

## FOOTBALL ITALY

# Infront profits could be hit by Juve rebellion as IMG waits to pounce

By Frank Dunne

The Infront Sports & Media agency is facing a fight to hang on to one of its – and sports broadcasting's – most lucrative deals: media adviser to Italy's Serie A.

The IMG Media and Sportfive agencies are gearing up to challenge Infront for the contract, in what looks set to be a re-run of the three-way battle that took place the first time it was put out to tender in 2008.

In the six-year deal, which runs from season 2010-11 to 2015-16, Infront guarantees the league €900m (\$1.1bn) per season from media-rights income. It has helped the league bring in close to €1bn per season in the current three-year cycle, 2012-13 to 2014-15, triggering a revenue-sharing agreement which earns Infront about €35m per season. This is thought to be equal to about half the company's ebitda.

Because the rights to Serie A were sold

first for two-years, 2010-11 to 2011-12, then for three years, 2012-13 to 2014-15, the league left itself with a conundrum: how can an adviser with one year left on its deal advise on the next three-year broadcast cycle?

The 20 top-flight clubs were due to discuss the matter today in a league assembly. The fear that the contract might be extended without being put out to market led Italy's biggest club, Juventus, and six other clubs – Inter Milan, Roma, Fiorentina, Sassuolo, Verona, and Sampdoria – to write to the league last week, making four demands. These were:

- to ask Serie A's two live rights-holders, Sky Italia and Mediaset, to discuss their future bidding intentions at a league assembly
- to commission an independent

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## OLYMPIC GAMES

# Dentsu deal helps push up Asia value

By Dan Horlock

Dentsu's deal last month with the International Olympic Committee for the rights to the 2014 and 2016 Olympic Games in 17 Asian territories pushed the IOC's revenues for the region up by nearly one third on the last rights cycle.

Dentsu is understood to have paid about \$64m (€48m) for the rights. This brought the IOC revenue for the 2014-16 Games in Asia to about \$638m at current

exchange rates, up 28 per cent from the \$500m it earned for the 2010-2012 Games (see table, page 5).

The deal is Dentsu's second for the 2014-16 Olympics, following its deal in July for the rights in five countries in Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – worth in excess of \$2m.

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## Uefa starts with small increase in Middle East

Uefa has achieved a small increase in the value of the rights to the Champions League and Europa League in its renewal with Al Jazeera for the Middle East and North Africa.

The new deal, covering the seasons 2015-16 to 2017-18, is thought to be worth about \$90m (€68m) per season, compared to the \$85m per season Al Jazeera pays in the current three-year deal.

Uefa is thought to be happy with the outcome in a market which has become increasingly difficult. Al Jazeera's main rival, the Abu Dhabi Media Company, now rarely ever competes head-to-head for top rights with Al Jazeera. The third major pay-television player in the region, OSN, does not have the resources (or the state funding) to compete with the big two for premium properties.

A small increase compares favourably with a drop of over \$10m per season, from \$117m per season to about \$106m, for the recent Premier League deal with the MP & Silva agency.

Given the difficult nature of the market, many observers were surprised that Uefa chose to start its sales process for the coming rights cycle in the Middle East. It tends to start in markets guaranteed to deliver big increases, to set a high psychological benchmark for subsequent negotiations. However, as one rights expert pointed out this week, a small increase in a market where everyone is expecting a drop can send an equally positive message.

All Champions League and Europa League deals are negotiated on behalf of Uefa by the Team Marketing agency. ■

## PCB does short-term deals

The Pakistan Cricket Board last week generated a total of about \$8m (€6m) for two series that it will play in the United Arab Emirates later this year.

Pan-Asia pay-television broadcaster Taj Television acquired the rights to the Pakistan v South Africa series in a deal worth about \$4.5m. The series, which will take place in October and November, comprises two Test matches, five One Day Internationals and two Twenty20 games.

The second series, against Sri Lanka, was acquired by Pakistani pay-television broadcaster Geo Super in a deal worth about \$3.5m. The series comprises three Tests, five ODIs and two T20s. The series will take place in December and January. Geo will also broadcast the one-off T20 match between Pakistan and Afghanistan on December 8.

The PCB's previous global rights deal with Taj was worth \$125m in rights fees and \$16m in production costs over four seasons, from 2009-10 to 2012-13.

The board will return to the market next year to sell its rights in a long-term deal after it has elected a new chairman. The interim chairman Najam Sethi, who works for Geo, oversaw the agreements. His defence against claims of a conflict of interest was that the sales process was monitored by audit firm Ernst & Young.

Pakistan has been forced to play its home matches abroad due to security concerns in the country following an armed attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in 2009. Since then, the majority of the country's home matches have been played in the United Arab Emirates. ■

## Silva strikes digital compromise

The MP & Silva agency is understood to have struck a compromise with the Perform Group and Rightster to resolve the problem of having sold the same rights to both digital specialists.

The agency has split the rights from its portfolio so that Perform will handle the betting rights and Rightster the internet clips rights for platforms like YouTube.

The arrangement will remain in place for two more football seasons, until the end of the 2014-15 season, when many of the agency's rights deals expire.

In July 2012, MP & Silva created a joint venture with Rightster. The venture was launched on the back of Rightster's acquisition of the digital rights from the agency's portfolio, including the rights to Italy's Serie A and France's Ligue 1 (*TV Sports Markets* 16:14). In May this year, it agreed a deal for the same rights with Perform (*TV Sports Markets* 17:8).

The agency is thought to have opted for Rightster because it was unhappy with the way Perform had been exploiting its rights in an earlier deal. It then became unhappy with a number of aspects of the Rightster deal. ■

## Chivas to lose as Time Warner bails

North American Major League Soccer club Chivas USA stands to lose about \$650,000 (€492,000) this season from its failure to agree a regional broadcast deal which will cover its production costs.

The Los Angeles based club had been in talks with pay-television operator Time Warner Cable at the start of the year but it is understood that the two sides did not come close to an agreement. TWC owns the regional rights to two other MLS teams, the Los Angeles Galaxy and FC Dallas.

Last month, the club agreed two regional deals, but with no rights fee, for seven of the last nine Chivas USA matches this season. The club agreed the deals primarily because it needed exposure for its sponsors.

The club's final matches of the 2013 season will be on regional broadcasters KDOC and MundoFOX22 KWHY-TV, for English and Spanish-language rights respectively. The MLS regular season runs from March to October.

