final bids. RTL is understood to have increased its final offer significantly, to between €100m and €110m, wrong-footing its state-funded rivals, who did not raise their bid.

RTL is said to have been slowly convinced of the commercial opportunities around Uefa's so-called Week of Football, the periods in which qualifier matches will be concentrated. The last time the broadcaster showed a Germany match was in 1993. RTL is part of the Bertelsmann-owned RTL Group, Europe's largest private media group.

ARD/ZDF already hold the rights to the finals of Euro 2016, in a deal worth €145m. They also hold the rights to the Fifa World Cup finals of 2014 and 2018.

Other rights

With a number of packages still to sell in Germany, including pay-television rights to all live matches, and a free-to-air highlights programme, Uefa could be on course to earn well above €150m.

Sky Deutschland is the favourite to win the pay-television rights. It could face competition from commercial broadcast group ProSiebenSat.1, which is planning to launch a basic-tier sports channel in 2014, and smaller pay-television operator Sport1.

The highlights rights could push up the overall value. In Germany, the value of football highlights compared to live rights is particularly high.

Local media sources believe that ARD/ZDF, stung by the loss of the live rights to Germany games, will be determined not to let the highlights slip. The broadcasters have shown extensive highlights of other qualifier matches on the same nights as Germany matches. They could face competition from Sat.1.

Wider impact

The deal sends two messages to the market. First, that Uefa does not have favoured partners. It will take the best offer in terms of income and exposure.

Some observers were convinced that the DFB would push Uefa towards agreeing a deal with the association's long-standing partners, ARD and ZDF. The DFB is understood to have scrupulously avoided interfering in the process and when informed last month that the rights were probably heading to RTL accepted that there was clear daylight between the two offers and that Uefa had no choice but to accept RTL's bid.

Second, the deal means that another major European commercial broadcaster – after ITV in the UK – has demonstrated confidence that the property is a good fit for the advertising-funded business model.

Uefa needs further aggressive commercial broadcasters bidding if they are to get anywhere close to the €1.2bn over four years that it has committed to its federations. Until last week, Uefa had brought in about €300m (*TV Sports Markets* 17:11). It has since agreed the deal in Germany and a deal in Malaysia with pay-television platform Astro worth just under \$10m.

RTL bounces back

In the early 1990s, RTL's chief executive, Helmut Thoma, and his second-in-command, Hans Mahr, were firm believers in the 'halo effect' of flagship sports properties. They were prepared to spend sums which could not be refinanced purely from advertising on properties such as the Uefa Champions League, Formula One motor racing and boxing.

When Thoma was replaced by Gerhard Zeiler in 1998, the broadcaster changed course. It gradually lost much of its sport, including the Champions League, and took a much harder-headed approach to those properties, such as Formula One, which it retained. This line has been pursued by Anke Schaeferkordt since she took over control of the broadcast group in 2005.

Rights-holders lament this as the period when accountants, rather than sports lovers, were calling the shots. There was little indication before this week that anything was about to change. ■

TV ASIA

MP & Silva/Pitch provide path for Al Jazeera channels

By Dan Horlock

The arrival of Al Jazeera Sport in South East Asia could be one of the most significant shifts in the sports pay-television market in recent years.

The Qatari satellite broadcaster and rights-trading company by next month will have launched channels in five markets in the region on the back of its strong relationships with the MP & Silva and Pitch International agencies. It follows the advances it has made in France and the US (*TV Sports Markets* 16:9).

The content for the channels is dominated by football. It will be supplied in the main by MP & Silva, with Pitch adding some less valuable content. MP & Silva and Pitch have a joint venture in Asia (*TV Sports Markets* 17:7).

The development is seen by local experts as having the potential to challenge pan-Asian pay-television broadcaster Fox, as well as being an opportunity to fill a gap left by pan-Asian pay-television football broadcaster Goal TV, which began liquidation proceedings last week. Goal TV owes 13 creditors a total of over \$13m (€10m) (see table). It could also put the squeeze on other rights agencies operating in the region.

Al Jazeera will launch its beIN Sport channels next month in Hong Kong, Thailand, the Philippines and Chinese Taipei. This follows its channel launches in Indonesia on July 1.

Al Jazeera has deep pockets and if it has decided to be a force in Asia, it will be. But the broadcaster will face a series of problems establishing itself in the region. These include:

- creating a different strategy for each market
- having to spend heavily to acquire premium rights in over-heated markets
- agreeing profitable carriage deals with operators who might see them as a threat
- being dependent on short-term football contracts for key content.

