

## TENNIS

# Eurosport to hang on to French Open until 2021 in blockbuster deal

By Robin Jellis

Pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport is in advanced negotiations with the MP & Silva agency to renew its French Open rights across Europe, excluding France.

The deal under discussion is thought to be for seven years, from 2015 to 2021, and worth about €140m (\$190m), or €20m per year. This would be an increase of around 40 per cent on the €14.5m per year Eurosport pays in its current three-year deal, from 2012 to 2014.

The deal is one of three French Open deals in play this month.

For Eurosport, the French Open is a 'crown jewel' property. The broadcaster is said to be prepared to pay a big increase for what is a long-term deal in an increasingly competitive market, to keep out interested agencies and other pan-regional operators like Fox International Channels, the broadcast subsidiary of media company 21st

Century Fox (see separate story).

The sale is being handled by MP & Silva, which sells the European rights outside France on behalf of the French tennis federation, the Fédération Française de Tennis, in a deal initially running from 2012 to 2016, and later extended to cover 2017. It is understood the agency's deal will be extended again, for the four years from 2018 to 2021 – the year the Eurosport deal will end.

It is thought that the extension is worth an amount similar to the €22m per year MP & Silva pays in the 2012 to 2017 agreements.

Free-to-air rights in several big tennis markets including the UK and Spain have been carved out of Eurosport's deal. MP & Silva is committed to securing a certain amount of free-to-air coverage.

A tender for the UK rights run by MP & Silva

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## PAY-TELEVISION

# Second-tier rights prices set for boom

By Frank Dunne

The deals unveiled by Fox International Channels at this month's Sportel trade fair in Monaco, and those about to be unveiled by Eurosport, suggest that there will be a gradual escalation of competition between the two companies for sports rights in Europe and beyond.

In the short term, the two businesses' need for content looks set to inflate the price of the more important second-tier

pay-television properties.

FIC, the pay-television channel operator owned by Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox, agreed the following deals this month:

- an 80-territory deal for the German Bundesliga, thought to be worth about €80m (\$109m) per season (see page 5)
- a deal for French Open rights in Asia

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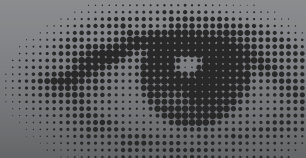
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## FASTRACK 1

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Olympic Games value falls in Sky deal in New Zealand

The value of the rights to the Olympic Games fell by close to 40 per cent in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands as pay-television broadcaster Sky took advantage of the lack of competition in the market.

The new deal, covering the 2014 and 2016 Olympic Games, is worth about \$6.5m (€4.8m), down from the \$10.5m Sky paid in the previous deal covering the 2010 and 2012 Games.

Last year, Sky chief executive John Fellet said that the broadcaster had lost about \$15m on its Olympics coverage. Industry executives said that Sky used this as leverage to secure a reduction in the rights fee.

In the negotiations for the last cycle, the IOC exploited competition between the rights-incumbent public-service broadcaster TVNZ and Sky. The fee rose by 128 per cent, from \$4.6m for the 2006-2008 Games to \$10.5m.

Since then, the government has reduced its investment in TVNZ, affecting the broadcaster's ability to bid competitively for top quality sport, while Sky has consolidated its dominance in the media market.

Sky has both pay-television and free-to-air operations in the country. In 2006, the government approved its acquisition of free-to-air channel Prime. Buying the channel enabled Sky to bid for major sports events such as the Olympics, which cannot be shown exclusively on pay-television.

Sky has an obligation to ensure that at least 200 hours of coverage of the 2016 Olympics are made available on free-to-air television. ■

### Sportfive/IEC 'stronger together'

The Sportfive and IEC in Sports agencies, part of sports marketing company Lagardère Unlimited, said that their newly-created 'media hub', based on a closer collaboration between the agencies, would be a more

competitive unit in the rights market than either agency operating alone.

Earlier this month, the two companies unveiled the unification of operations in media rights distribution and in services for digital and production, including host broadcasting, transmission, editing and voiceover services.