Last season, Chivas USA's regional rights were owned by Fox Sports West, a division of the Fox network. Fox did not renew its agreement as the broadcaster switched its focus from regional deals to the national battle with rival ESPN. ■

## FOOTBALL ITALY

# IMG Media and Sportfive gear up to take on Infront

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benchmarking report on the value of the media rights of other European leagues

- to hold a competitive tender for the adviser role
- to require the adviser to produce a strategic action plan.

The clubs are reported to believe that the €35m per season which Infront earns from Serie A is too high a reward for the task it carries out, in a market with only two realistic buyers of live rights.

The leaking of the clubs' letter to the Italian press spurred the IMG Media agency to write to the league this week putting itself forward for the adviser role, once Infront's contract has expired.

In the IMG letter, extracts of which were published in the *Corriere della Sera* newspaper two days before the assembly, the agency's head of worldwide sales and acquisitions, Ioris Francini, revealed that IMG had offered to guarantee €860m per season in 2008 when the league put the adviser contract out to tender.

Francini told the league that since IMG last bid it had "reinforced its position as the market leader in sports marketing" and was prepared to provide a "specialist and high quality service with a very competitive remuneration structure." He said that as the leading supplier of sports programming into Italy, IMG had "excellent relationships with all broadcasters" in the country.

Sportfive – the third shortlisted agency last time – is following developments closely and will almost certainly throw its hat into the ring if the contract goes out to tender.

Infront would, almost certainly, favour an automatic renewal. It has support from leading club AC Milan and enjoys close relationships with Lazio, Genoa and Cagliari. The agency produces and distributes Milan's club television channel in Italy. It also has agreements to handle

## Advisers, consultants, experts

Italy's Serie A is the only major football league which requires an external adviser to guarantee its domestic media-rights income.

England's Premier League uses two external consultants – David Kogan of Wasserman Media Group and Nick West of law firm DLA Piper. Until about 2006, it used a third adviser, William Field from the Spectrum consultancy.

The league pays either a flat fee or a monthly retainer. League chief executive Richard Scudamore is said to be averse to performance-related payments. This has roots in the Premier League's short-lived employment of former BSkyB executives Sam Chisholm and David Chance as media-rights advisers for the 2001-02 to 2003-04 deal. After clubs objected to the arrangement, the league had to buy the pair out of their deals for £11m (€13m/\$17m).

The French football league, the Ligue de Football Professionnel, handles its domestic rights sales largely in-house.

They use an external consultancy on auction structures. In the last two cycles, former league marketing and media director Stéphane Dor and director of development Jean-Guillaume Welgryn were assisted by Philippe Février, a mathematician and renowned expert in auction theory.

The domestic rights sales for the German Bundesliga are handled in-house by the league's commercial arm, DFL Sports Enterprises. Strategy and negotiations are handled largely by managing director Jörg Daubitzer and the league chief executive Christian Seifert.

The Spanish league, the Liga de Fútbol Profesional, does not sell media rights centrally; they are sold by the individual clubs. However, it has for many years been advised on media-rights issues by former Canal Plus director Melcior Soler.

The role has recently taken on greater significance, as the league is hoping to adopt a form of collective selling from the 2015-16 season.

the marketing and advertising rights of the four clubs. These deals are said to be very lucrative for the clubs. However, it has a similar deal with Sampdoria which has not prevented the Genoa club from supporting Juve's stance.

Industry insiders close to Infront claim that the real issue at stake is not television rights, nor Infront's performance, but political power within the league. They point out that the big clubs calling for change – Juve, Inter and Roma – are those which were excluded from the league's ruling council in a vote in January.

In the build-up to the assembly, there was an unprecedented level of media scrutiny – some of it based on inaccurate information – of the league's two main rights partners: Infront, and the MP & Silva agency, which sells the global media rights to Serie A (see Sports Clips).

*Corriere della Sera* described Infront and MP & Silva this week as "the team which earns most from Serie A." The newspaper is owned by RCS Media Group, in which Fiat motors are the largest single shareholder, with 20.1 per

cent. Juventus's owners, the Agnelli family, are the largest single shareholder in Fiat. The owners of Fiorentina, the Della Valle family, also have a stake in RCS Media Group.

## Market forces

Given the amounts of money at stake and the changes which have taken place in the market since 2008, it would arguably be negligent of the clubs not to open up the advisory role to competing bids, regardless of Infront's performance.

Many independent rights-experts believe that Infront has done a good job for the league, putting its media-rights sales on a professional footing, with workable timescales, after years of chaos and last-minute deals which had become the norm under the old system of individual selling.

It is an unusually profitable deal for an adviser, because no other league adviser runs such a financial risk (see panel). There is some debate about the true level of the risk, however. In 2008, €900m per season seemed bullish, when set against

what was reported to have been the income of the clubs under individual selling – about €750m per season. However, that figure was an underestimate. Several clubs under-declared their media-rights income to reduce their solidarity payments.

The clubs themselves, in any case, insisted on the guarantee model and unanimously approved the revenue-sharing terms.

[www. To see how Infront beat IMG and Sportfive last time visit our website.](#) ■

## FOOTBALL NORWAY

# Small increase for Uefa as SBS and MTG keep powder dry

By Robin Jellis

The CAA Eleven agency got an increase of 25 per cent in the value of its European Championship rights in Norway in a deal at the end of July.

Public-service broadcaster NRK and commercial broadcaster TV2 are paying about €15m (\$20m) for all matches at Euro 2016. NRK, TV2 and pay-television broadcaster C More Entertainment together paid about €12m for Euro 2012.

A fee increase was expected due to the increase in the number of matches, from 31 at Euro 2012 to 51 at Euro 2016. But the level of uplift is modest.

CAA Eleven is said to have sought a similar fee per match as for Euro 2012 – about €390,000, for a total of about €20m. But NRK and TV2 faced little competition. Pan-regional broadcasters SBS Discovery Media and Modern Times Group are not thought to have bid.

NRK and TV2 are yet to decide on the match broadcast split. A decision will be made once the tournament draw takes place in December 2015.

NRK and TV2 were beaten by SBS to the rights for the Norway national team's Euro 2016 and World Cup 2018 qualifiers in a deal earlier in July (*TV Sports Markets* 17:14).

For Euro 2012, TV2 is thought to have paid about 50 per cent of the fee, or around €6m. It showed 11 matches,

including the final. NRK showed 10 matches and is thought to have paid about €3.5m. C More showed 10 group-stage matches on its Canal 9 channel and paid the remaining 20 per cent, about €2.5m.

