

## REGULATION 1

### Fifa: Legal challenge to UK and Belgium listed events was not an own goal

By Frank Dunne

Fifa has insisted that its joint challenge with Uefa to the UK's listed-events regime – which ended in a comprehensive defeat last week in the European Court of Justice – was not, as critics claim, an own goal with potentially damaging consequences.

The ECJ threw out the challenge by football's world and European governing bodies to the listing of the entire Fifa World Cup and European Championship in the UK and Belgium.

Some independent lawyers and sports rights-holders believe that it could be a green light for other member states to list both football tournaments entirely, and more generally to expand the scope of events which must be shown on free-to-air television. If this happened, the decision to bring the case would prove to be an "own goal" which could damage international football economically.

Fifa rejected the arguments. The

governing body told *TV Sports Markets*:

"The judgment does not give *carte blanche* to all member states of the European Union to include in their lists all the matches of the Fifa World Cup. The holdings in the judgments are tailor-made to the UK and to Belgium."

Fifa and Uefa were appealing a February 2011 ruling by the European General Court which backed an earlier decision by the European Commission that the listing of the two events in their entirety was in line with the EU Television Without Frontiers Directive. This enshrined free-to-air protection for events of major importance in European law.

The ECJ said that the decision in the General Court in 2011 was correct. The two governing bodies were ordered to pay costs. The ruling brings the legal case to an end; no further appeals are possible.

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## EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS

### Discovery changes the Nordic landscape

By Kevin McCullagh

SBS's Uefa European Qualifiers rights deal in Scandinavia last week is being seen as confirmation that Discovery's acquisition of the broadcaster last year will inject fresh competition into the Nordic sports-rights market.

SBS Discovery Media, which operates basic-tier and free-to-air channels across the Nordics, paid between €70m (\$91m) and

€75m for rights in Denmark, Norway and Sweden for all matches in the package.

The deal covers the Euro 2016 and World Cup 2018 qualifying matches of all European nations including the Scandinavian countries – 546 matches in total. The CAA Eleven agency, Uefa's marketing agent for the rights, brokered the deal.

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## FASTRACK

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Greek Euroleague deal may be positive sign

Last week's deal in Greece for basketball's Euroleague was a rare positive sign in a troubled market.

The value of the rights is understood to have stayed steady, at around €4.3m (\$5.6m) per year, in a deal agreed between the league and the Asset Ogilvy agency.

The deal is a two-year extension, from 2016-17 to 2017-18, of the agency's current six-year deal, which runs from 2010-11 to 2015-16.

Rights fees have generally been falling in Greece in recent years, tracking the declining economy and advertising market. The advertising market has now hit its floor, according to some local experts. Revenues in 2013 are expected to be close to those in 2012, and some are predicting a single-digit percentage increase in 2014.

The Euroleague is one of the strongest sports properties in Greece. Two of Europe's top clubs hail from the country. But a drop in value had been expected because one of the league broadcasters in the current cycle is defunct public-service broadcaster ERT.

Rights-holders and agencies are still waiting to see how the Greek government's shutdown of ERT will affect the sports-rights market.

ERT was previously one of the biggest buyers in the market – being licence fee-funded, it had been protected from the ravages of an advertising market that fell 72 per cent between 2007 and 2012.

The government has set up a new national public-service broadcaster – the New Hellenic Radio, Internet and Television (Nerit). Its debut live transmission will be this weekend's Formula One Hungarian grand prix.

It shut the old one, ERT, because it believed it was wasting too much money. Agencies and rights-holders fear that Nerit will spend much less on sports rights.

ERT's sports content during the shutdown – since June 11 – has either been sublicensed to other broadcasters, broadcast on an unofficial ERT feed, or not shown at all.

Fifa, football's world governing body, is understood to have been angered by an unauthorised sublicensing of Confederations Cup matches to commercial broadcaster Skai. The government-appointed ERT managers who did the deal had to pull the plug on it after two matches.

The unofficial ERT feed was set up by ERT employees in defiance of the government, with help from the European Broadcasting Union, the public-service broadcaster consortium. It has shown some sport that ERT acquired via the EBU.

Stefan Kuerten, the head of the EBU's sport and business unit, told *TV Sports Markets* that the organisation had tried to help its rights-holders get coverage as far as possible in what was "a *force majeure* situation." ■

### Big fee for Mayweather bout

UK pay-television boxing broadcaster BoxNation paid close to \$500,000 (€385,000) for the rights to the catchweight fight between Floyd Mayweather Junior and Saúl Álvarez. The fight will take place in Las Vegas, the US, on September 14.

It is understood that rights-holder Golden Boy Promotions did not put the rights on the market and concluded an exclusive deal with the channel at the end of last month.

The deal was a good one for both parties. The UK has become a difficult market for boxing rights-holders in recent years. Pay-television broadcaster BSkyB has significantly reduced its boxing content since last year and now works with only one promoter, Matchroom Sport, while pay-per-view platform Primetime has struggled to land any rights since the creation of BoxNation at the end of 2011.

Boxing promoter Frank Warren, who

has a seat on the board of BoxNation, said that the deal was an example of the strong working relationship between the channel and US-based promoter Golden Boy.

BoxNation has shown Mayweather's last three fights. Warren told *TV Sports Markets* that Golden Boy were "very happy" with the deals.

The channel paid about \$450,000 for the rights to Mayweather's last fight against Robert Guerrero on May 4. Mayweather won by unanimous decision.

BoxNation has a long-term rights deal in place with Golden Boy but it does not include Mayweather's fights. Mayweather Promotions, the agency that represents Mayweather, reached an agreement with Golden Boy for it to market the broadcast rights to the fight outside the US.

The fight will come too soon for BoxNation's launch of its high definition channel in late November. The move to high definition is being funded by Bill Ives, owner of steel stockholder Rainham Steel, a long-term sponsor of Frank Warren's boxing events. Ives is set to acquire about a 30-per-cent stake in the channel.

In addition to the main bout on September 14, Golden Boy has added the light-welterweight title fight between Danny García and Lucas Matthyse as the main undercard bout. Champion García puts both his WBA and WBC belts on the line.

The card will be shown in the US on pay-per-view broadcaster Showtime. The promoter and the broadcaster are expecting to generate significantly more than 1m ppv buys.

Álvarez is extremely popular with the US's large Mexican population while Mayweather is the pound-for-pound best fighter in the world, according to *The Ring Magazine*. It is being dubbed the fight of the year.