Shailla-Ann Rao and Daniel Franck, joint-chief executives of the media and production hub across Europe and Africa, told *TV Sports Markets*: "Through this reorganisation, we believe that we will have a stronger team for media sales and acquisitions, as well as production and digital services. This will enable us to strengthen our position in the market and compete with rival agencies."

The rights portfolios of the two agencies have already been pooled and are being jointly distributed. It is understood that they will bid jointly for rights. They said: "We intend to expand our combined portfolio of rights. The new combined platform is already up and running."

The collaboration is not a merger. Each company will retain its own brand identity for the foreseeable future.

Together, the two agencies have a wide range of sports-rights contracts. The weakness of the combined portfolio, according to both rival agencies and some independent observers, is the relative lack of flagship properties which would enable Sportfive/IEC to gain real leverage with broadcasters. They see the venture primarily as a cost-cutting exercise.

The agency countered that "as in any group, we are attentive to managing costs. We continue to study how the new structure can ensure maximum cost efficiency."

The collaboration marks a shift back to media-based activities, away from marketing, which will now be handled by other Lagardère Unlimited subsidiaries. In January, Sportfive brought in Nathalie Zimmermann to beef up the marketing business but she has since left the company. ■

### Top Greek clubs suffer drop in fees

Greece's top basketball clubs Olympiacos and Panathinaikos suffered a 10-per-cent cut in the value of their domestic media rights in a deal two weeks ago with New Hellenic Radio, Internet and Television (Nerit), the country's new public-service broadcaster.

Nerit is understood to be paying the two clubs a combined €1.8m (\$2.4m) for the rights for their home matches in 2013-14. Nerit's predecessor ERT paid the clubs €2m for the rights last season.

Nerit has been established by the Greek government to replace ERT, which the government shut earlier this year, accusing it of wasting money.

The fee went down as Nerit's sports rights budget is smaller than ERT's was, and there was no competition.

Competition was restricted because Olympiacos and Panathinaikos did not consider a pay-television deal, due to their lucrative shirt sponsorship deals with the Greek state gambling monopoly OPAP. These deals are worth €1.3m per year to each club, and a large part of the value is linked to free-to-air television exposure during the teams' matches.

The rights for the other 12 clubs in the Greek basketball league in 2013-14 were acquired by pay-television operator Nova earlier this year in a deal worth about €1.6m. This was down on last season's deal with ERT, worth around €1.75m, although some of this was advertising airtime rather than cash. Both the recent deals were brokered by the Taf Sports Marketing agency.

The deals continue a slide in value for the league's domestic rights. The combined value of the deals this season, €3.6m, compares to about €3.75m last season, €4.5m in 2011-12, and €5m in 2010-11. ERT had the rights exclusively in 2011-12, and ERT and Nova both had rights in 2010-11. ■

## TENNIS

## Eurosport pays big once again to hang on to a grand slam

Continued from page 1 ►

Silva in June flopped. Broadcasters were given 10 days to bid, but they were in the middle of the tender for English Football Association rights and the response was weak.

Local experts believe a renewal with commercial broadcaster ITV is the most likely outcome in the UK. Public-service broadcaster the BBC is thought to be uninterested due to the cost of the rights and the difficulties of scheduling live tennis. Interest at commercial broadcaster Channel 4 is thought to have cooled. It is understood to have considered the property at one point, but never prepared a serious bid.

UK pay-television broadcasters are unlikely to want to share rights with another pay-television operator and the federation would almost certainly prefer a free-to-air solution. It is thought that BT Sport, the newest player in the pay-television market, considered bidding in June.

A free-to-air deal in Spain will be harder due to the battered finances of broadcasters. Only the second week of the tournament was shown free-to-air this year, after commercial broadcaster Mediaset agreed a late deal. Mediaset is understood to have paid significantly less than the €1.5m it paid in a one-tournament deal in 2012.

MP & Silva initially expected Spain to deliver up to €10m per year in rights fees. In a four-year contract from 2008 to 2011, state broadcaster TVE paid €4.6m per year as part of a deal with the European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters.

### MP & Silva profits

The deal with Eurosport would represent a change in fortune for MP & Silva, which made a loss on the French Open rights in the first year of its contract.