NRK and TV2 got the Euro 2012 rights in a sublicensing deal from C More's owner Bonnier, Swedish public-service broadcaster SVT and Norwegian telco Telenor. Bonnier, SVT and Telenor had acquired the pan-Scandinavian rights from Uefa.

Norway is the first country in the Nordics to agree a deal for Euro 2016. The public-service broadcaster and leading commercial broadcaster in Sweden and Denmark are considered favourites to secure the rights in those territories. They are: SVT and commercial broadcaster TV4 in Sweden, and public-service broadcaster DR and commercial broadcaster TV2 in Denmark. ■

## SIX NATIONS

# Discovery looks to rugby to drive Italian expansion

By Frank Dunne

The expansionist global channel operator Discovery Communications showed its hand in Italy this week with a surprise swoop for the rights to rugby's Six Nations tournament.

Discovery is thought to be paying about €2.5m (\$3.3m) per season for the rights over four seasons, from 2014 to 2017. It is the company's first sports-rights deal in Italy.

The broadcaster outbid incumbent rights-holder, pay-television operator Sky Italia. Sky is understood to have bid less than €2m per season. It paid €3.25m per season in its four-year deal from 2010 to 2013.

Discovery will also have to cover productions costs of Italy's home matches, at up to €50,000 per match, plus the costs of creating a studio operation from scratch.

The Six Nations Committee is understood to view the deal as the best possible combination of exposure

and income in the current Italian marketplace.

Where a pay-television broadcaster is offering a premium for exclusivity, rights-holders will often sacrifice a wide audience for the big rights fee. But Sky was offering less than last time.

For Sky, the tournament has had a prestige value but the broadcaster felt that it was overpaying given the property's limited value as a driver of subscriptions. It is also faced with a scheduling headache at weekends from 2014 onwards, when it adds live coverage of motorcycling's MotoGP to that of Formula 1 motor racing, on top of its staple diet of live Serie A and Serie B football.

Previous Six Nations broadcasters, state broadcaster Rai and commercial channel La7, were not interested. Mediaset, the commercial and pay-television operator, has recently acquired the rights to the Pro12 league (formerly the Celtic League) which it will show free-to-air on its Italia 2 channel. It was not prepared to invest the sum necessary to land the Six Nations.

The Six Nations Committee, which is advised on its media-rights deals by consultants Bridge Television, is said to have been won over by an aggressive presentation by Discovery about its plans for growth in Italy, and its commitment to extensive marketing of the tournament, including a large volume of support programming.

In January, Discovery expanded its footprint in Italy when it bought out channel operator Switchover Media, which operated three free-to-air channels and one pay-television channel. The deal means that Discovery now operates six free-to-air channels and six pay-television channels. It claims that this put it behind Rai and Mediaset and ahead of Sky in terms of audience share in Italy.

The DMAX general entertainment channel, on which the Six Nations will be shown, is carried free on digital-terrestrial platforms. It has a share of less than two per cent but is one of Italy's fastest-growing channels in terms of audience.

The Italy deals follow two major expansion deals late last year. In

December, Discovery acquired a 20-per cent stake in pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport from owners the TF1 group for €170m, and acquired the SBS Nordic northern European media operations of the ProSiebenSat.1 group for \$1.7bn. ■

## OLYMPIC GAMES

# Dentsu deal helps IOC to big overall increase in Asia

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The new Dentsu deal represents a massive increase on the value of the same territories for the 2010-2012 Olympics, though a like-for-like comparison is not possible because of the way the territories have been split.

For 2010-12, the IOC brought in \$38m for the 17 territories plus the Indian subcontinent through five separate deals. These were: two pan-regional deals, one with the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union and one with pan-Asia sports pay-television broadcaster ESPN Star Sports (ESS), and individual deals in Chinese

Taipei, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

The ABU paid \$10m for the free-to-air pan-regional rights. ESS paid \$5m for the pan-regional pay-television rights. Both deals included the Indian subcontinent. In Hong Kong, pay-television broadcaster i-Cable paid \$15m. In Chinese Taipei, digital media content distributor Elta paid \$6m. In the Philippines, pay-television broadcaster Solar paid \$2m.

For the same markets in 2014-16, the IOC is earning \$80m. This is made up of Dentsu's \$64m, plus pan-regional sports broadcaster Star's \$16m fee for the Indian subcontinent rights (*TV Sports Markets* 17:15).

The 17 territories in the Dentsu deal are: Afghanistan, Brunei, Cambodia, Chinese Taipei, East Timor, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The deal covers all languages and media platforms, including free-to-air television, pay-television, internet and mobile. Dentsu has an obligation to ensure that at least 200 hours of coverage of the 2016 Olympics is made available on free-to-air television. The IOC will approve all sublicensing deals that the agency agrees.

(€380,000) per year for the rights for the five years from 2013-14 to 2017-18, in a deal agreed in July.

In recent weeks, Zuku agreed a deal with Kenya's volleyball federation, for all its properties including club and national team volleyball, also for 2013-14 to 2017-18. It has also agreed a deal with the Kenyan university basketball league.

Zuku is the only other major pay-television operator in East Africa alongside DSTV, SuperSport's parent company. It is a much smaller business than DSTV, having launched only three years ago and operating in a handful of territories, including Kenya and Uganda. DSTV is available in all 47 sub-Saharan Africa territories and has nearly 7m subscribers.

"I believe there is a big future for local sport in sub-Saharan Africa, and particularly in East Africa," Gary Rathbone, Zuku's head of sport, told

Olympic Games Asian rights values 2010-2016, (\$m)			
Territory	2014-2016	2010-2012	Increase (%)
Japan <sup>1</sup>	362	327	11
China	160	100	60
Pan-Asia-Pacific	80	38	111
South Korea	33.5	33.5	0
Pan-Asia Central	2	n/a	n/a

Source: TV Sports Markets Footnote: <sup>1</sup>The deals were originally agreed in the local currency at ¥36bn for 2014-16 and ¥32.5bn for 2010-2012.

## Other Asian deals

The IOC's most lucrative market in Asia for the 2014-2016 Games is Japan, worth ¥36bn (€275m/\$362m) in a deal with the Japan Consortium. This was up 11 per cent, from ¥32.5bn, on 2010-12.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV paid \$160m for the 2014-16 Games, up 60 per cent from the \$100m it paid for the 2010-12 Games.