The record for pay-per-view purchases is 2.48m, generating almost \$137m, set by Mayweather and Oscar De La Hoya in 2007. ■

## TV ITALY

# Rai-Sky Olympic deal leaves ski federation cold

By Frank Dunne

The €65m (\$84.5m) sublicensing deal agreed last week between Sky Italia and Rai for the rights to the Olympic Games has angered the Italian winter sports federation.

The Federazione Italiana Sport Invernali is unhappy at state broadcaster Rai's decision to acquire only the rights to the 2016 Rio summer Games.

The deal means that live free-to-air coverage of next year's winter Games in Sochi will now be exclusively on Sky's Cielo, a channel with a two-per-cent share, instead of on one of Rai's three flagship channels. One source close to the federation this week said that Rai's choice was in keeping with its view in recent years that skiing was "a Serie B sport."

The source said: "Winter sports have given Italy 97 Olympic medals, second only to athletics, but over the years the sport has been gradually moved off Rai's main national channels on to its smaller digital sports channels." He said that smaller live audiences for the Games would prove damaging for the sport.

## 'Best possible deal'

The reaction was in stark contrast to that of the Italian Olympic Committee (Coni), which hailed it "the best possible deal" in the circumstances.

Coni told *TV Sports Markets*: "We now have a situation where the Rio Games will be shown live and free-to-air, with Rai committed to showing a greater number of hours than it did in the past. The whole of the winter Olympics – every minute – will broadcast live on Sky."

Coni said that the cumulative live audience of the event on Sky, across its Sky Sport pay-television channels and Cielo, would end up being higher than was the case when Rai held the rights exclusively and showed only 100 or so hours of the event live.

Rai will show a late night highlights

programme, with one hour of footage from Sochi. Coni president Giovanni Malagò, who was heavily involved in brokering the deal, is credited with demanding this of the two broadcasters.

The International Olympic Committee told *TV Sports Markets* that it was "pleased" with the deal. It said that the agreement "ultimately means better overall exposure in Italy of the Olympic Games for Sochi than we saw in Vancouver [in 2010] and indeed any past winter Games."

Details of coverage for Rio have not been finalised yet, but Rai has told the IOC that it will show at least 400 hours of live free-to-air coverage. In the past, Rai has shown around 200 hours of live coverage for the summer Games.

## End of an era for Sky

Sky's unexpected decision to sell on all the rights to Rio, not just the free-to-air rights, arguably marks the end of an era. In the last decade, faced with the inability (for regulatory reasons) to acquire top football content like Serie A and the Uefa Champions League on an exclusive basis, the broadcaster began investing heavily in one-off major events, such as the Fifa World Cup and the Olympic Games.

The blue-ribbon events were intended to be a differentiator around which Sky could build its marketing campaigns as the home of sport in Italy. Sky's coverage of both events won widespread respect but did nothing to increase its subscriber base.

Ironically, this was one of the factors which saved Sky in the complaint by media group Mediaset to the Italian antitrust authority that in acquiring World Cup rights on an exclusive basis, Sky was abusing a dominant position.

In finding in Sky's favour in April, the Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato said that an analysis of historical subscriber numbers showed that the 2010 World Cup did not help Sky add a "significant" number of subscribers, and that the rights did not give Sky any competitive advantage in the pay-television market.

Sky paid €152m for the rights to Sochi and Rio. Of this, the summer Games is thought to account for around 70 per cent

of the value, or €106m. Selling on those rights for €65m does not look like a great piece of business for Sky.

A local industry executive said, however, that given Sky's stated intention to make savings of \$200m over two or three years, it had little choice but to do the deal. "The commercial upside was small and the costs of rights and production enormous," he said. "Sky had to cut its losses. It now has €65m, which might strengthen its position in the rights market."

Sky's production costs for the London Games ran into the tens of millions of euros. In announcing a drop in Sky's operating profits from \$119m to \$23m in the three months to September 2012, parent company News Corp singled out the London costs as a major factor.

Sky lost 40,000 subscribers in the quarter, despite having the Games. It lost a further 28,000 subscribers in the last quarter, leaving it with 4.83m customers at year-end. At March 31 this year, it was down to 4.78m.

Dropping Rio appears to signal the end of the major events strategy, which would not be good news for the IOC for future negotiations. However, the IOC is confident that Sky will still be at the table. It said: "The deal also keeps both Sky Italia and Rai in the front seat in terms of Olympic broadcasting coverage in Italy, which should continue fostering competition in the run-up for bids for Olympic Games coverage for 2018 and 2020."

## Rai the winner

Rai appears to be the real winner in the deal. It has been able to acquire exclusive rights to the Rio Games and highlights to the winter Games for less than the amount it paid, as a member of the European Broadcasting Union, for the 2008 summer Games in Beijing.

Rai, as a member of the EBU, had held the Italian rights to the Olympics up to Beijing. In February 2008, Sky bought the rights to the winter Games in Vancouver 2010 and the 2012 summer Games in London for €112m. The two broadcasters agreed a sublicensing deal under which Rai acquired the free-to-air rights to 100 hours of coverage from Vancouver, and

200 from London. This is the minimum required by the IOC and Italian listed-events legislation.

When Sky later acquired the rights to the 2014 and 2016 Games, it had been expected that Rai would do a similar deal. The two broadcasters had been in on-and-off talks for over a year about a sublicensing deal covering both Games. Some sources say that a more wide-ranging deal was not agreed for Sochi because Sky's operational plan for covering the event was too far advanced when negotiations resumed earlier this month. ■

## REGULATION 1

# Fifa insists that listed events challenge was not an own goal

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All of Fifa's and Uefa's main legal arguments were rejected by the ECJ. There were two small 'victories' for them in the court's reasoning which might be significant in future, even though neither changed the outcome of the case.

First, the ECJ said that the General Court had "erred in law" in saying that football tournaments could reasonably be considered to be single events. The General Court interpretation would make it easier for other member states to justify listing all matches.

Fifa said that the ECJ position "endorses an important argument in our appeal." The court upheld Fifa's view that the World Cup "must be regarded as an event which is, in principle, divisible into different matches or stages, not all of which are necessarily capable of being characterised as an event of major importance."

Fifa added that the "market distortion" of listing all 64 matches had a negative impact on its ability to generate funds from the World Cup, income which it "redistributes through the entire pyramid of football worldwide – investing in the global development of the game."

Second, the ECJ argued – contrary to the General Court view – that a member

state which lists all matches must communicate to the European Commission its reasons for doing so.