The agency was expected to struggle after paying more than a 50-per-cent increase on the federation's previous deal with the EBU, which included Eurosport.

The EBU paid €14m per year from 2008 to 2011 (*TV Sports Markets* 15:11). Eurosport is thought to have contributed €7m per year to the EBU deal for pan-regional rights.

The latest Eurosport deal appears to now guarantee a profit for MP & Silva. It only needs to secure another €2m per year from other markets to break even.

### Asian change

Last week, the federation agreed a direct deal with FIC covering 20 Asian territories in the five years from 2014 to 2018. It is worth about \$5m per year, which is understood to be an increase on the previous value in the markets covered. Free-to-air rights in Thailand and some other territories have been carved out of the deal.

The deal represented a change in strategy, away from market-by-market sales. It is thought that the federation was reluctant to make the move as it had built strong relationships with some broadcasters, but was swayed by the money on offer, coupled with decent distribution.

FIC is looking to increase the distribution of its channels in Asia by agreeing non-exclusive deals with pay-television platforms, which bodes well for increasing the French Open's audience in the region.

Deals for the tournament are yet to be agreed in India, Japan, Australia and China.

The deal was brokered by the Sportfive agency. Sportfive advises the federation in all Asian territories except Japan, where MP & Silva is its adviser, and Australia, where it uses the IMG Media agency.

Sportfive is paid on a commission basis. The agency's current deal is for five years, from 2013 to 2017. This has been extended until 2018 to fall into line with the FIC deal.

### Tough home market

The federation is reviewing its domestic rights tender process after receiving just two disappointing bids for the five-year cycle, 2014 to 2018. Incumbent rights-holder, the state broadcaster France Télévisions, bid about 20 per cent less than the €15.5m per year it paid in its deal from 2010 to 2013. Eurosport also bid in France, separately from its pan-European bid.

The federation is holding direct talks with

broadcasters in France to discover why it only received two weak bids. It is thought to be frustrated and puzzled at the level of bids, after creating a tender designed to maximise competition. They are ready "to play the second, third, fourth and fifth rounds if needed" to build up the value of the bids, a source close to the talks said.

The tender split the rights into three packages. Package A covered rights for the entire tournament. Rights for matches covered by the other packages were non-exclusive. It was envisaged as a package for pay-television broadcasters, although it was open to bids from any broadcaster.

Package B covered free-to-air rights for the best matches, played on the main courts from 3pm onwards. Package C covered mobile rights for matches on five courts, including the first four.

The finals of the men's and women's competitions are listed events and must be shown by a free-to-air broadcaster.

Public-service broadcaster France Télévisions is thought to have bid about €12m per year for all three packages. Eurosport made a surprisingly low bid of about €500,000 per year for Package A, and bid about €1.5m per year for the mobile rights. In the 2010 to 2013 cycle, telco Orange paid €1m per year for the mobile rights.

The lack of bids was also a surprise as 10 parties asked for the tender. The other eight were: commercial broadcasters TF1 and M6; digital-terrestrial channel D8; pay-television broadcasters Canal Plus and beIN Sport; basic-tier broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport; Orange and video-sharing website Dailymotion.

TF1 and M6 are thought to be focusing on the qualifier rights to the French national football team for Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup, which are currently on the market.

Reports say beIN Sport may have been put off from bidding by a remark made by federation president Jean Gachassin last month. Gachassin said that Qatar was looking to create a rival competition to the French Open that offered players more prize money. BeIN Sport is owned by Qatar state-owned satellite broadcaster Al Jazeera. It is said, however, that the federation does not think this affected beIN Sport's bidding intentions. ■

## PAY-TELEVISION

## Rights prices set to rise as channel operators compete

Continued from page 1 ►

worth about \$5m per year (see page 1)

- a deal for Euroleague basketball rights in selected European and African territories worth just over €5m per season.

These deals followed an 80-territory deal for motor racing's new Formula E Championship in August.

Eurosport, the pan-regional sports broadcaster in which US media group Discovery Communications holds a large minority stake, is understood to be in the final stages of renewing deals for two properties:

- a deal for tennis's French Open worth €20m per year (see page 1)
- a deal worth over €20m per season for the Bundesliga in Central and Eastern Europe and the Nordics (see page 5).