The IOC did a four-Games deal in South Korea, from 2010 to 2016, worth about \$67m with media group SBS. The committee has already secured a 139-per cent increase on this deal at \$160m for four Games, from 2018 to 2024, with SBS.

[www. For a comparison of Asian rights values across the last three Olympic rights cycles visit our website.](#) ■

## TV AFRICA

# Zuku seeks space alongside SuperSport

By Kevin McCullagh

Zuku TV, the sub-Saharan Africa pay-television operator, is building a sports service around under-developed local leagues, rather than taking on pan-regional heavyweight SuperSport for major domestic and international sports properties.

Zuku has acquired several properties in the last three months under the new strategy. Its flagship content will be Kenyan club and national team rugby union. Kenya is the operator's biggest market. Zuku is paying the Kenyan Rugby Union about \$500,000

*TV Sports Markets.* Rathbone is a former SuperSport executive who was hired by Zuku this summer to lead its sports coverage expansion.

Rathbone said there was room for growth in East Africa for both Zuku and SuperSport, and Zuku would not be targeting SuperSport's top-end sports rights, which include the top African and European football leagues.

"We're not trying to take content away from SuperSport. We see the market as being completely underdeveloped. I think there's about a million subs to play for [in East Africa], and we're both playing in about a fifth of that."

SuperSport and Zuku are not yet seeing eye-to-eye, however. SuperSport in July pressured Kenyan Premier League football team the AFC Leopards into cancelling a rights deal with Zuku. SuperSport says the deal breached its agreement for KPL domestic rights. Zuku

deny this, arguing their deal was for club channel-style content not covered by the KPL deal, such as interviews with the Leopards' players and manager.

Rathbone said Zuku's planned Leopards programming could have benefited SuperSport by raising the profile of the team and league. "They need to change their whole mindset because we could end up in a race to the bottom, with two trying to pull each other down, and then we get nowhere," he said.

SuperSport told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "We have always welcomed competition as that affords consumers more choice. Our objectives remain to grow sport in sub-Saharan Africa, including East Africa, and provide our subscribers with quality content. We do so in accordance with international best practice."

### Learning from the past

Zuku's modest ambitions are a result of both budget limitations and a consideration of the recent history of the sub-Saharan pay-television market. There have been two high-profile flops in the last five years when new players tried to take on SuperSport by buying the best sports content.

Pan-regional operator GTV went bust in 2009, and Nigerian broadcaster HiTV pulled out of sports broadcasting in 2010, and later shut down in Nigeria, after struggling to pay fees for big European football rights deals.

### Solid foundations

Zuku believes Kenyan rugby has potential as a pay-television product because, unlike many other local sports in East Africa, it is well-organised and already has a big following.

Kenyan rugby is far ahead of where the local football league was when SuperSport first began investing in it five years ago, Rathbone said. He managed SuperSport's coverage of the KPL while at the company. The SuperSport investment, via media-rights fees, helped the league improve its administration, increase crowds and reduce match fixing.

Kenyan rugby already attracts strong live attendances and sponsorship

revenue. Its fanbase is also wealthy, as the roots of the local game are in Kenya's private schools. Interest in rugby has also been lifted by the strong national rugby sevens team. Kenya made it to the semi-finals of the 2013 Rugby World Cup Sevens, the sport's top national team tournament.

### Zuku and Setanta

Zuku's sports output before the latest deals in Kenya was completely managed by Setanta Africa, the African arm of the Ireland-based international sports broadcaster. Setanta acquires sport for Zuku's sports channel, Zuku Sport.

Setanta will continue in its role, but Zuku plans to acquire and produce an increasing amount of programming for Zuku Sport.

The channel's content currently includes French Ligue 1 and Russian Premier League football, content from the Manchester United club channel MUTV, IAAF athletics including the Diamond League, and NFL American football.

Zuku's platform carries five sports channels – the standard and high definition versions of Zuku Sport, plus Setanta Africa, Setanta Action and Eurosport News.

SuperSport was the previous rights-holder of Kenyan rugby under a deal agreed by Rathbone while he worked at the broadcaster. SuperSport got the rights for free in return for producing the matches.

For the new cycle, the Kenyan Rugby Union approached SuperSport and asked for a rights fee. The broadcaster was not prepared to pay, which opened the door for Zuku. Rathbone was not involved in Zuku's deal. He was hired by the broadcaster after it was agreed.

There is strong interest in East Africa in several sports outside football, which is somewhat unusual for the region, Rathbone said. Football is utterly dominant in many other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Rugby, motorsport, athletics, basketball and hockey have big followings in East Africa, and heavy coverage in the local media.

### Free-to-air challenge

Free-to-air broadcasters pose two challenges for Zuku. First, the five strong free-to-air broadcasters in Kenya make it more difficult to convince consumers of the benefits of paying for television. Second, some free-to-air broadcasters in sub-Saharan Africa have broadcast local sport without acquiring the rights. They earn advertising money from the broadcasts, but do not pay anything back to the sports, Rathbone said.

[www.ksafrica.com](#) For the full interview with Gary Rathbone visit our website. ■

### TV EUROPE

## Fox bags NFL but rules out new US sports channel

By Robin Jellis

Fox International Channels acquired NFL American football rights in 42 European territories last week as part of its ongoing sports expansion in the region, Diego Londoño, the company's chief operating officer in Europe and Africa, told *TV Sports Markets*.

FIC, the international channel operator owned by Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox, plans to show coverage on existing or yet-to-be-launched Fox Sports channels, or on other Fox channels, such as its Fox-branded general entertainment channel.

The broadcaster has ruled out launching a North American sports channel, along the lines of the now-defunct ESPN America.

"Our new focus is looking to launch sports channels in Europe," Londoño said. "We believed that having a US sports product was an important part of the content we wanted to put together. We understood from our research that the NFL is one of the most appreciated properties in Europe.

"The territories covered by the deal are all territories that Fox operates in. We may not have a Fox Sports channel, but we have a channel, which means we have the capability of broadcasting these rights."

Londoño added: "Our content and our

strategy for Fox Sports across all of our operations is not to launch a US or American sports channel. It hasn't been our strategy in Asia, and it's not our tactic in Europe."

FIC has been ramping up its sports coverage in Europe, buying content and launching Fox Sports-branded channels in new markets. Fox Sports is now in four European territories – the Netherlands, Italy, Turkey and Cyprus. Londoño said more launches were planned.