The strategy

Implementing a market-by-market strategy in Asia is critical to establishing Al Jazeera's channels. Last year, when Fox outlined its future strategy in the region, it said that it needed to bid more aggressively for key rights in competitive markets and adopt a more local strategy, with more local windows within the pan-regional feed.

In much of South East Asia, the Premier League is the single most desirable product. Al Jazeera has been able to offer this in Indonesia. In Hong Kong and Thailand, its content offering, while fairly strong, lacks the killer content to crack the markets, local experts say.

In Hong Kong, Al Jazeera will launch two sports channels, with one (beIN Sport 1) dedicated to football. Only the beIN Sport 1 channel will launch in Thailand. Each market will have its own feed. It is not yet clear where the channels will be distributed in either market. Nobody at MP & Silva was available for comment this week.

MP & Silva holds the rights to the Premier League in the Asia-Pacific region in Indonesia, Chinese Taipei, the Philippines, and New Zealand and the Pacific Islands (see separate story).

The key market

Indonesia is where Al Jazeera has the most premium content and the strongest growth possibilities. MP & Silva believes that the pay-television sector is on the brink of a major growth spurt. The country is experiencing strong economic growth, with gross domestic product expected to rise by six to seven per cent annually for the next five years.

Pay-television in Indonesia has an extremely small penetration rate at present. In 2010, it was about three per cent, close to 1.2m subscribers, although that number is expected to increase to about 6m subscribers by 2016.

In addition to the channels beIN Sport 1 and 2 it also has beIN Sport 3, a 24-hour Premier League channel. The channels had originally been launched by MP & Silva and have subsequently been taken over by Al Jazeera.

One industry executive said that it had a very strong entry position and would

Goal TV creditors

Company	(\$m)
Astro Oversea	5.8
Taj Television	1.5
Trans World International	1.5
Thomas Kressner	1.2
Pitch International	1.2
Measat Broadcast Network Systems	0.61
Sportfive International	0.6
Real Madrid C.F.	0.51
Measat Satellite Systems	0.18
Yes Television (Hong Kong)	0.05
Globecast Asia	0.04
Sportsbrand Media Australasia	0.03
RRsat Global Comm's Network	0.02
Total	13.24

Source: *TV Sports Markets*

want to have a long-term presence in the country with the world's biggest Muslim population.

Other markets

Al Jazeera is also launching three channels in Chinese Taipei and the Philippines. There are doubts about whether the MP & Silva football-dominated portfolio will work in these markets.

Chinese Taipei is primarily a baseball market while the Philippines is a basketball and boxing market. Both markets are too small to offer significant financial returns and each would require the broadcaster to acquire locally-relevant rights.

Al Jazeera is thought unlikely to enter two other key markets – Malaysia and Singapore – in the near future due to Fox's strong position in both (*TV Sports Markets* 16:22).

In Malaysia, Fox has an exclusive deal for its six pan-regional channels with dominant pay-television broadcaster Astro. It also has a dedicated pay-television channel – Fox Football Channel – on telco Telekom Malaysia's IPTV service HyppTV.

In Singapore, Fox has carriage deals with both pay-television broadcasters, SingTel and StarHub. The platforms themselves would also be powerful rivals in sports-rights acquisitions. Further, cross-carriage regulation now makes it impossible for operators to acquire premium rights exclusively, which would be a major barrier for a new-entry pay-television operation. ■

TV EUROPE

ESPN exit strategy questioned despite good German deal

By Frank Dunne and Robin Jellis

ESPN's exit strategy for its pan-European US sport channel ESPN America is being questioned by industry observers, despite ESPN having secured a good deal for its rights with basic tier and pay-television broadcaster Sport1 in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

With the switch-off of the channel set for July 31, this remains the only major deal which ESPN has signed. The Disney-owned company can expect to do good deals to offload its rights in a small handful of other markets, such as the Netherlands and Russia, but many others will prove difficult and time is limited. The channel is distributed in every European country except Spain, and in the Middle East.

Some critics say that ESPN was so preoccupied with agreeing a satisfactory exit deal for its UK operation that it underplayed its hand with ESPN America in the rest of Europe.