This cluster of deals has raised several questions in industry circles:

- (1) To what extent will the Discovery-backed Eurosport be prepared to compete with such a well-funded and expansionist rival?
- (2) What impact will inflation in the price of second-tier rights have on the economics of pay-television?
- (3) To what extent will the bundling of sports channels with channels from other genres strengthen the hand of FIC and Discovery in talks with distributors?
- (4) How, in the longer term, will Murdoch integrate his burgeoning channel operation with the satellite distribution businesses he owns or controls?

### Fox v Eurosport

Hernan Lopez, president and chief executive of FIC, told *TV Sports Markets* that the company would continue to sign global or multi-territory deals where possible. He said there were three reasons why it was a compelling proposition for rights-holders.

First, it gave them an immediate global platform. At present, Fox Sports channels

are in 165m homes – 90m in the US and a further 75m around the world. Within 18 months that will reach 200m. Second, it guaranteed the kind of cutting-edge production and presentation standards which have become the hallmark of Murdoch's sports operations around the world. Third, the company was in a position to pay competitive rights fees.

Rights-holders also point out that FIC's policy of seeking non-exclusive distribution deals enables them to reach a greater audience than if they did exclusive deals with one operator in each market.

The Fox Sports channels do not generally compete for the top-tier, "must-have" properties. But to secure the best possible fee per subscriber they need to have a good variety of the best sport below that rung. As such, they are increasingly likely to find themselves competing with Eurosport, as well as with local broadcasters, in Europe and beyond.

The view of many in the industry is that with the investment of Discovery – which is expected to take up its option to eventually take over the broadcaster – Eurosport is better placed than ever to respond.

FIC is building its operations in Europe from scratch, taking opportunities to enter new markets as they arise. It has launched Fox Sports in Italy and has taken control of the Eredivisie Live pay-television platform in the Netherlands. It has also acquired sports rights in Belgium (Bundesliga) and Poland (Euroleague), and late this week was close to a deal for MLB baseball rights in 30 European markets. Eurosport, on the other hand, already has a pan-European infrastructure.

This raises the question of why Murdoch didn't buy it, according to Claudio Aspesi, senior analyst in European media for research company Bernstein. "The interesting thing is that Fox have decided to build it bottom up," he said. "You could argue that Eurosport is too France-centric and France is not critical enough to Fox. But it was an infrastructure with a brand in place. To field a new brand in Fox and a new team was an interesting decision. Perhaps they felt that there were enough sports rights out there to build an operation organically and they did not want to pay a big price for Eurosport."

He added that if Discovery/Eurosport

responded aggressively to the threat posed by Fox, the Murdoch-owned company would now have to "slug it out on every content contract."

### Inflation

FIC and Discovery/Eurosport may not often compete against incumbent pay-television platforms for must-have content, but their expansion could still have an unwelcome knock-on effect on the dominant pay-television operators.

In the UK, for example, the two main pay-television platforms, BT and BSkyB, need a lot of secondary content to feed their sports channels.

"Sky has been able to count on low inflation in second-tier rights to balance the high inflation on top rights," Aspesi said. "If there is a content battle between Fox and Discovery which pushes up the price of second-tier rights, that doesn't bode well for them keeping costs under control."

### Bundling content

FIC and Discovery are using the same strategy – bundling sports channels with other entertainment genres to drive better deals with advertisers and distributors.

One expert in content syndication said that by bundling Fox Sports into a suite of channels such as Fox Crime, Fox Life, FX and others, FIC could put pressure on platforms for an increase in carriage fees. In a most extreme scenario, it could give platforms a take-it-or-leave-it offer for all of its channels.

Pay-television platforms in many parts of Europe are experiencing a plateauing or even a drop in subscriber numbers, but channel syndicators always want a better deal when they come to renew, he said.

As a consequence, the market is becoming increasingly dominated by a small number of US media companies – Viacom, Turner, Fox, Disney and Discovery – each offering multiple channels which give them a strong negotiating position.

### Content v distribution

Some industry experts point out that developing a powerful global channel operation gives Fox long-term security not only against the threat from rival broadcasters, but from that posed by

telcos and internet operators.