Under the NFL deal, FIC has rights to broadcast coverage in English of one game per match window. It will show the Sunday Night Football, Monday Night Football and Thursday Night Football matches, all three US Thanksgiving Day games, and all post-season games, including the Super Bowl. The rights cover the 2013 and 2014 seasons. The deal was agreed directly with the NFL.

### Value

One expert in US sports put the value of the rights at about \$1.5m (€1.1m) per year. FIC declined to comment on the value of the deal.

The NFL rights would have been attractive to Fox for several reasons. They provide high quality, live programming and the time difference with the US means that the NFL is not competing in the same window as live European sports. The flip side of this is that NFL matches take place late at night, European time.

One industry expert said the rights may make FIC channels attractive to pay-television platforms looking to replace ESPN America. "There is still a gap in the market following the departure of ESPN America, and they were doing quite well in terms of revenue. Cable companies didn't like losing ESPN and [archive channel] ESPN Classic," he said.

### Local language

FIC is understood to be in talks to acquire local-language NFL rights in certain European territories. These are sold by the IMG Media agency under a three-year deal with the NFL, from 2012 to 2014. IMG's deal covers all of Europe except the UK and Scandinavia, plus selected territories in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean.

## C4 deal shows UK is ear-marked for growth by NFL

American football's National Football League said this week that its new deal with UK commercial broadcaster Channel Four was part of a strategy to develop the sport in the UK.

Channel Four's deal includes non-exclusive rights for live matches, including the Super Bowl, International Series matches in London, and the Sunday Night Football match, and highlights. The deal is for two seasons, 2013 and 2014.

Alistair Kirkwood, NFL UK's managing director, told *TV Sports Markets*: "The UK has been ear-marked as the market that the NFL is most keen to develop and grow, so free-to-air coverage was always going to be an important component."

There are several reasons for this, Kirkwood said. The UK is one of the strongest European markets for American football. It is an English-speaking market, and one which NFL executives have a good understanding of. And the NFL has a long history in the UK, where it was first broadcast in the 1980s.

Free-to-air coverage would bring the sport to a wider audience than it could reach on pay-television, he said.

The NFL spoke to all UK free-to-air broadcasters before agreeing the Channel Four deal. Channel Four was the one willing to dedicate the most programming. The broadcaster is

thought to have paid only a nominal fee. Public-service broadcaster the BBC had rights for some NFL coverage last year but was unwilling to expand this.

The NFL also has a three-year UK rights deal with pay-television broadcaster BSkyB, from 2012 to 2014. Sky and Channel Four will share rights for the Super Bowl and the International Series games. Sky's deal is thought to be worth about \$5m (€3.8m) per year.

The Channel Four deal is not considered a big encroachment on Sky because the pay-television broadcaster will have more, and better, games. Experts say that Channel Four's coverage will even have a promotional effect for Sky's coverage, and provide a platform for Sky to advertise on.

Last season, the UK free-to-air rights were split between Channel Four and the BBC. Channel Four had Sunday Night Football. The BBC had Monday Night Football, live coverage of the Super Bowl and the International Series game at Wembley Stadium, and play-off highlights.

Channel Four's new deal also covers highlights of the play-offs, a weekly highlights programme – the American Football Show – on Saturday mornings, and ancillary programming including documentaries.

[www.](#) For the full interview with Alistair Kirkwood visit our website. ■

The NFL separated English and local-language rights after getting a good offer for English-language rights from international sports broadcaster ESPN. The broadcaster wanted the rights for ESPN America, which was distributed in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. When ESPN America shut down in July the rights reverted to the NFL.

The NFL is not expected to split the rights by language in its next cycle.

### Markets missing

The FIC deal excludes the biggest NFL markets in Europe: the UK (see box

and Germany. There are no separate English-language rights in the UK. Basic-tier and pay-television broadcaster Sport1 was awarded the English-language rights in Germany, Austria and Switzerland in a deal agreed in July (*TV Sports Markets* 17:15).

The FIC deal also excludes Scandinavia and Spain, because English-language rights are not available in these territories.

[www.](#) For the full interview with Diego Londoño, plus a round-up of Fox's recent rights deals in the US, visit our website. ■

## Big losses will not stop C More buying top sport

Nordic pay-television broadcaster C More Entertainment will continue to invest strongly in sports content, its chief executive said this week, following reports in local media that suggested the broadcaster is struggling.

C More's owner Bonnier is looking to sell its 65-per-cent stake in the company, and has been reported to be struggling to find a buyer. Media coverage has highlighted that C More made combined losses of SEK675m (€77m/\$100m) over the last four years.

"All pay operators need a strong rights portfolio otherwise you can't be in business," Johan Kleberg, C More's chief executive, told *TV Sports Markets*. "This year we have renewed the Swedish football league until 2019 and the Swedish ice hockey league until 2018, so we have a strong rights portfolio."

The pay-television business broke even in 2012, with profitability hit by weak performances in Denmark and Norway. It has struggled in these markets since 2010 when it failed to renew its pan-Nordic English Premier League rights.

Bonnier's C More stake has been on the market since April. Norwegian telco Telenor owns the other 35 per cent.

Those interested in buying Bonnier's stake are understood to include rival pan-Nordic broadcaster Modern Times Group, 21st Century Fox's international channel operator Fox International Channels, Telenor and Danish media company Egmont. Some reports say interest has cooled at Telenor and Egmont.

[www. For the full interview with Johan Kleberg visit our website.](#) ■

## Buoyant Bundesliga talks to market

Early approaches from potential buyers for international rights have prompted the German Bundesliga to begin exploratory sales talks about its next

cycle, from 2015-16 onwards.

The league has begun speaking to agencies and broadcasters. Industry insiders say the league is just gauging the level of interest at this stage and deals are still a long way off.

The league is aiming to double the value of its international rights in the next cycle, to €140m (\$185m) per year. Some experts say the rights are undervalued in many territories.

Global interest in the league has been lifted by increasing recognition of the quality of its football, with Bayern Munich assembling what is arguably Europe's best team. Last season's all-German Uefa Champions League final between Bayern and Borussia Dortmund was widely regarded as the culmination of the league's recent development.

Market-by-market selling by the league's in-house commercial arm, DFL Sports Enterprises, is the league's preferred sales method in the new cycle. It has been moving towards this, doing more deals with broadcasters and fewer with agencies, in recent cycles, and is thought to want to continue the strategy. ■

## Petrucci brings Rai to the table

Fiba, the International Basketball Federation, agreed a deal with Italian state broadcaster Rai for EuroBasket, the European championships, just two weeks before the beginning of the tournament, which tipped off last week.