## Impact

The immediate effect of the ruling is that Fifa and Uefa will not be able to bring UK pay-television operators like BSkyB and BT into the bidding for their flagship tournaments, limiting the potential media-rights value of each.

The BBC and ITV paid a combined £196m (€229m/\$298m) for the World Cups of 2010 and 2014, and paid £50m for Euro 2012. Each was a joint bid. Some experts believe that the value could be doubled if pay-television was allowed to enter the market for the rights.

The rights to the World Cups of 2018 and 2022 were carved out of the recent European sales cycle by Fifa pending the outcome of the case. Uefa has held off from selling the UK rights to Euro 2016 for the same reason.

The wider impact of the ruling will depend on how it affects the thinking of governments around Europe. Ironically, the UK government had a difficult battle convincing the commission to accept the listing of all matches in both tournaments. When the commission eventually approved the list, in July 2000, the government was triumphant, with Whitehall sources claiming that the UK had "raised the bar," paving the way for other member states to list major events in their entirety.

Fifa points out that any economic impact will be limited because the governing body already has a strong commitment to seeking extensive free-to-air coverage for the World Cup.

Its minimum requirement in Europe is that 22 matches are shown free-to-air. These include national team matches, the opening ceremony, the semi-finals and the final. In practice, it seeks far greater exposure. In its broadcaster agreements for the tournaments of 2010 and 2014, the minimum requirement was exceeded in most European countries.

For the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, Fifa has already sold the rights in 37 countries to the European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters, who broadcast free-to-air (*TV Sports Markets* 16:7).

Uefa has a similar commitment to free-to-air coverage of the key games in the European Championship.

## Strategy questioned

Some experts argued this week that irrespective of whether the ruling leads to what one called "a viral strengthening of listed events" across Europe, the basic Fifa/Uefa strategy of litigating, rather than lobbying for change, was counter-productive.

One senior European lawyer compared the case with Uefa's legal challenge to the Belgian footballer Jean-Marc Bosman, leading to the 1995 ECJ ruling in Bosman's favour which tore up the existing European player transfer system. He argued that Uefa has generally been more successful when using diplomacy.

He pointed to the success of Uefa's negotiated settlement with the European Commission over Uefa's Financial Fair Play rules. "It was very unusual for the commission to come out so strongly in favour of a governing body's policies," he said, "when there was no formal case or reason for the commission to intervene."

Another lawyer argued that the General Court ruling was so strong that any appeal was doomed to fail and a waste of money.

Uefa remains convinced that its core legal argument – that the commission erred in law by not conducting a full analysis of the impact of the listing on competition in the UK broadcast market – was valid. Its view was supported by the General Court in a 2005 ruling in a case between the Infront Sports & Media agency and the commission.

A UK media-rights lawyer argued that the scale of the ECJ defeat will have undermined the attempts of Fifa and Uefa to convince the UK government to voluntarily reduce the scope of its listed events. The government has been sitting on a 2009 review of UK listed events pending the outcome of the ECJ case.

Fifa said this week that it would continue with "its productive discussions inside and outside of the European Union to issue lists of protected events carefully reflecting the interests of football fans, the media landscape and the event organisers." ■



## REGULATION 2

# High Court ruling is step change in battle with online pirates

By Frank Dunne

Last week's High Court ruling in the Premier League's battle to prevent a website, FirstRow Sports, streaming its matches without authorisation represented a step change in sport's battle against pirate internet coverage in the UK.

The court ruling requires the UK's six main internet service providers – BSkyB, BT, Everything Everywhere, TalkTalk Telecom, Telefónica UK and Virgin Media – to block their customers' access to the FirstRow site.

The site, which gives viewers unauthorised access to third-party broadcasts, is used both by private individuals and pubs. It is primarily targeted at the UK but is also accessed in many other countries around the world.

Until now, the league – along with many rights-holders – has struggled to find an effective way to take action against websites housed abroad which stream their content free online using peer-to-peer or other technologies.

There have been two main problems. First, many sites are registered in countries where there is no effective policing of rogue websites. Second, even where the league was successful in ordering a website operator to shut its service down, the operator would simply reappear days later under a new domain name. One insider said that "it was like playing a game of whack-a-mole."

The key to the strengthening of the league's position, according to competition lawyer John Enser, of law firm Olswang, is the use of section 97A of the UK's Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. The law allows rights-holders to choke off access to foreign sites carrying pirate material.

At the end of 2012, following a successful test case brought last year against a website called PirateBay, the law began to be used by music and film companies to close down or limit access

to illegal file-sharing sites. This is the first time it has been used by a sports body.

"It follows the strategy increasingly adopted in challenging piracy of not bothering about attacking the sources," Enser said, "which are often offshore and too hard to get to, but attacking the ability for a 'casual' pirate to access that material."

He said that another part of the league's strategy, and that of other rights-holders, was to challenge the ability of such sites to sell advertising and take credit cards.

"The Digital Economy Act 'three strikes' legislation that would allow content owners to go after users, with the collaboration of ISPs, doesn't look like it will come into force any time soon, so the industry is taking whatever steps it can find under the existing law," he said.

As a consequence of this ruling, and a separate successful league action in the High Court against a UK publican in March, the league is understood to be about to double the number of UK pubs which it investigates for breach of copyright to about 7,000 per season. This week, it appointed Glasgow-based company ID Inquiries to conduct the investigations (see Sports Clips).

The league action was supported in the High Court by England's Football Association, the Football League, the Scottish Premier League, Uefa, the PGA European Tour, the Professional Darts Corporation, World Snooker and the Rugby Football Union.

## Copyright protection

One interesting aspect of the ruling is the scope of copyright protection it gives the league. This follows a small change the league made in the way it sends its live match signal.

Until the end of the 2011-12 season, the feed of all 380 league matches per season was transmitted live around the world to all Premier League rights-holders by the league's production partner IMG Media. IMG now records the feed before transmitting it globally. This means that what is being broadcast is a 'film' of the live match, with a delay of a few seconds, known as the "recorded world feed." The league can therefore claim that what is being broadcast is a creative work, on which it can rightfully claim copyright.

The league made the change due to

doubts which were raised about the extent of its copyright during its failed European Court of Justice case against UK publican Karen Murphy.

The league had challenged Murphy over her use of a Greek satellite feed to show Premier League matches in her Portsmouth pub. The court ruled that accessing satellite services from other EU member states was not illegal but said that such broadcasts might infringe copyright (*TV Sports Markets* 15:18).