One of the challenges 21st Century Fox will face in the future is how to integrate the channel business with its satellite platform operations, including BSkyB in the UK, Sky Deutschland in Germany, and Sky Italia in Italy.

Some experts question the logic, for example, of Murdoch operating Sky Sports channels in Italy in parallel with

Fox Sports channels. According to one expert, there are arguments for keeping distribution and channel operations separate, bringing the Sky Sports channels in the UK, Germany, and Italy under the management of FIC.

Aspesi said that this would probably have been discussed. “Companies like BSkyB and Sky Italia contain two separate businesses, one of which is distribution,

which is increasingly commoditised. At some point, it might be interesting to at least have the option of separating the distribution business from the content business,” he said.

“A good management team has to ask whether in the long term they want to be in both the content and distribution businesses, and if not, in which one they want to be.” ■

## FOOTBALL

### Fox and Eurosport push DFL towards €140m target

By Frank Dunne and Kevin McCullagh

Two multi-territory deals will put Germany's Bundesliga well on track to hit its target of doubling income from international media rights in the next cycle from the present €70m (\$95m) per season.

Earlier this month, the league agreed a deal with channel syndication company Fox International Channels for the rights in 80 territories. It is also in advanced talks with sports broadcaster Eurosport to renew a deal covering Central and Eastern Europe and the Nordics.

The FIC deal is worth about €80m per season. Discussions with Eurosport are understood to involve a fee of over €20m per season, up from €17.5m at present.

The two deals take the league to about €100m per season with many territories, including valuable markets like the Middle East, still to sell. The deals are negotiated by the league's commercial arm DFL Sports Enterprises.

DFL Sports Enterprises chief executive Jörg Daubitzer told *TV Sports Markets* that money was not the driving factor in the FIC deal. He said that a global relationship with a broadcaster like Fox provided solid financial guarantees, but also the broadcasting know-how to elevate the league as a television product. FIC's commitment was both an affirmation of the strides the league has taken in recent years and a platform to make German club football even stronger.

He declined to comment on the rights

#### Bundesliga international rights deals

The Bundesliga rights package includes live and highlights rights to all 306 top-division matches each year, plus the rights to the DFL-Supercup and the relegation play-offs.

The deals with FIC and Eurosport will come into force from the 2015-16 season. In the FIC deal, the rights in Asia and the Americas are for five seasons, and the rights in Europe cover two seasons. The deal under discussion with Eurosport is for two seasons.

The FIC deal covers the Americas and selected territories in Asia and Europe. These include: the US, Brazil, Canada,

Mexico, China (English-language rights), Indonesia, Japan, Italy and the Netherlands.

Eurosport is the rights-holder in the Netherlands from 2012-13 to 2014-15. This deal was agreed separately from its multi-territory European deal.

The current Eurosport deal, which is close to being renewed, covers: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden.

fee, but said that the league would not have done such a deal unless it had been “very happy” with the fee.

FIC president and chief executive Hernan Lopez said that Fox Sports saw the Bundesliga as either its number one or number two property in most markets. He said that the company had made a “very significant investment” in the league because of its strength “both on and off the field.”

Talks between the DFL and FIC began in February. The DFL did not issue an invitation to tender for its global rights but had informal meetings with all the major agency players and its major broadcast partners. The IMG Media agency is thought to have made a global bid for the rights which was lower than FIC's final bid on a like-for-like basis. Sports broadcaster ESPN also made a bid covering Latin America, which was rejected.

#### Eurosport renewal

The DFL is thought to be discussing a renewal with Eurosport for two seasons,

2015-16 and 2016-17. It is said to be pushing for this duration to synchronise its international and domestic rights cycles. The previous deal covered the three seasons from 2012-13 to 2014-15. The current domestic rights cycle runs from 2013-14 to 2016-17.

The rights are key content for the broadcaster's Eurosport 2 channel, but some industry experts say putting the Bundesliga on Eurosport 2 has not helped the league's profile and visibility in the 22 territories covered by the deal. Critics say there are bigger platforms which would have been interested in acquiring the rights, particularly in the strong football rights markets in the Nordics.