With Rai stonewalling, the intervention of Gianni Petrucci, the head of the Italian basketball federation and former head of the Italian Olympic Committee, is understood to have been critical.

The deal is thought to be worth about €200,000 (\$264,000) but also includes airtime which Fiba can sell to its commercial partners.

Fiba's hopes of getting a better deal for the World Cup next year in Spain rest largely on Italy qualifying for that tournament by reaching the top seven

at the EuroBasket tournament.

Fiba sells its rights in a three-year block, with the current cycle covering 2013 to 2015. Varying market circumstances led to it doing one-off deals for EuroBasket in Russia, Germany and Greece, as well as Italy.

In Greece, Fiba had agreed a three-year deal with state broadcaster ERT which collapsed when the Greek government closed the broadcaster in May. Fiba hastily agreed new deals with commercial broadcaster Antenna TV and pay-television broadcaster OTE. The deals are thought to be worth about €1.5m in total.

In Germany, it sold the rights to public-service broadcaster ARD and the Spox website, and in Russia to state broadcaster VGTRK. ■

## Delay in Chinese Taipei

Al Jazeera was unable to launch its three beIN Sport channels in Chinese Taipei as planned last month after it failed to secure channel licences in time.

The channel launch had been set to coincide with the start of the Premier League season.

MP & Silva, which will provide the vast majority of the content for the channels, had acquired the rights to the league covering the period 2013-14 to 2015-16 at the start of July.

In the same month, the agency said that Al Jazeera was going to launch its three beIN Sport channels in August, fronted by its flagship content, the Premier League. The two companies work very closely together (*TV Sports Markets* 17:13). However, a channel licence in Chinese Taipei takes around six months to be granted.

As a consequence the agency had to sublicense non-exclusive Premier League rights in one-season deals to local broadcasters Sportscast and Dish.

It is understood that the agency has secured distribution for the channels, which will now launch in 2014, subject to the licence award, which is expected to be a formality. ■



# SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from August 29 to September 11

## MEDIA RIGHTS 1

### Football: World Cup, Champions League, Uefa Youth League and more

- **Football:** Media company Click Pacific was awarded the rights in 14 Pacific Island territories for Fifa competitions between December 2013 and July 2014 in a deal with the MP & Silva agency. The rights include the 2014 World Cup, Beach Soccer World Cup, U-17 World Cup, U-17 Women's World Cup and the U-20 Women's World Cup.  
Click Pacific sold on the rights in Fiji to commercial broadcaster Mai TV.
- **Football:** Public-service broadcaster the Zambia National Broadcast Corporation acquired rights to the Ghana v Zambia Fifa World Cup 2014 qualifier played on September 6. The broadcaster agreed the deal with the Sportfive agency after paying half the \$150,000 (€112,000) rights fee itself and getting corporate partners to fund the other half.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Al Jazeera acquired exclusive rights in the Middle East and North Africa for the Uefa Champions League and Europa League. The rights cover three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and include the 2015, 2016 and 2017 editions of the Uefa Super Cup. Al Jazeera will provide coverage in Arabic, English and French. The Team Marketing agency brokered the deal on behalf of Uefa (page 2).
- **Football:** Pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport became the first official broadcast partner of the new youth club competition operated by Uefa, the Uefa Youth League. The deal covers two seasons, 2013-14 and 2014-15. Eurosport acquired exclusive European rights to the first-pick game each match week, including the semi-finals and final. Eurosport will also produce the first-pick matches. From the semi-final stage, Uefa's Champions League rights-holders in the countries of the participating teams will be given the option of acquiring rights on a non-exclusive basis with Eurosport.
- **Football:** The MP & Silva agency sublicensed non-exclusive rights to the Premier League to Chinese Taipei broadcasters Sportscast and Dish in one-season deals covering the 2013-14 season (page 8).
- **Football:** Spanish commercial broadcaster Atresmedia acquired rights for the Liga Adelante, the Spanish second division, for two years, from 2013-14 to 2014-15. The La Sexta channel will show two games per week.
- **Football:** Spanish commercial broadcaster Atresmedia acquired rights for the Spanish Copa del Rey. The deal will run for two seasons, from 2013-14 to 2014-15. Atresmedia channels La Sexta and Antena 3 will broadcast all rounds of the cup competition apart from the final, the rights for which are held by public-service broadcaster TVE. Atresmedia also acquired internet and mobile rights, and will launch a dedicated website providing live streaming of games.
- **Football:** Newspaper group News UK acquired rights from the MP & Silva agency for video clips of goals and other highlights from Scottish Premiership games, and some games featuring Scottish League One team Glasgow Rangers. The clips will be available via News UK's newspaper websites from late September, and on smartphones and tablets later in the 2013-14 season.
- **Football:** Major League Soccer club Chivas USA announced rights deals with regional television channels KDOC and MundoFox22 KWHY-TV through to the end of the 2013 season (page 2).
- **Football:** Tanzania pay-television broadcaster Azam Media acquired rights for the Tanzanian Premier League. Azam's deal, with the Tanzania Football Federation, runs for three years, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, and is worth 5.5bn Tanzanian shillings (€2.5m/\$3.3m).
- **Football:** Indian subcontinent pay-television broadcaster Star India acquired rights to Indian regional league the Calcutta Football League, and IFA Shield club tournaments in a deal with the Indian Football Association, Indian football's governing body. Star will exploit the rights on its Bengali film channel Jalsha.

## SINCE LAST TIME

- The Infront Sports & Media agency denied a report in *La Repubblica* that it had employed Sabina Began, a German actress who claimed to be the lover of Italy's former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, as a sports media-rights consultant on a salary of €370,000 (\$490,000) per year. The agency said that Began "is not and has never been an employee of any company in the Infront Group nor has she had direct or indirect collaboration with Infront or its associates." The article was one of a number of recent press articles which were critical of Infront and the MP & Silva agency (see story, page 1). *Il Sole 24 Ore* had earlier claimed that MP & Silva earned €213.3m per season from the sale of Serie A rights, making a profit of €122.3m. Agency founder Riccardo Silva said that there had been an error in the company's accounts and the €213.3m was for the sale of all sports rights in its portfolio.
- Former Argentina and Brazil football players Diego Maradona and Romário pledged to form a commission to challenge Conmebol, the sport's governing body in South America, over its revenue distribution. Several clubs from across the region have demanded that details of media-rights revenues for Conmebol's club competitions the Copa Libertadores and Copa Sudamericana be made public.
- Sales at sports marketing group Lagardère Unlimited dropped by 4.6 per cent from €213m (\$281.2m) to €204m in the six months to June. Ebit was €18m. Lagardère's World Sport Group division suffered a decline in revenue due to a contract with the Asian Football Confederation being converted into a commission-based agreement, rather than a buy-out contract. The Sportfive division had a 12-per-cent increase in revenue thanks to strong sales of marketing rights for German football clubs and media rights for the 2013 African Cup of Nations football tournament.