ESPN UK is thought to have been losing £50m (€58m/\$75m) per year. The broadcaster sold its UK operation, including its premium channel and ESPN America, to UK telco BT for £10m (*TV Sports Markets* 17:5).

It is thought that when BT acquired ESPN UK, it also acquired full ownership of the ESPN America channel, with all of its assets and distribution contracts. As the carriage deals outside of the UK were of no interest to BT, carriers were informed the contracts were to be terminated at the end of July.

The decision also meant that the rights to baseball's MLB and American football's NFL reverted to the rights-holders. Under ESPN's contract, it was only allowed to show the sports under the ESPN brand.

So instead of coming to the market to sell an entire channel, with a full set of rights and distribution agreements, ESPN was left with the pan-European rights to some attractive, but second-tier, US sport, like NCAA college events.

ESPN America is thought to earn revenues in Europe of about \$25m per year and make profits of several million. Much of the early interest from potential buyers is thought to have evaporated once it became clear that only a handful of rights contracts, not the channel, were for sale.

Liberty Media's channel operation Chellomedia, premium sports channel operator Setanta, and pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport were the first companies of stature to express an interest. Only Setanta is thought to have remained in the bidding to acquire rights on a pan-European basis. Other broadcasters, including Sport1 and Sportdigital in Germany, bid for rights in specific territories.

One expert said this week that ESPN received a lot more interest in the channel than it had anticipated, but "by then the decision to switch off had been made and communicated."

Some experts say that the extent of ESPN's miscalculation is underlined by the large number of requests from broadcasters that the NFL and the MLB have had. The same applies to the rights to the ice hockey's NHL, which had reverted to the European rights distributor, the Advisers Media International agency.

AMI is thought to have received some lucrative offers for its rights, including what is said to be an aggressive bid from Fox Sports covering multiple territories.

Germany deal

The acquisition by Sport1 of the US sports rights held by the ESPN America channel – which is as yet unconfirmed – would be an important boost for the channel and a blow for rival sports channel Sportdigital.

Experts say that, depending on exactly what kind of content line-up it can put together, Sport1 could earn upwards of €5m per year in carriage deals in Germany alone for a US sports channel.

Sport1 already holds the German-language rights to the NFL through a four-year deal, from 2011-12 to 2014-15, with the IMG Media agency. It also holds the exclusive German rights to basketball's NBA in a two-year deal, for

the 2012-13 and 2013-14 seasons.

US sport, especially NFL and NBA, is not premium content in Germany but does have a young and loyal fanbase.

Sportdigital's plans to launch its own US sports channel – Sportamerica HD – are now under review. The broadcaster held talks with ESPN last month and is understood to still not have received any information about whether the German rights have been assigned or whether it can still launch a counter offer to that of Sport1.

Much will depend on whether it can now outbid Sport1 for the rights in Germany to ice hockey's NHL and baseball's MLB, or possibly English-language rights to the NFL. Aggressive bidding is expected for the properties.

Sportdigital was last month granted a 10-year licence for the channel by the German Commission for Licensing and Supervision, having filed its application on May 21. ■

HANDBALL

EHF looks to MP & Silva for expansion into new markets

By Robin Jellis

MP & Silva's acquisition of European Handball Federation Champions League rights last month is part of a strategy to become the world's leading marketer of handball rights, the agency said this week.

MP & Silva agreed a seven-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2019-20, to advise the federation's commercial arm EHF Marketing on the sale of global rights to club competitions, including the flagship Champions League. The agency has existing deals for the Champions League rights in France, Canada and the US, from 2012-13 to 2016-17. These have been extended to 2019-20.

MP & Silva is understood to be guaranteeing the EHF a minimum of between €7.5m (\$9.8m) and €8m per year, as well as a share of revenues above this figure.

The agency has already agreed a deal with pay-television broadcaster Al Jazeera

for the rights in the Middle East from 2013-14 to 2016-17.

The EHF told *TV Sports Markets* this week that the new deal meant an increase in its global media rights revenues. A direct comparison with the previous cycle is not possible, as the rights were previously sold by a mixture of EHF Marketing operating by itself, and agencies including MP & Silva and the Sportsman Media Group.

“MP & Silva’s strategy is to become the number one agency in marketing handball rights,” Sascha Kojic, the agency’s chief representative for Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Eastern Europe, said.

“The Champions League is the biggest European club handball competition so these rights were an obvious target for us. We already have the German handball league, and this long-term co-operation is something any agency would want.”