One agency rights expert said this week that a shorter renewal with Eurosport made good sense for the league. Broadcasters generally prefer three-year deals or longer, and would want rights fee discounts for anything shorter. The league may have struggled to match the money on offer from Eurosport if it had gone market by market. ■

## FOOTBALL

## Flanders done, but Wallonia looking tougher for CAA

By Robin Jellis

The CAA Eleven agency is understood to be close to a deal in Flanders for third-party European Qualifier rights, but is facing a tougher sale in the other Belgian region of Wallonia.

CAA Eleven, Uefa's sales agent for national team football, is understood to be finalising a deal with pay-television operator Telenet in Flanders, worth about €1m (\$1.4m) over four years, 2014-15 to 2017-18. The rights cover all European qualifier matches for Euro 2016 and the 2018 Fifa World Cup, excluding Belgium national team matches. Belgium matches were acquired by the country's public-service broadcasters earlier this year.

CAA Eleven is understood to have initially sought €2m from each region. It is understood that there was little interest in the third party rights in Wallonia.

Telenet and Wallonian pay-television broadcaster BeTV often work together to acquire rights in their respective territories, but Telenet bid separately on this occasion. BeTV is thought to be focusing on a bid for the rights to the domestic football league, the Pro League, which are due on the market either late this year or early in 2014.

The Telenet deal looks to rule out a deal with Belgium's other major pay-television operator Belgacom, which covers both Flanders and Wallonia and generally acquires rights for the whole country.

There is said to be interest in Wallonia in matches featuring the French national team, as the region has strong French influence. But the value to Belgian free-to-air operators will be limited by overspill from France. The rights for the matches will be acquired by a free-to-air broadcaster in France, and French channels are widely available in Wallonia.

The domestic rights for France matches are currently on the market. They are protected for free-to-air broadcast in France by listed-events legislation.

Flemish public-service broadcaster VRT and Wallonian public-service broadcaster RTBF acquired all of Belgium's European qualifier matches as part of the European Broadcasting Union deal in April. The EBU deal covered 30 countries and was worth about €70m (*TV Sports Markets* 17:6).

VRT and RTBF are thought to be together paying about €300,000 per match, or €6m in total across the 20 Belgium matches. VRT is thought to be paying slightly more than RTBF.

Belgium matches have become more desirable for free-to-air broadcasters because of the current strength of the team. Belgium has moved from 30th to fifth in the Fifa world rankings in the last 12 months. ■

## TV AUSTRALIA

## Last-minute Serie A switch by Silva angers Fox Sports

By Dan Horlock

The last-minute decision by the MP & Silva agency to pull out of a deal with Fox Sports in Australia for Serie A rights in order to sell them to Al Jazeera could have serious implications for the agency's relationship with Rupert Murdoch's broadcast operations, local sources claim.

MP & Silva sold the English-language Serie A rights to Al Jazeera last week in a two-year deal covering the seasons 2013-14 and 2014-15. Fox had already begun a major marketing campaign believing that it had reached an agreement with the agency.

Fox Sports in Australia, owned by Murdoch's News Corp Australia, had never bought rights from the agency before and is unlikely to do so again, one well-placed source said.

Some local experts question the wisdom of selling such a minor rights property to Al Jazeera in a manner which would clearly upset Fox. They say that the agency risked compromising its relationship with Murdoch's entire group. Fox International Channels, which is part of Murdoch's 21st Century Fox, has been acquiring content in multi-territory deals which are invaluable to agencies.

The saga suggests that MP & Silva

will have to be skilful to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the growing appetite for content at multinational operators like Fox and Discovery/Eurosport, and at the same time protect its lucrative relationship with Al Jazeera.

Al Jazeera wanted the rights ahead of launching a sports channel in the coming years. It is understood that this will not be part of the wider MP & Silva and beIN Sports joint venture (see page 7).

Al Jazeera began its coverage of the league last weekend, exploiting the rights on its Arabic-language channel – Al Jazeera. The coverage had English-language commentary. Al Jazeera already had Arabic-language rights. Coverage in Italian is available on the Rai International channel.