**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from August 29 to September 11**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****American football, and basketball from Australia, Europe and the NBA**

- **American Football:** International broadcaster Fox International Channels acquired rights for the NFL in 2013 and 2014 in 42 European countries (page 6).
- **American Football:** UK commercial broadcaster Channel Four acquired rights for the NFL in 2013 and 2014 (page 6).
- **American Football:** British Eurosport, the UK arm of sports broadcaster Eurosport, acquired rights for the NFL's Monday Night Football programme. The deal will run for two years, from 2013 to 2014.
- **American Football:** Sub-Saharan Africa pay-television broadcaster SuperSport acquired rights for the NFL's Monday Night Football and Thursday Night Football games, the American Football Conference play-offs, the Pro Bowl and All-Star game, in a deal covering at least the 2013 season.
- **American Football:** Sporting News Media, part of digital media company Perform Group, announced an online rights agreement with the NFL. The deal, which will run until at least the end of the 2013 campaign, will allow the NFL's premium video content to be shown via Sporting News Media's SN ePlayer video-on-demand platform in the US. Sporting News Media will offer on-demand highlights of games plus other content. The SN ePlayer is available via newspaper websites including the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Chicago Tribune*.
- **American Football:** UK newspaper the *Daily Mail* agreed a deal with the NFL to host video content on the MailOnline website in the 2013 season. The content will include game highlights, exclusive interviews and press conferences.
- **Basketball:** Chinese internet operator Sina, owner of the Weibo microblogging service, struck a rights deal with the NBA to stream one game per day from the North American league. The agreement covers at least the 2013-14 season. Sina, which will have reporters covering all 30 teams in the league, will also produce a weekly NBA programme.
- **Basketball:** Basketball Australia agreed a rights deal with public-service broadcaster the ABC for the Women's National Basketball League and the women's and men's national teams. The ABC will expand its Saturday afternoon coverage of the women's league to a two-hour time slot from the 2013-14 season. All women's national team games played in Australia will continue to be broadcast on free-to-air television. The ABC will also show all men's national team home games.
- **Basketball:** Pay-television broadcaster SuperSport acquired multi-year, multi-platform rights in 47 sub-Saharan Africa territories for the NBA. SuperSport will show up to three live regular-season games per week plus the All-Star, play-offs and finals matches in multiple languages.
- **Basketball:** Pan-Nordic media company Modern Times Group acquired rights in Sweden for the NBA for the 2013-14 season. Live coverage of games and the NBA Action highlights programme will be shown on basic-tier channel TV10, pay-television channel Viasat Sport and the Viaplay online service.
- **Basketball:** Greek pay-television broadcaster Nova acquired rights for the Euroleague in a three-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. Nova, which will show the games on its Novasports channel, struck the deal with the Asset OgilvyEntertainment agency, Euroleague's rights licensee in Greece.
- **Basketball:** Fiba, the International Basketball Federation, agreed one-off deals in Italy and Russia for EuroBasket 2013 (page 8).
- **Basketball:** Sub-Saharan Africa pay-television broadcaster SuperSport acquired rights for the new top-tier National League in South Africa. The deal will run for five years, from 2013 to 2017, and covers rights on all platforms.

- Russian pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus is slashing its prices in a major strategy shift away from the premium end of the market. This is due to competition from cheaper rivals such as Tricolor TV. Its basic package, which includes some sports channels, will cost Ru29 (€0.66/\$0.87) per month, down from Ru99. Supersport, a premium sports package available on top of the basic package, will cost Ru299 per month, down from Ru799.
- Mixed martial arts promoter the Ultimate Fighting Championship and Mexican media group Televisa launched their new UFC-dedicated pay-television channel on September 1 in 20 Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America.
- Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro announced plans for a new state-run sports channel for the country. VTV Deportes will be available on digital-terrestrial television.

**MEDIA INTERNATIONAL**

- Italian state broadcaster Rai lost an appeal against a court ruling that it should stop encrypting its broadcasts, including coverage of Italian national team football games, via pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia.
- German sports broadcaster Sport1 launched a live streaming service to accompany its new US sports pay-television channel, Sport1 US. The service is available via computer and mobile devices for a monthly subscription fee of €10 (\$13.20).
- Pay-television broadcaster Star India plans to launch a Bengali regional sports channel and expand its sports coverage from its current focus on cricket. It will push into other sports such as hockey, swimming, football and kabaddi, and produce sports programming in regional languages in India.
- The Australian Sports Commission said that a government-funded digital-television sports channel could be launched in the second half of 2014. The commission, which is looking for a media partner to launch the channel, was approached by video-sharing website YouTube, among other platforms.

## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from August 29 to September 11