MP & Silva holds the global rights for the German Handball Bundesliga from 2013-14 to 2016-17. One further opportunity to expand its portfolio is the rights for the 2015 and 2017 International Handball Federation World Championships, which are currently on the market (*TV Sports Markets* 17:9).

How Silva won

EHF opted for MP & Silva in the new cycle because the agency put forward the most lucrative offer, and has committed to developing new markets.

“We hope to improve our coverage in new markets,” Peter Vargo, managing director of EHF Marketing, said. “We feel more confident with MP & Silva’s ideas and their concepts. We felt it was the right time to change to develop our product.”

Sportsman had previously advised EHF Marketing on rights sales in the Middle East, Poland and some Eastern European territories. In its last three-year deal, from 2010-11 to 2012-13, Sportsman was paid on a commission basis.

Sportsman will continue to help the federation distribute its content via satellite, and produce a Champions League highlights magazine in partnership with Austrian production company Unas, under separate deals.

Rights covered by the new deal include the men’s and women’s Champions

League, the men’s EHF Cup, and finals from other tournaments including: the women’s EHF Cup, the women’s Cup Winners’ Cup and both the men’s and women’s Challenge Cup. The rights cover all platforms.

The deal includes an extension to 2019-20 of global betting rights for EHF club competitions that MP & Silva had earlier acquired from 2012-13 to 2016-17.

Al Jazeera factor

MP & Silva’s close relationship with Al Jazeera looks to have again helped the agency secure a major rights deal. Although it is understood to have not been a pre-deal, any prior knowledge of the big-spending Qatari broadcaster’s interest in the EHF rights will have helped MP & Silva be aggressive in the bidding. This has been a frequent pattern in the agency’s rights deals in recent years.

The Middle East rights were previously held by sports broadcaster Dubai Sports, which is owned by state-owned media company Dubai Media Incorporated.

MP & Silva sold the Champions League rights in its pre-existing deals for France and the US for 2012-13 to 2016-17 to the Al Jazeera-owned beIN Sport channels.

EHF Marketing sold the rights without a formal tender. The Infront Sports & Media agency and Sportsman bid. The IMG Media agency is thought to have been interested but did not bid.

Sales strategy

MP & Silva and EHF Marketing will take turns leading sales talks in different territories depending on who has the best relationships. EHF Marketing will sign off all deals.

“We have established a healthy network of relationships with broadcasters in certain markets,” Vargo said. “In some it will be easier for us to sell, and in others it will be more challenging, and that is why we wanted a partner like MP & Silva.”

Germany, Scandinavia, France, Spain and Eastern Europe are the strongest regions for the sport. Possible growth areas include Asia and the Americas, Kojic said.

Germany, Macedonia, Poland and Romania will be among the markets targeted first. The agency is still deciding on a sales strategy in these markets. ■

TENNIS

German TV will have to pay more due to Lisicki effect

By Robin Jellis

The rights to the Wimbledon tennis championships in Germany could rise by 50 per cent due to increased interest in the sport following Sabine Lisicki’s run to the 2013 women’s final.

Negotiations for the rights for 2014 to 2016 are currently in a third round, where the incumbent rights-holder, pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland, is facing competition from public-service broadcasters ARD/ZDF. A deal is set to be agreed in the next two weeks.

In the deal which has just expired, Sky paid between €3.5m (\$4.6m) and €4m for the exclusive rights over three years, from 2011 to 2013. The IMG Media agency, which advises the All England Tennis Club, launched a tender for the rights last month with a deadline during the first week of the 2013 tournament.

This time the rights could be split between free-to-air and pay-television. IMG has created a free-to-air package including one match per round from the men’s and women’s tournament from the quarter-finals onwards.

ARD’s interest in the rights has grown following Lisicki’s run to the final – she was the first German to reach a Wimbledon final since Steffi Graf in 1999. Some experts expect the value to rise by around 50 per cent, to nearly €6m.

ARD made a bid to sublicense the rights to the 2013 women’s final from Sky. Sky asked for about €500,000 – a fee ARD was not willing to pay. Sky rejected a lower bid, and with just two days before the final, there was little time for negotiation.

Sky had created a specific Wimbledon package for customers who do not subscribe to its sports packages. It is thought that Sky feared that customers would demand a refund if the most important match had been available free-to-air on ARD or ZDF.