The court questioned, however, whether there could be any copyright in the broadcast of the match itself, which is a spontaneously occurring sports event. It said that a claim to copyright might be limited only to the creative works of the league, such as its theme tune, logos and action replays.

In the High Court, the league claimed copyright in the following: the films comprising the action replays included in the clean live feed (and hence the recorded world feed); the films comprising the recorded world feed; the artistic works comprising the Premier League and league sponsor Barclays logos which are incorporated in the recorded world feed; and the artistic works comprising two sets of on-screen graphics which are incorporated in the recorded world feed.

The judge, Justice Arnold, said he was satisfied by the evidence filed by the league that "copyright subsists in these works" and that the league owns those copyrights.

## FirstRow

One of the reasons that the league decided to target FirstRow, which is registered in Sweden, is that it had become hugely successful on the back of showing Premier League matches.

It was ranked as the 239th most popular website in the UK in April 2013. This made it more popular than websites such as leading travel website lastminute.com and the website of the *Financial Times* newspaper. That month, it received 9.98m unique user hits worldwide.

The level of traffic enabled FirstRow to earn large amounts from advertising and affiliate fees. The league's expert witness in the case estimated that FirstRow was generating between £5.4m (£6.3m/\$8.2m) and £9.5m per year. ■

## EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS

## SBS deal shows that Discovery arrival will heat up the Nordics

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The fee represents about a 30-per-cent increase on current values. First- and second-party rights for Denmark, Norway and Sweden qualifiers for Euro 2012 and World Cup 2014 are thought to have been worth around €55m in total.

Strong competition between broadcasters and relatively buoyant economies have led to rights-fee increases in the Nordic region in the last five years, particularly for top football. They have been among the few strong markets in Europe.

## SBS steps up

Until now, SBS has played a relatively small role. Pan-Nordic broadcasters Modern Times Group and Bonnier/TV4 Group, and Norwegian broadcaster TV2 have been the major players.

SBS, unlike these three, does not have premium pay-television channels. It operates basic-tier and free-to-air channels in each market. MTG, Bonnier and TV2 Norway each have a range of free, basic-tier and premium pay-television channels. MTG also runs a satellite television platform.

SBS has tended to bid for a small number of strong properties, on a market-by-market basis. It has non-exclusive rights for English Premier League football in Denmark, and also previously acquired rights in Norway and Sweden for national team football matches.

The European Qualifiers deal is a major step up for SBS, and looks to be down to financial backing from new owner Discovery, the US-based non-fiction television channel operator. Discovery acquired the business from German broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1 last December (*TV Sports Markets* 16:23).

Harald Strømme, head of SBS in Norway, said at the time of the merger that it would make SBS stronger, both in rights buying and in the advertising market. This week he said the qualifier

deal was “a tangible example” and proof that Discovery was serious about its commitment in the Nordics.

This looks to be good news for rights-holders, and not so good for some of the region's other broadcasters. SBS's ability to bid pan-regionally makes it a particularly tough opponent for broadcasters operating in a single market, like TV2 Norway.

“It's a totally different scenario,” Bjørn Taalesen, TV2's head of sport, told *TV Sports Markets* this week. “The opposition now includes Discovery, which means big American money. We can no longer just sit on our own in little old Norway and expect to win major rights deals. If TV2 doesn't find other companies to bid together with, we will struggle. I need some rich friends.”

## Surplus matches

A big question, with potentially huge ramifications for the Nordic rights market, is what SBS will do with the rights for the matches in the European Qualifiers package which it doesn't currently have room for on its channels.

SBS will show live coverage in each market of the respective national teams' matches plus some other matches between major nations. This leaves hundreds of matches which it has not yet announced plans for. These are typically premium pay-television content, rather than drivers of big audiences for free-to-air or basic-tier channels.

SBS has three options. First, it could sublicense the rights to another broadcaster. Second, it could launch or acquire its own pay-television channels. A potential acquisition target is the loss-making pan-Nordic C More premium pay-television channels, currently being sold by owner Bonnier/TV4 Group. SBS is a previous owner of C More – then called Canal Plus – which it held between 2005 and 2008.

A third option is that SBS could put the matches on the Nordic Eurosport channels. These are now sister channels of SBS, after Discovery bought a 20-per-cent stake in Eurosport last year.

Several industry insiders said this week they expected SBS to use the Eurosport channels. A new pay-television service or an acquisition of C More is considered less likely due to the cost.

SBS declined to comment on its

plans when contacted by *TV Sports Markets* this week.

## Other bidders

TV2 and public-service broadcaster NRK are understood to have submitted a strong joint bid for the rights in Norway. Danish free-to-air and basic-tier broadcaster TV2 bid in Denmark.

The level of interest from MTG and Bonnier/TV4 Group is unknown, although some industry insiders said there were indications neither was going to bid very strongly. MTG already has a strong and expensive football rights portfolio.

Bonnier/TV4 Group was expected to be interested in the rights in Sweden, where its commercial broadcaster TV4 is the current national team rights-holder. But it does not have any free or basic-tier channels in Norway or Denmark, where national team football matches are typically shown free-to-air. Its C More pay-television channels, which might have been strengthened by national team football, are struggling financially.

A consortium of public-service and commercial broadcasters from across the Nordics is understood to have at least discussed a joint bid. Sources were this week divided as to whether they actually made a bid. The consortium was made up of public-service broadcaster DR and TV2 in Denmark, NRK and TV2 in Norway, public-service broadcaster SVT and TV4 in Sweden, and public-service broadcaster YLE in Finland.

CAA Eleven is understood to have ‘parked’ the European Qualifiers rights in Finland, to sell at a later date, as offers did not meet its expectations.

## Euro 2016

CAA is also currently selling Euro 2016 rights in the region. They remain on the market in each territory.

For Euro 2012, Bonnier, SVT and pan-Nordic pay-television platform Canal Digital acquired the rights in Denmark, Norway and Sweden in a deal worth about €42m. They sublicensed the rights to some matches in Denmark and Norway to local broadcasters. The rights in Norway and Denmark are understood to have been valued at about €12m each, and in Sweden at €18m.

### Previous qualifier values

In Norway, TV2 has the rights for national team home matches as part of a wider deal that also covered domestic club football. Away matches have been acquired from agencies by different broadcasters in recent cycles, including SBS and C More. The broadcasters are thought to have paid a range of fees between €500,000 and

€1m per match.

TV2 pays about €1m per match for Denmark's home matches in its current deal with the Dansk Boldspil-Union, the Danish football federation. Away matches have been acquired by various broadcasters, and are understood to have been cheaper than home matches.