Serie A is not a major sports property in Australia, trailing far behind other football competitions such as the domestic A-League, the English Premier League and the Uefa Champions League and Europa League. Last season there was no English-language coverage of the league. The rights are worth about \$500,000 (€368,000) per season.

Fox Sports wanted the rights to add to its content offering over the Australian summer months. It had begun marketing Serie A along with its Spanish Liga rights acquired from the Mediapro agency at the same time.

Sources close to the deal said that Fox received a contract from MP & Silva to broadcast coverage of Serie A. At the end of last week, the broadcaster was informed by the agency that it could not begin its coverage of the league until the agency had received a signed contract. Sources close to the broadcaster said that this was not usual practice.

On Saturday, Fox said that for contractual reasons it could not begin its coverage until the following weekend. On Tuesday, the agency told the broadcaster that its contract had not been ratified by the agency board. The broadcaster then asked the agency about the league's English-language coverage on Al Jazeera that weekend. The agency said it had sold the rights to Al Jazeera. Sources said that the deal between MP & Silva and Al Jazeera was agreed on Friday. ■

## AGENCIES

## MP & Silva behind Asian rollout of beIN Sport channels

By Dan Horlock

Peter Hutton, who has replaced Andrea Radrizzani to become MP & Silva's co-chief executive, this week confirmed that the agency had entered into a joint venture with Al Jazeera to launch channels in five South East Asian markets.

MP & Silva will run and provide rights for the sports pay-television channels, with Al Jazeera providing the funding. The markets covered are Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei and the Philippines.

Hutton told *TV Sports Markets* this week that the current priority for the joint venture was securing carriage deals in the five markets ahead of upcoming negotiations for the rights to key European football leagues.

"We are signing distribution deals for two years to coincide with the termination of the rights deals for Italy's Serie A, Spain's La Liga and France's Ligue 1 at the end of the 2014-15 season," he said.

This excludes Indonesia where the channels will show the Premier League for three years, until 2015-16.

The joint venture was this month securing deals in Hong Kong, the Philippines and Thailand. It agreed two non-exclusive distribution deals in Hong Kong and the Philippines, covering two seasons, from 2013-14 to 2014-15 (see panel).

In Thailand, it is close to an exclusive two-year deal with one of the country's biggest platforms. Only beIN Sport 1, a channel dedicated to football, will launch in the country.

The joint venture is still looking for carriers in Indonesia, Hong Kong and the Philippines. In Indonesia, MP & Silva still has some channel packages to sell, which are fronted by the Premier League (*TV Sports Markets* 17:6).

The channel rollout is on hold in Chinese Taipei, where the joint venture

has sublicensed on Premier League rights in one-season deals to local broadcasters Sportscast and Dish, after failing to secure licences in time to launch its three beIN Sport channels (*TV Sports Markets* 17:16).

The distribution deals are not thought to be particularly lucrative but they are important strategic footholds in the markets. "In a couple of years' time we will come back to the market in a different position and be able to negotiate more lucrative carriage deals," Hutton said.

### Carriage deals

The MP & Silva/Al Jazeera joint venture this month agreed non-exclusive two-year distribution deals, from 2013-14 to 2014-15, for new, beIN Sport-branded pay-television sports channels in Hong Kong and the Philippines.

In Hong Kong, one deal is with commercial broadcaster TVB's pay-television service. Two beIN Sport channels will launch on the platform on November 1. It is understood that carriage deals have also been secured on other platforms.

In the Philippines, three beIN Sport channels will be launched. Pay-television platform SkyCable last week began carrying two of the channels. The joint venture is expected to hold discussions with the other main pay-television platforms Signal and Cable Boss.

The plan is contingent on the agency renewing its football rights in the markets. Al Jazeera's deep pockets and MP & Silva's strong position in the football rights market would suggest that any risk is somewhat limited. If the agency were to fail to acquire the rights, the worst case scenario for the joint venture is that the channels would close.

Hutton said the Al Jazeera joint venture was separate to the joint venture that MP & Silva set up with the Pitch International agency in Asia in March (*TV Sports Markets* 17:7). The Pitch project focuses on event management, sponsorship, television

production, consultancy and development of local sports, as well as leveraging the two company's respective sports-rights portfolios.