IMG is also currently in talks to sell the rights in France and Italy. ■

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from June 27 to July 10

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: World Cup, European Qualifiers, Premier League, Ligue 1 and more

- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand acquired rights for the 2014 Fifa World Cup (page 2).
- **Football:** German commercial broadcaster RTL acquired live and highlights rights for the German national team's Uefa Euro 2016 and 2018 Fifa World Cup qualifying matches (page 1).
- **Football:** Pay-television operator Astro acquired rights in Malaysia and Brunei to European qualifiers for Uefa Euro 2016 and the 2018 Fifa World Cup from the CAA Eleven agency (page 5).
- **Football:** Spanish commercial broadcaster Atresmedia acquired rights for the 2013 Uefa European Under-19 Championship in a deal with the CAA Eleven agency. Live coverage will be on the La Sexta and Nitro channels, and on the Nitro, La Sexta and Antena 3 websites. The tournament takes place in Lithuania from July 20 to August 1.
- **Football:** The English Premier League reallocated its rights in four territories for the 2013-14 to 2015-16 period after the original buyers handed them back. The IMG Media agency acquired the exclusive rights in Spain and Andorra, formerly held by the Multimedia Sports agency. The MP & Silva agency acquired the rights in the Philippines and Chinese Taipei, formerly held by the KJ Sports agency (page 1).
- **Football:** Telecommunications company Go renewed its English Premier League rights in Malta for the 2013-14 to 2015-16 period in a deal with the league. Go will show coverage in the English and Maltese languages on its Go Sports digital terrestrial and IPTV pay-television channels.
- **Football:** Chinese IPTV operator BesTV acquired exclusive rights for the English Premier League in China and Macau in a deal with the Super Sports Media Group agency for six seasons, from 2013-14 to 2018-19. As part of the deal, BesTV will acquire a 14-per-cent stake in Super Sports Media Group for \$1.85m (€1.39m).
- **Football:** Russian commercial and pay-television broadcaster VGTRK agreed a two-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2014-15, for rights to Ligue 1, the top division in France. VGTRK struck the deal with the Ligue de Football Professionnel, the French league.
- **Football:** Austrian public-service broadcaster ORF acquired rights for the Samsung Cup domestic club competition in a three-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, with the Austrian Football Federation. The ORF Sport + channel will broadcast games from the first round until the quarter-finals, and the ORF eins channel will show the remaining matches. The deal includes online rights.
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport agreed a two-year rights deal, from 2013-14 to 2014-15, for rights for the Conference Premier, the fifth tier of English football. It will show 30 live games per season.
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired the live television rights to Manchester United star Rio Ferdinand's testimonial match. BT also agreed a partnership with digital media company Streamworks International to create a live global internet stream of the game. The match, between Manchester United and Spanish Liga club Sevilla at Old Trafford on August 9, will be streamed live via the dedicated Riotestimonial.com website in up to 170 countries. In the UK, the stream will be available free-of-charge, and the match will also be shown on the BT Sport pay-television service.
- **Football:** The Kentaro agency acquired the global media rights for English Premier League club Manchester United's summer tour of Asia and Oceania. The tour starts in Thailand on July 13 before moving on to Australia, Japan and Hong Kong.
- **Football:** The Kentaro agency agreed a deal with Paris Saint-Germain to distribute rights in Europe, Asia and Latin America to the French Ligue 1 club's pre-season friendly matches against Sturm Graz on July 9 and Rapid Vienna on July 12.
- **Football:** The IMG Media agency has extended a deal with Chelsea to exclusively distribute the English Premier League club's Chelsea TV channel on a global basis for three years, spanning the 2013-14 to 2015-16 seasons. The agreement excludes the UK and Ireland.

SINCE LAST TIME

- The sale of the IMG agency by current owner Forstmann Little, the private equity group, is being delayed by negotiations over the fees for Evercore and Morgan Stanley, the banks handling the sale process.
- Fifa and Uefa, respectively the governing bodies of world and European football, should share their media rights revenues with players' unions to aid footballers whose clubs encounter financial difficulties, Joaquim Evangelista, a board member at global players' union FIFPro, said.