In Sweden, TV4 is understood to be paying between €1m and €2m per

home match under a deal with the Svenska Fotbollförbundet, the Swedish football federation. TV4 acquired rights for Sweden's away qualifiers for the 2014 World Cup and Euro 2012 in deals with agencies worth around €700,000 per match.

TV4 last December sublicensed to SBS five Sweden national team matches taking place in 2013. ■

## TV SPAIN

# More pain for rights-holders as crisis deepens

By Dan Horlock

The crisis in Spain continues to hit the value of top sports rights, with North America's NBA basketball league and English football's Premier League the latest victims.

Spanish pay-television operator Canal Plus last week paid about €4m (\$5.2m) per year to renew its NBA rights. This represents a drop of 47 per cent from the previous fee of €7.5m per year.

The length of the deal was not disclosed but it is thought to be for two or three years. The previous agreement was for four years, from 2009-10 to 2012-13.

Canal Plus faced very little competition for the rights due to the difficult market conditions. Fox International Channels, the channel syndication arm of Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox, is thought to have shown some interest but did not bid.

FIC is having talks with rights-holders in Spain with a view to launching its own operation in the country. FIC is also understood to be looking at possible launches in Portugal and Poland, among other territories.

Canal Plus, which has broadcast the NBA since 1995, will show live coverage of games, highlights, customised programmes and marquee events across its channels.

Coverage will also be available online and on demand via mobile devices

through Yomvi, the broadcaster's online service, and NBA League Pass International, the NBA's online service.

Subscribers and non-subscribers will also have access to one free game per week, live or on demand, through Yomvi on a mobile device, desktop computer, Samsung Smart TV or an Xbox games console. Post-season coverage will also be available across Canal Plus channels.

Spain has been the most lucrative market in Europe for NBA rights. The NBA, and basketball in general, is popular in the country. Top Spanish players such as brothers Pau and Marc Gasol play in the league. The Spanish national team are the reigning European champions and are ranked second in the world behind the US.

### Premier dip

The IMG Media agency this month secured the Premier League rights in a deal worth about €3m per season, for three seasons from 2013-14 to 2015-16. The fee was down 43 per cent on the previous three-year deal, which was worth €5.3m per season.

It is the second time the rights have been sold in Spain after the Multimedia Sport (MMS) agency had to hand them back to the league earlier this month after it failed to do a deal with a broadcaster. MMS had acquired the rights in February in a deal worth about €4.5m per season.

In the initial Premier League auction in February, the incumbent rights-holders, pay-television broadcasters Gol T and Canal Plus, made a joint bid of €2.5m per season. MMS tried to get them to pay more than this but they refused. Canal Plus and Gol T have a long-standing non-compete pact on

Premier League rights.

The difficulties in the Spanish pay-television market were highlighted this week by a report from the Comisión del Mercado de las Telecomunicaciones, Spain's telecoms commission. Over the past 12 months, Spain's pay-television business has lost almost 450,000 subscribers, from 4.4m in March 2012 to 3.9m in March 2013. ■

## FOOTBALL

# FA and league cash in as BT and Sky battle for rights

By Robin Jellis

England's Football Association and Football League have earned strong increases in their domestic media rights fees in a re-energised UK market.

Telco BT's emergence as serious competition for market-leading pay-television operator BSkyB has been the catalyst for rights-fee increases in the last year, and was so again in the latest deals.

Public-service broadcaster the BBC also made its most aggressive move in the market for several years with a successful bid for FA Cup rights.

Prior to BT's emergence, UK fees for even top football rights – the market's strongest content – had been generally flat or declining. A period of cost-cutting at the BBC, induced by the government as an economic austerity measure, had also depressed rights values. Both the FA and the Football League suffered decreases when they last came to market.



The BBC and BT have jointly acquired rights for the FA Cup for a fee of around £51m (€59m/\$77m) per year. The deal covers the four seasons from 2014-15 to 2017-18.

This is up by about 28 per cent on the current deals, in which commercial broadcaster ITV and pay-television broadcaster ESPN are understood to pay about £40m per year in separate deals. ESPN's deal covers 2010-11 to 2013-14, and ITV's 2012-13 and 2013-14. BT has taken over ESPN's deal for the 2013-14 season, as part of a wider takeover of ESPN's UK pay-television business.

ITV has renewed its rights for England national team matches for a price understood to be just above the £2.5m per match it pays in the current cycle. Again, the new deal runs from 2014-15 to 2017-18, while the current one covers 2012-13 and 2013-14.

Sky renewed its rights for Football League properties for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, with a pre-emptive bid, prior to the rights coming on the market. The move appears to have been aimed at preventing BT getting a chance to bid. UK media reports say Sky has agreed to pay £90m per year, up more than 38 per cent on the £65m per year it pays currently.

### FA Cup

The BBC was keen to secure the FA Cup rights due to a lack of live football in its portfolio. For BT, the FA Cup will not be a big pay-television subscription driver, but strengthens its still-growing portfolio at a vital time, ahead of the launch of its sports channels on August 1.

As one expert said: "Two Premier League packages just aren't enough. This deal means they will be able to fill a few weekends with FA Cup games. The Champions League rights will be on the market soon, and I'm sure they will have a good go at those rights as they look to position themselves in the market." BT's two packages of live Premier League rights in 2013-14 to 2015-16 are its flagship content.

Sky is thought to have been genuinely interested in securing the FA Cup rights, and not to have entered the bidding merely to put pressure on BT. However,

as one expert put it, Sky may have "had an eye on future battles," specifically the upcoming Champions League sale.

Team Marketing, Uefa's sales agent for its club competitions, is expected to sell the Champions and Europa League rights in the UK in September to take advantage of the hot market. The deal will cover three years, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

ITV is understood to have been keen to renew the FA Cup rights, and to have offered more than it pays currently. Losing the rights will be a blow, but not a disaster, as it still has strong football content in the free-to-air Champions League rights and England matches.

In the first round of bidding for the FA Cup, the BBC and BT bid together, while ITV and Sky put in separate bids. In the second round, there were two joint bids, one from the BBC and BT, and one from ITV and Sky.

The fact that the FA Cup will be the BBC's only live club football is understood to be considered important by the FA. It means the competition will be at the core of the broadcaster's offering. ITV holds free-to-air rights to another major club football property, the Champions League.

The BBC will have first pick of FA Cup matches each round, and BT will have second pick. Beyond that, the match split is yet to be arranged.