### MEDIA RIGHTS 3

## Boxing, cricket, cycling, handball, motorsport, rugby, tennis and more

- **Boxing:** Filipino commercial broadcaster GMA Network acquired rights for the world light-middleweight title fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr and Saul Alvarez. The bout, which takes place on September 14 in Las Vegas, will be broadcast on September 15 in the Philippines after GMA's midday variety show, Sunday All Stars.
- **Cricket:** Canadian media company Asian Television Network acquired rights from the Board of Control for Cricket in India, Cricket South Africa, Cricket Australia and Zimbabwe Cricket national governing bodies in five-year deals, from 2013-14 to 2017-18. ATN will broadcast all home international series featuring the national teams of the governing bodies, primarily on its ATN Cricket Plus and CBN pay-television channels.
- **Cricket:** Indian subcontinent pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports and Pakistani pay-television broadcaster Geo Super acquired rights to Pakistan's series against South Africa and Sri Lanka later this year (page 2).
- **Cycling:** The European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of European public-service broadcasters, renewed a rights deal with Amaury Sport Organisation for races including the Tour de France, for four years, from 2016 to 2019. The deal also covers the Paris-Roubaix, Liège-Bastogne-Liège, Flèche Wallonne and Paris-Tours classics, plus the Paris-Nice, Critérium du Dauphiné and Critérium International stage races.
- **Cycling:** Pan-Nordic broadcaster Modern Times Group acquired rights in Denmark to the 2013 UCI Road World Championships. The TV3 Sports 1 and TV3 Sports 2 pay-television channels will broadcast most of the event, with individual races also streamed live via the TV3Sport.dk website. The men's final on September 29 will be broadcast on basic-tier channel TV3 Plus.
- **Handball:** Macedonian commercial broadcaster Alfa TV acquired rights for the men's and women's Champions Leagues in a two-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2014-15, with the MP & Silva agency and EHF Marketing, the commercial arm of the European Handball Federation. Alfa TV acquired the rights to all games featuring Macedonian teams, magazine programmes and the season-ending Final4 event.
- **Motorsport:** US cable-television channel CBS Sports Network acquired live rights to the World Touring Car Championship's event at Sonoma Raceway in California on September 8.
- **Rugby Union:** Discovery Italia, the Italian arm of international broadcaster Discovery Communications, acquired exclusive rights in Italy to the Six Nations for four years, from 2014 to 2017. The deal includes television, online and mobile rights (page 4).
- **Rugby Union:** Italian commercial broadcaster Mediaset acquired rights for all home games and some away games of Italian clubs Benetton Treviso and Zebre in the Pro12. The deal covers the 2013-14 season.
- **Squash:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights for the 2013 World Squash Championship, which takes place from October 26 to November 3 in Manchester, England. The BBC, which struck the deal with the Professional Squash Association, will provide coverage from the quarter-final stage onwards on its Red Button interactive service and via IPTV and online. The BBC 2 channel will show highlights.
- **Tennis:** Mobile television service Zenga TV acquired exclusive mobile rights in India for the 2013 US Open. The rights were sublicensed to Zenga by sports media company Seven3 Sports, which had acquired them from pan-Asia pay-television broadcaster Taj TV.
- **US College Sport:** US cable-television operator Time Warner Cable Sports agreed a regional rights deal with the Mid-American Conference, covering Ohio and western and central New York state. The deal will run for three years, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, and includes live coverage of American football, basketball, football, volleyball, baseball and softball. Selected programming will also be available nationally on Time Warner Cable's video-on-demand service, internet platform ESPN3, the Watch ESPN app and the official Mid-American Conference website.
- **US College Sport:** US sports broadcaster CBS Sports agreed a sublicensing deal with sports broadcaster Fox Sports to show games from the Big East college sports conference for six years, from 2013-14 to 2018-19. There will be 20 Big East games shown on CBS Sports and pay-television channel CBS Sports Network in the 2013-14 season, increasing to up to 30 games per year from the 2014-15 season onwards.

### MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The Fédération Française de Tennis, the governing body of tennis in France, launched a tender on September 10 for the domestic media rights to the French Open for five years, from 2014 to 2018. The federation has split the tender into three packages: one for mobile platforms, one for free-to-air television, and one open to all broadcasters including pay-television broadcasters. Winners will be announced in late October. *L'Équipe* this week reported

that the federation wants at least €15m (\$19.8m) per year for the pay-television rights, which includes all matches. It is aiming for at least €12m per year for the free-to-air television rights. This covers matches from 3pm (CET) on the three main courts, and the end of matches on other courts if they involve a French player. The mobile rights cover five courts, including the first four courts. The federation wants the tournament to continue to be broadcast free-to-air, but also wants to increase its revenues to cover the cost of improvements to the stadium.

## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from August 29 to September 11

- Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sport is close to deals for the rights in France to the Wimbledon tennis championships and ATP World Tour tournaments, according to *L'Équipe*. BeIN Sport is said to be on the verge of sealing three-year deals, from 2014 to 2016, with the IMG Media agency for Wimbledon and ATP Masters 1000 and 500 events. Rival pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus is the current rights-holder of both. Canal Plus is expected to retain the rights to the Paris Masters and Monte Carlo Masters ATP tournaments, the rights for which are sold separately.
- Rai will struggle to retain rights to Italy national football team matches due to the spiralling rights fee, according to Michele Anzaldi, secretary of the supervisory committee at the Italian state broadcaster. He said Rai only had budget for about half of the €200m (\$264m) price tag that has been put on the European Qualifiers rights package by the CAA Eleven agency, covering Italy qualifiers for Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup. Some media reports said that Rai was considering a joint bid with pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia. The two broadcasters have shared coverage of the last two Fifa World Cups.
- US sports broadcaster Fox Sports will bid for the next cycle of media rights for the Big Ten Conference US college sports organisation, from 2017. They are currently held by sports broadcaster ESPN and the ABC network.
- The CAA Eleven agency launched invitations to tender for the media rights in Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia to European qualifiers for the Uefa Euro 2016 and 2018 Fifa World Cup national team football tournaments. Bids must be submitted by October 2.
- The McLaren Group, which runs the McLaren Mercedes Formula One motor racing team, announced a partnership with video-sharing website YouTube. McLaren said revenue generated from a new commercial channel on YouTube would enable the company to invest in “exciting future video projects.”
- Online sports broadcaster Laola1.tv, which is owned by the Sportsman Media Group, launched a new premium service and redesigned its platform. Laola1 Premium, which costs €4.99 (\$6.60) per month, provides live streams and video content in high definition, with a reduced amount of advertising, and features including the ability to rewind live streams and set reminders. Laola1.tv also added support for the Apple AirPlay service, allowing users of Apple computers and mobiles to stream programming to high-definition televisions via wireless networks.
- Bill Pulver, the chief executive of the Australian Rugby Union, rugby union’s governing body in Australia, told broadcasters and other commercial stakeholders that he wants the Super 15 club competition to have a presence on free-to-air television in the next cycle of domestic rights, beginning in 2016. The Super 15 is currently shown exclusively by pay-television broadcaster Foxtel.

## INDUSTRY MOVES

- Multi Screen Media appointed Prasana Krishnan as business head of its Indian sports and entertainment pay-television channel Sony Six. Krishnan was previously chief operating officer at rival pay-television broadcaster Neo Sports.
- US media group NBCUniversal appointed Rhys Beer to the newly-created role of vice president of sports distribution and business development. Beer was formerly commercial director of digital sports media company Perform.

## ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The English Football League announced a new content partnership with video-sharing website YouTube. The Football League’s online arm, FL Interactive, will launch official YouTube channels for more than 85 clubs, as well as the Football League

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