- Cuba broadcast its first full Major League Baseball game on free-to-air television since 1961. The 'Baseball International' programme on June 30 showed a full replay of the May 2 game between the Washington Nationals and Atlanta Braves.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- English Premier League football club Manchester United struck a deal for Thai pay-television broadcaster TrueVisions to carry the club's pay-television channel, MUTV. The agreement will run for three years, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. The arrangement is part of a broader deal between United and Thai telecommunications

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from June 27 to July 10**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****American football, basketball, boxing, Commonwealth Games and cricket**

- **American Football:** The San Diego Chargers agreed a deal for local television channel KFMB-TV (CBS 8) to exclusively broadcast three of the NFL franchise's 2013 pre-season games. KFMB will show the home games against Seattle Seahawks on August 8 and San Francisco 49ers on August 29, and the away match against the Arizona Cardinals on August 24.
- **Basketball:** Public-service broadcaster France Télévisions acquired non-exclusive rights for matches featuring the French national team at International Basketball Federation (Fiba) events, under a deal with the federation. The deal covers live rights for matches played by France in the semi-finals and final of all major men's and women's Fiba tournaments in 2013 to 2015, including the European Championships in 2013 and 2015, and the World Cup in 2014. The deal covered the women's team's semi-final and final matches in the EuroBasket Women, which finished on June 30. France Télévisions shares the rights with pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus.
- **Basketball:** The International Basketball Federation awarded exclusive rights in Greece for the EuroBasket 2013 national team tournament to commercial broadcaster Antenna TV and pay-television broadcaster OTE TV. Antenna's deal includes online and mobile rights.
- **Basketball:** German public-service broadcaster ARD acquired rights to three of the German national team's group stage games in EuroBasket, the European basketball championship, in a deal with the International Basketball Federation. The matches are against Belgium on September 5, Great Britain on September 8, and Israel on September 9.
- **Boxing:** UK pay-television channel BoxNation acquired exclusive rights to Floyd Mayweather Junior's fight against Saul Alvarez on September 14.
- **Boxing:** UK pay-television channel BoxNation agreed a deal with promoter Hatton Promotions for its stable of fighters to appear exclusively on the channel.
- **Commonwealth Games:** The organising committee for the 2014 Glasgow Games agreed a rights deal with the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union. ABU members will provide free-to-air coverage in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mongolia, Myanmar, North Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.
- **Cricket:** Sri Lanka Cricket awarded broadcast and production rights for the Sri Lanka national team's home matches to Indian subcontinent pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports in a seven-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2019-20 (page 2).
- **Cricket:** Ditto TV, part of Indian media group Zee Entertainment Enterprises, acquired the international streaming rights to the One Day International Tri-Series between the West Indies, India and Sri Lanka, and India's upcoming One Day International series against Zimbabwe. Ditto TV acquired rights from Indian subcontinent pay-television broadcaster Taj TV for the Tri-Series, which concluded on July 11. The India-Zimbabwe series starts on July 24. Taj TV also sold mobile rights for the matches in India to telecommunications company DigiVive, which is offering highlights on its video on-demand mobile television service nexGTV.
- **Cricket:** US sports broadcaster ESPN acquired a range of live online rights in a sublicensing deal with Indian subcontinent broadcaster Taj TV. The deal includes: the One Day International tri-series featuring India, Sri Lanka and the West Indies starting on July 24; the West Indies' series of five ODI matches and two Twenty20 matches against Pakistan starting on July 16; South Africa's ODI and T20 tour of Sri Lanka in July and August; and Pakistan's Test, ODI and T20 series against South Africa in October and November. Taj holds global rights to the Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and West Indies cricket boards.

company True Corporation, the parent company of TrueVisions, under which the TrueMove H brand is becoming the club's official mobile partner in Thailand.

- A new five-member executive board will assume operational responsibility for the Constantin Medien media company's sports division. The board comprises Joachim Wildt, chief executive of sports production subsidiary Plazamedia; Robin Seckler, digital director at sports broadcaster Sport1; Olaf Schröder, Sport1's chief editor and head of programming; Leif Arne Anders, chief financial officer of Sport1 and marketing company Constantin Sport Marketing; and Constantin Sport Marketing chief executive Thomas Deissenberger.
- Portuguese pay-television sports broadcaster Sport TV will launch a new low-cost channel, Sport TV Live, in August. The channel will be available for between €10 (\$13) and €15 per month, which is cheaper than Sport TV's existing offering. Benfica TV, the basic-tier channel operated by Benfica, the most popular football club in Portugal, became a pay-television channel on July 1 with a monthly subscription price of €10.
- Indian Premier League cricket team Rajasthan Royals launched its own media service, RR TV, in partnership with media company Engage Sports Media. The service will produce daily video clips of the team and programming during and after the IPL season, which will be distributed via the Royals' website; social networking sites including Fan Zone, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter; online publishers; news and sports websites; and television, mobile and radio networks in India, the subcontinent and selected international territories.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from June 27 to July 10