BT has, as part of the same deal, secured live and exclusive rights to the Community Shield and FA Trophy competitions.

### England rights

ITV faced competition for the England national team rights from the BBC and BT, who were going to split the matches between them.

However, the BBC and BT are thought to have prioritised, and bid more aggressively for, the FA Cup rights.

The four-year contract gives ITV rights to 14 England friendlies. The FA may organise more friendlies in the period, in which case ITV will be offered the matches for an additional rights fee.

The England package is smaller than in the current cycle as it excludes home competitive matches – qualifiers for the Uefa European Championships and Fifa World Cup – which have been sold

centrally by Uefa from 2014-15 onwards.

ITV acquired the qualifier rights in a separate deal with Uefa, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, worth about £20m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 17:11).

Advantages for the FA in selling to ITV included free-to-air coverage for all matches, and all competitive and friendly England games being on one channel.

There is little difference, to broadcasters, between the value of top England friendly and qualifying matches against low-profile opposition. Friendlies are often against top international teams like Brazil, Germany or Italy.

### Clips rights

Rupert Murdoch's newspaper group News UK acquired non-exclusive rights for near-live clips of FA Cup, Community Shield and England friendly matches from the FA for the four-year cycle.

The FA is understood to have wanted to sell exclusive clip rights, but the BBC and BT wanted clips as part of their deal.

News UK in January acquired exclusive rights for English Premier League clips for the three years from 2013-14 to 2015-16, for about £36m (*TV Sports Markets* 17:3). It will use them to drive subscribers to the paid-for internet editions of its newspapers *The Sun*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*.

In the current cycle, ITV has clips rights for FA Cup and England matches, which it exploits on its website.

### Football League

Sky is thought to have paid the fee increase to the Football League to convince the league to sell the rights without going to market, and to reflect a big increase in the number of live matches.

Sky will show 148 live matches per season, an increase of 38 per season on the current deal. The Football League's content covers matches from the three divisions below the Premier League, and knockout competitions the League Cup and the Football League Trophy (see *Sports Clips*).

Alongside the media rights deal, Sky's betting arm Sky Bet agreed a title sponsorship deal with the league for five years, from 2013-14 to 2017-18, thought to be worth about £6m per year. ■



# SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 11 to July 24

## MEDIA RIGHTS 1

### Football: European Qualifiers, FA Cup, England, Premier League and more

- **Football:** Pan-Nordic broadcaster SBS Discovery Media acquired rights in Denmark, Norway and Sweden to European qualifying matches for Uefa Euro 2016 and the 2018 Fifa World Cup in a deal with the CAA Eleven agency (page 1).
- **Football:** The English Football Association agreed domestic media rights deals for the FA Cup with public-service broadcaster the BBC and pay-television broadcaster BT Sport, and for England matches with commercial broadcaster ITV. The deals cover four seasons, from 2014-15 to 2017-18.  
The BBC is paying around £25m (€29m/\$38m) per season. ITV paid around £22m per season for free-to-air FA Cup rights in the current deal, for 2012-13 and 2013-14. BT is paying around £26m per season for the pay-television FA Cup rights. Pay-television broadcaster ESPN pays about £17.5m in the current deal, from 2010-11 to 2013-14. The BBC and BT deals include highlights and non-exclusive internet clips. ITV's deal includes live rights to six FA Youth Cup matches per season (page 7).
- **Football:** News UK, part of media conglomerate News Corporation, acquired internet clip rights to English Football Association properties in a four-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, with the association (page 7).
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB agreed a three-year rights extension, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, with the English Football League. Each season, Sky will show 112 matches from the Football League – the three divisions below the Premier League – including play-offs and play-offs finals; 15 matches from the League Cup, including both legs of each semi-final and the final; and the Football League Trophy final, and at least two matches from the preceding rounds (page 7).
- **Football:** Qatari pay-television broadcaster Al Jazeera acquired rights in the Middle East and North Africa for Brazil national team matches from the Pitch International agency.
- **Football:** Al Jazeera acquired rights in the Middle East and North Africa from the MP & Silva agency for England's Premier League, Italy's Serie A, North America's Major League Soccer, plus club channel content from English teams Arsenal, Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur as well as Italian clubs AC Milan and Inter Milan.
- **Football:** Al Jazeera-owned pay-television broadcaster beIN Sport Asia acquired rights in Indonesia and the Philippines for the German Bundesliga. The deal will run for two seasons, from 2013-14 to 2014-15. The Bundesliga will feature on the football-dedicated beIN Sport 1 HD channel and the multi-sport beIN Sport 2 HD channel.
- **Football:** Pay-television channel GolTV struck a deal to share rights in the US to the 2013-14 season of the Eredivisie, the sport's top division in the Netherlands, with pay-television broadcaster ESPN. GolTV also acquired rights for a friendly match between German club Bayern Munich and Spanish team Barcelona on July 24, as well as the all-Italian Tim Trophy pre-season tournament featuring Juventus, AC Milan and Sassuolo. GolTV also agreed a deal to show English club Chelsea's three-match pre-season tour of Asia.
- **Football:** Azerbaijani public-service broadcaster AZTV secured exclusive rights to the English Premier League. AZTV's sports channel, Idman Azerbaijan, will provide the coverage. The deal runs for three years, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, and covers all 380 matches per season.
- **Football:** The Kentaro agency completed a number of rights deals for the five matches of Premier League club Manchester United's 2013 pre-season tour of Asia. Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Latin America agreed a deal for coverage in Latin America. Pay-television broadcaster SuperSport will show the games in South Africa. Pay-television operators Sportsnet and Viasat acquired rights in Canada and several Scandinavian territories, respectively, and state broadcaster CCTV will show games in China.

## SINCE LAST TIME

- German regional public-service broadcaster WDR called for greater transparency in national public-service broadcaster ARD's acquisition of sports rights. The demand was one of a number of recommendations made in a report by WDR's broadcasting council, which called for ARD to increase the range of sports programming it provides and justify its levels of investment in football rights.
- The Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, France's media regulator, started a consultation into the impact of recently-introduced rules regarding sports highlights rights deals. Regulations implemented in January limited the length of rights deals and the number of highlights packages available through a sales process.

- French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus is preparing a complaint to the country's Tribunal de Commerce business court about rival pay-television broadcaster beIN Sport. Canal Plus will accuse Al Jazeera-owned beIN Sport of unfair competition practices.