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

Handball, mixed martial arts, motorcycling, Olympics, rugby and more

- **Handball:** EHF Marketing, the marketing arm of the sport's European governing body, agreed a seven-year rights deal, from 2013-14 to 2019-20, with the MP & Silva agency (page 7).
- **Hockey:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights to the 2013 EuroHockey Nations Championship national team tournament in August. The broadcaster will show all England, Scotland and Ireland games via its internet television service BBC iPlayer, the red button interactive television service, and the BBC Sport website.
- **Kickboxing:** US pay-television channel Spike TV agreed a multi-year rights deal with the Glory Sports International series. The agreement starts in the autumn and will allow Spike TV to broadcast two-hour events live in primetime on Saturday nights.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** Colombian commercial broadcaster Caracol agreed a one-year deal with the Ultimate Fighting Championship. The rights include live coverage of four events in Spanish on television and online.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** The Cage Warriors Fighting Championship agreed exclusive rights deals with UK pay-television broadcaster Premier Sports and Irish pay-television broadcaster Setanta Sports. Both broadcasters will carry all of the championship's events for the remainder of 2013, in an agreement that began on July 6. Premier Sports will have exclusive live rights in the UK.
- **Motorcycling:** New Zealand digital free-to-air channel Sommet Sports acquired rights to the remaining rounds of the 2013 MotoGP championship. Sommet, which launches on July 14, will offer live coverage and highlights.
- **Olympic Games:** The Dentsu advertising agency was awarded cross-platform rights in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for the 2014 and 2016 Olympics in a deal with the International Olympic Committee (page 2).
- **Rugby League:** Fijian commercial broadcaster FBC TV extended a rights deal with the Fiji National Rugby League for live and delayed coverage of the governing body's national club competition. The deal will run for two years, 2014 and 2015.
- **Rugby Union:** Australian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights for the inaugural World Club 7s tournament on August 17-18 at Twickenham Stadium in London, in a deal with Premiership Rugby, which is running the competition.
- **University Sport:** The International University Sports Federation (Fisu), awarded media rights for the 2013 editions of the Summer Universiade and Winter Universiade multi-sport events to the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union. The agreement comprises television rights and non-exclusive internet and mobile rights for the majority of the ABU's sport group members.
- **Various:** Modern Times Group-owned Danish broadcaster TV3 agreed a partnership with the Ekstra Bladet newspaper under which thousands of free sports clips from TV3 will be shown on the Ekstrabladet.dk website. The clips will include coverage of football from the Danish Superliga, English Premier League and Uefa Champions League, along with other properties held by the broadcaster.
- **Wrestling:** The Total Sports Asia agency agreed a three-year deal, from 2013 to 2015, to distribute rights for TNA Impact Wrestling across South East Asia, with the exception of Thailand. TSA agreed the deal with the RDA Television agency, which controls the organisation's global rights.

- Ten Cricket, the pay-television channel owned by Taj TV, struck a carriage deal with Caribbean cable-television broadcaster Flow. The deal will run for three years, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, and covers Jamaica, Trinidad, Grenada, Barbados, St Lucia, Antigua and St Vincent. Taj holds the global rights to the West Indies Cricket Board.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The CAA Eleven agency launched a tender for the media rights in Indonesia to European qualifying matches for Uefa Euro 2016 and the 2018 Fifa World Cup. Bids are due by July 29. CAA Eleven is Uefa's exclusive marketing agency for the matches.
- Spanish pay-television operator Canal Plus started negotiations to extend its rights deal with North American basketball league the NBA. Canal Plus's previous four-year deal expired at the end of the 2012-13 season.
- Norwegian public-service broadcaster NRK was appointed by the European Broadcasting Union to show International Biathlon

Union events in the four years from 2014-15 to 2017-18. Norwegian commercial broadcaster TV2, also an EBU member, was also vying to show the coverage. The EBU acquired the global media rights for IBU events in a deal with the union in June.

- US sports broadcaster Fox Sports is seeking to add content to its eight-year rights deal, from 2015 to 2022, with the Nascar motor racing series. Fox is in talks to add at least half of the second-tier Nationwide Series plus additional Sprint Cup races.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- Broadband provider Telecom New Zealand struck a deal with Coliseum Sports Media to offer customers access to Coliseum's PremierLeaguePass.com online platform for English Premier League football coverage. Coliseum last month acquired rights for the league in a three-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. Existing Telecom New Zealand broadband customers can claim a 15-per-cent discount on the PremierLeaguePass.com 'Season Pass', which

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from June 27 to July 10

- offers live coverage of all 380 games per season. New customers signing up for a mid-range broadband plan on a 12-month contract can get the Season Pass for free.
- Australian commercial broadcaster Network Ten's coverage of the British and Irish Lions rugby union tour of the country generated A\$8m (€5.7m/\$7.4m) in advertising revenue. Network Ten acquired the rights to the series for A\$2.5m.
 - UK public-service broadcaster the BBC indefinitely suspended its 3D programming, citing a "lack of public appetite" for the service. The broadcaster showed the men's and women's semi-finals and finals from the 2013 Wimbledon tennis championships in 3D.
 - British star Andy Murray's victory over Novak Djokovic in the men's final of the 2013 Wimbledon tennis championships generated the largest audience on UK television so far this year for a programme of any genre. The coverage on the free-to-air BBC One channel attracted an average audience of 12.1m (73-per-cent share), and a peak of 17.3m (79.6-per-cent share).
 - The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile, motorsport's world governing body, banned members of the media from pit lanes during Formula One races and qualifying sessions after a cameraman was injured by a bouncing tyre during the German Grand Prix at the Nürburgring on July 7.
 - Canadian free-to-air multilingual broadcaster Omni Television provided a Mandarin-language broadcast of the Toronto Blue Jays game away to the Boston Red Sox on July 4 – the first time a Major League Baseball game has been shown in the language in Canada.
 - MDR, one of the regional broadcasters that makes up German public-service broadcaster ARD, said ARD was spending too much on football media rights. MDR produced a report that said that football accounts for 70 per cent of ARD's spending on sports rights, but accounts for only 29 per cent of its total sports programming.
 - Olympic Broadcast Services, the company which oversees host broadcasting of the Olympic Games, agreed to work with the International Federation of Associated Wrestling Styles (Fila), on new ways to present the sport at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. The two parties will study the potential inclusion of a mini point-of-view camera on the referee, introducing biometrics data into coverage, new lighting, new outfits and different time management in an effort to make the sport more entertaining on television.
 - Sub-Saharan Africa pay-television broadcaster SuperSport lifted its month-long ban on broadcasting AFC Leopards games after the Kenyan Premier League football club suspended a rights deal with rival pay-television broadcaster Zuku TV. SuperSport has the rights to the Kenyan Premier League. The league threatened to suspend the Leopards from the competition after the club struck a separate rights deal with Zuku TV.
 - Australian commercial broadcaster Nine Network opted to show full coverage of the Ashes Test cricket series between England and Australia on secondary channel GEM. Nine said that its primary channel would broadcast coverage of individual sessions, but GEM would show live coverage of all of the action.
 - The athletics department of Oklahoma State University in the US established a new video division to produce original and exclusive content for the university's website and social media platforms.
 - The England and Wales Cricket Board is streaming coverage of the 2013 Ashes series between Australia and England on YouTube. Full live coverage and one-minute highlights snippets of each session are available across 53 countries in Europe and Latin America.
 - Bill Ives, chairman of UK steel products company Rainham Steel, is in talks to acquire a major shareholding in the UK pay-television boxing channel BoxNation. Meanwhile, the channel is to launch a high-definition service later this year.
 - MP & Silva appointed Stefano Turconi, a former executive at Spanish media company Prisa, as the agency's new senior vice-president for the Americas.

EDITORIAL

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

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Designer	Stewart Henson
----------	----------------

SALES & COMMERCIAL

Telephone	+44 (0) 20 7954 3483
Email	sales@tvsportsmarkets.com
Paul Santos	Head of Sales & Commercial paul.santos@tvsportsmarkets.com
Scott Longhurst	Account Manager scott.longhurst@tvsportsmarkets.com

TV Sports Markets

Registered Office 33-41 Dallington Street, EC1V 0BB
 © TV Sports Markets Ltd.
 Printed by Printflow, Citybridge House,
 235-245 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7JD



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