## FOOTBALL

- European football's governing body Uefa distributed €904.6m (\$1.2bn) to teams competing in the Champions League last season. Bayern Munich, who defeated Borussia Dortmund in the final, earned €55m. This consisted of €35.9m in participation, match and performance bonuses and €19.1m from the television market pool. Italian Serie A champions Juventus earned more than Bayern and Dortmund, despite being knocked out by Bayern

# SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 11 to July 24

## MEDIA RIGHTS 2

### Athletics, badminton, basketball, boxing, cycling, horse racing and more

- **Athletics:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC signed a six-year extension to its rights deal with British Athletics, to run from 2014-15 until 2019-20. The deal is worth a total of £25m (€29m/\$38m) and includes events such as the Anniversary Games and the British Championships plus two International Association of Athletics Federations Diamond League meetings per season.
- **Badminton:** Pan-Asian pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN Star Sports acquired rights for the Indian Badminton League, which will take place from August 14-31 in six cities across the country.
- **Basketball:** Spanish pay-television operator Canal Plus agreed an extension to its deal with North American league the NBA. Coverage of the league will be available online and on-demand in Spain via mobile devices through Yomvi, Canal Plus's online service, and NBA League Pass International, the league's digital subscription service (page 7).
- **Basketball:** Euroleague Basketball, which operates the sport's European club competition, agreed a two-year extension, from 2016-17 to 2017-18, to its rights deal with the Asset Ogilvy agency in Greece and Cyprus (page 2).
- **Boxing:** US pay-television broadcaster beIN Sport acquired rights to the Super 4 super middleweight bout between Edwin Rodriguez and Denis Grachev in Monaco on July 13. The deal included coverage of the light welterweight clash between Khabib Allakhverdiev and Souleymane M'baye on the undercard.
- **Commonwealth Games:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky acquired rights in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands for the 2014 event in Glasgow, Scotland. Sky will provide live coverage of the Games as well as highlights and daily news on pay-television, free-to-air television and digital platforms. Sky will produce a separate daily highlights programme focusing on competitors from the Pacific Islands.
- **Cycling:** Amaury Sports Organisation, which organises the Tour de France and other events, renewed a deal to distribute the international broadcast rights for the Tour Down Under in Australia. The deal will run for the next three editions of the race, from 2014 to 2016. ASO has been a partner of the curtain-raising event on the International Cycling Union's World Tour series for the past two editions. The next event runs from January 19-26 in Adelaide and regional South Australia.
- **Cycling:** Australian public-service broadcaster SBS acquired exclusive rights for the Tour de France in a 10-year deal, from 2014 until 2023. The deal was agreed with Amaury Sport Organisation.
- **Horse Racing:** UK commercial broadcaster Channel 4 sealed a multi-year deal to broadcast Europe's premier flat horse racing event, the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. The length of the deal was not disclosed.

in the quarter-finals. Juventus earned €65.3m, with €44.8m from the market pool. Income from the market pool is divided according to the value of the broadcast deals in each market. Uefa distributed also €209m to teams playing in the Europa League. English Premier League club Chelsea, who beat Portuguese club Benfica in the final, earned €10.7m, with €3.7m of this coming from the market pool. Turkish Super Lig club Fenerbahçe earned the most, €11.2m. Fenerbahçe exited the competition at the semi-final stage but was aided by €6.6m from the market pool. Italian Serie A club Lazio generated €9.6m from its run to the quarter-finals, with €6m coming from the market pool.

- The English Premier League appointed corporate investigations and brand protection firm ID Inquiries to carry out investigations into unauthorised and illegal use of foreign satellite systems in the UK. The league said that the company was appointed following a competitive tender process. The appointment was confirmed after the league secured a judgment in the UK High Court requiring six internet service providers in the country to block access to illegal live streaming website FirstRow Sports (page 5).
- Lech Poznań struck a partnership with telecommunications company Inea to launch a television channel dedicated to the Polish Ekstraklasa club. LechTV will launch in the next three months as a digital channel in Inea's standard cable television package.

## MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- Fox Sports 1, the new national pay-television sports channel that will be launched by US network Fox on August 17, will look for advertising agency partners from later this year, according to Fox Sports Media Group head of marketing Robert Gottlieb. Gottlieb said that Fox Sports 1 had not decided whether to launch a formal review of agencies or work on an ad-hoc basis, but added that current agency partner Pereira & O'Dell would "definitely be part of that conversation."
- US pay-television sports broadcaster Universal Sports Network, which is operated by media company NBCUniversal, agreed a multi-year carriage deal with cable-television operator Time Warner Cable. The operator will carry the channel on its Sports Pass and has also secured TV Everywhere and video-on-demand rights plus carriage of Universal Sports Max, a secondary broadband channel.
- US pay-television broadcaster the Tennis Channel requested a new court hearing of its claim that pay-television provider Comcast unfairly placed the channel in a lower carriage tier. In May, a DC Circuit court overturned a ruling by the US Federal Communications Commission that the channel should be placed on the same tier as the Golf Channel and NBC Sports Network pay-television channels.

# SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 11 to July 24

## MEDIA RIGHTS 3

### MMA, motorsport, Olympics, parasport, rugby union, sailing and more

- **Mixed Martial Arts:** Pay-television sports broadcaster Setanta Sports Eurasia agreed a rights deal with the Ultimate Fighting Championship. Setanta Sports Eurasia, which is available in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan will broadcast 30 events and up to 400 fights per year for the next three years, from 2013-14 to 2015-16.
- **Motorsport:** NBC Sports Group, operated by US media company NBCUniversal, agreed a 10-year rights deal, from 2015 to 2024, with the Nascar series. The broadcaster secured exclusive rights to the final 20 Sprint Cup Series races every year, as well as the final 19 events from the second-tier Nationwide Series plus some Nascar regional and touring series events and other live content. The deal, which is worth a total of at least \$4bn (£3bn), includes Spanish as well as English-language rights, certain video-on-demand rights and exclusive TV Everywhere rights.
- **Olympic Games:** Italian state broadcaster Rai agreed a sublicensing deal with pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia. Rai acquired highlights rights for the 2014 winter Olympics in Sochi and exclusive rights for the 2016 summer Games in Rio. Rai paid €65m (\$84.5m) (page 3).
- **Parasport:** Brazilian pay-television channel SporTV agreed a deal with the Brazilian Paralympic Committee to broadcast the 2013 International Paralympic Committee Athletics World Championships from July 19-28 in Lyon, France. The SporTV 3 channel will show two hours of live coverage per day from the event. Coverage will also be provided on the Brazilian committee's official website.
- **Rugby Union:** East African pay-television provider Zuku agreed an exclusive rights deal with the Kenya Rugby Union for all matches organised by the governing body. Zuku will produce and show all of the action for the next five seasons, from 2013-14 to 2017-18. The agreement is worth K250m (€2.2m/\$2.9m). Zuku will provide coverage of several Africa-based events such as the Safaricom Sevens, Bamburi Rugby Super Series, Elgon Cup, Kenya Cup, Eric Shirley Shield, International Mombasa Sevens and National Sevens Circuit.
- **Rugby Union:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights for the Wales national team's autumn international matches in an agreement with the Welsh Rugby Union. The deal, which will run until 2018, also covers home internationals ahead of summer tours, but does not include warm-up matches for the 2015 Rugby World Cup.
- **Sailing:** Production company Sunset+Vine was appointed as the host broadcaster and rights distribution partner for the 2014-15 Volvo Ocean Race. Sunset+Vine will provide live coverage of the in-port series and leg starts, and will distribute all race programming and news footage internationally.
- **US College Sport:** The IMG agency's college sports division, IMG College, agreed a 12-year multimedia and commercial rights partnership with West Virginia University in the US, from 2013-14 to 2024-25. The deal is worth a total of more than \$80m (€61.5m) and includes revenue-sharing opportunities. The partnership includes management of local game broadcasts and coaches' shows. IMG and West Virginia Media Holdings will co-produce programming.
- **US College Sport:** US regional pay-television channel Yes Network agreed a deal with Fox Sports Media Group, a division of the Fox network, for live rights to Atlantic Coast Conference basketball and American football games, along with Big East Conference basketball games. Yes will show up to 10 ACC American football games and up to 23 men's ACC basketball games, as well as selected women's basketball and Olympic sports events. Yes will show up to 10 Big East basketball games. The deal will commence later this year.
- US media company 2080 Media, which operates as PlayOn! Sports, said that it had secured \$26m (€20m) in funding to support the launch of the NFHS Network in mid-August. The channel, created in partnership with the National Federation of State High School Associations, will be dedicated to high school sports and will be available in the US across television, online and mobile devices.
- Celebrity video website producer Young Hollywood will launch an online channel dedicated to the 2014 Fifa World Cup. Established in association with the Momentum Entertainment Group, part of marketing company Momentum Worldwide, the channel will be based in Rio de Janeiro and will focus on celebrity news related to the national team football tournament.
- Telecommunications company Bell added its pay-television channel Sportsnet to the Bell Mobile TV service in Canada. Sportsnet launched on Bell Mobile TV as a standalone option or as an add-on to existing subscribers. Sportsnet One is available on the mobile service nationally. Local services Sportsnet East, Sportsnet Ontario, Sportsnet West and Sportsnet Pacific are also available.
- US sports broadcaster ESPN confirmed it would launch SEC Network, a new pay-television sports channel dedicated to college sports' Southeastern Conference, on August 21 2014.
- Online sports broadcaster Laola1.tv was appointed to produce coverage of all football matches on behalf of telco Deutsche Telekom for club channels of numerous teams in the German Bundesliga 1 and 2. Laola1.tv, working alongside sister company Unas Media Productions, a streaming specialist, will produce coverage from the start of the 2013-14 season for clubs including Hamburg, Hannover 96, Kaiserslautern and Borussia



## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 11 to July 24

Dortmund. The coverage will include full, delayed coverage of matches as well as highlights for television, online, tablet and smartphone platforms.

Meanwhile, the media authority of North Rhine-Westphalia began an investigation into BVB Total after the online channel of Borussia Dortmund streamed live coverage of a friendly game against Swiss club Basel on July 10. If the regulator decides that the streaming constituted a broadcast, Dortmund would have to apply for a broadcasting licence.

- The Unidad Editorial media company and the Mediapro agency, which jointly own Marca TV, said that they would close the Spanish digital-terrestrial sports channel on July 31. Mediapro met Marca TV staff to confirm the closure, with 47 of the 63 workers set to be relocated within the agency.
- Eurosport will make its pan-European sports channel available via the Xbox Live online service on Microsoft's Xbox 360 games console. The Eurosport Player service on Xbox 360 will deliver Eurosport's live and on-demand sports content to 20 European markets in 13 different languages. The service will also be launched in Poland, the Netherlands and Sweden in the coming weeks, but will not be available in France.
- Pay-television sports broadcaster SuperSport, which operates in sub-Saharan Africa, launched three new television channels on July 23. SuperSport SHD will focus on motor sports, boxing, swimming and athletics, and will also act as an overflow channel. SuperSport 6HD will complement existing football channels SS3HD and SS4HD by streaming international football leagues. SuperSport 8 will cater for locally produced and sourced content.

### MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- German free-to-air television channel Sat.1 Gold said it would seek to enhance its tennis rights portfolio following the success of Sabine Lisicki, who reached the final of the women's singles tournament at the 2013 Wimbledon championships.

- The Tunisian Football Federation launched a sales process for domestic rights to all matches organised by the national governing body. The rights cover three seasons, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. Bids for the rights, which cover television, internet and mobile platforms, must be submitted by August 2.
- Tennis Australia vice-president Harold Mitchell defended the national governing body's decision to sell the next cycle of domestic media rights for the Australian Open to commercial broadcaster Seven without a tender.

### ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- Qatari pay-television broadcaster Al Jazeera is understood to be unlikely to acquire Spanish agency Mediapro, contrary to media reports this week. Al Jazeera is thought to be in talks to buy Mediapro's football pay-television channel Gol T.
- The Swiss Competition Commission regulator rejected a request from a group of cable television operators for provisional measures to be taken against telecommunications company Swisscom, which is accused of having established a monopoly by strengthening its position in the sports-rights market.
- Bob Bowlsby, commissioner of the Big 12 college sports conference in the US, said that big screens at the competition's stadia will be able to show action from other games, in response to "declining attendance across the country as people stay home to watch more games on television rather than a single contest in person." Bowlsby said that the screens would show highlights of other games as well as some action in real time during broadcast timeouts.

### INDUSTRY MOVES

- Tom Harrison will take charge of the IMG Media agency's media distribution business in the UK and Ireland as senior vice-president and head of sales, after six years working for the agency in Asia. ■ The Pakistan Cricket Board enlisted former International Cricket Council chairman Ehsan Mani to help boost its television revenues over the next five years, from 2013-14 to 2017-18.

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