### Singapore

In other Asian business for MP & Silva this month, the agency signed a deal with pay-television broadcaster StarHub to produce the SuperSports 360 show on StarHub's free sports channel SuperSports Arena.

Hutton said the deal was about getting exposure for the agency's events and highlighted the importance of the Singapore market for the company. "We do things there that are far more local and targeted than anywhere else in the world."

He said that it was good to be doing significant business again with StarHub and he hoped it could lead to a deal for MP & Silva's football package.

"This sort of deal is a good example of what you can do in the short term and then we'll look to see what else we can do in the future," he said. "But I think it's fair to recognise that because of the legislative changes around the sharing of content it's very difficult for them to make long-term decisions."

Singapore's Media Development Authority introduced forced content-sharing to counter rising costs for pay-television operators and subscribers in March 2010.

Most of the agency's rights deals in recent years have been with rival pay-television broadcaster SingTel. Last year, it sold SingTel a non-exclusive football rights package in a deal worth about \$4m (€3m) per year.

### New line-up

Hutton, who joined MP & Silva in May as chief operating officer, is taking on all of Radrizzani's responsibilities from this week, with the former chief executive moving into a supervisory, strategic role.

Hutton will be responsible for strategy and implementation of commercial and production affairs. The other co-chief executive, Marco Auletta, will focus on operational matters, with overall responsibility for administration, finance, legal and human resources. ■

## Money and visibility as Fina renews with EBU and IEC

A fee increase and its traditional strong hand of free-to-air coverage allowed the European Broadcasting Union to renew its contract with the world swimming federation last month.

The EBU renewed rights in all its territories for the Fédération Internationale de Natation (Fina) World Championships and World Swimming Championships (25m) for four years, from 2014 to 2017. The deal value is in the low millions of euros per year, according to industry insiders. It is one of Fina's two biggest media rights deals globally alongside an agreement with commercial broadcaster TV Asahi in Japan.

"What is important for us is visibility, to get our sport in front of the biggest audience possible," Peter Hall, Fina's head of marketing and TV, told *TV Sports Markets*. "And in financial terms it is good for us." He declined to comment further on the fee.

The deal was renewed in an exclusive negotiation period included in the previous deal, for 2010 to 2013.

The EBU is guaranteeing 6,000 hours of coverage across its 50-plus territories between the two World Championships covered by the deal, in 2015 and 2017, and 750 hours for the two World Swimming Championships, in 2014 and 2016.

The consortium is able to sell on rights not used by its members to non-EBU broadcasters. It began doing so this year, the last year of the current deal, with some rights from the World Championships in Barcelona.

This is particularly relevant for the World Championships, Hall said, which includes events in niche disciplines like synchronised swimming which may not be popular enough for a major channel.

The EBU will be the host broadcaster of one event in the next cycle – the 2015 World Championships in Kazan, Russia. The event is expensive

to produce – over €2m (\$2.7m) per event – because it takes place in multiple venues.

Fina also this month renewed an agreement with IEC in Sports under which the agency distributes rights for its biggest annual events – the Swimming World Cup, the Diving World Series, the finals of the Water Polo World League, and the Synchronised Swimming World Trophy. The deal is also for four years, 2014 to 2017. The previous deal covered the four years from 2010 to 2013.

IEC pays a guarantee plus a revenue share for the swimming and diving events, and a revenue share only for the water polo and synchronised swimming events.

Fina distributes all revenue from the deal to the hosts of the events. The competitions are vital for the federation in giving swimming visibility during the Olympics and World Championships.

"They pour a lot of money into supporting our events, and we do what we can to support them in return from the TV rights," Hall said. Television production is among the costs covered by the organisers. ■

## ECB gets 30% bump in private talks

In its deal agreed last month for its rights in Australia, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) achieved a 30-per-cent fee increase, *TV Sports Markets* understands. The increase came despite the ECB holding talks with just one party.

The deal with the Nine network, which covers the 2015 and 2019 Ashes tours to be held in England, is worth about \$26m (€19m). Nine is likely to exploit the rights on its smaller digital-terrestrial channels rather than its main channel, as it did for this year's Ashes.

The previous deal with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports covered the 2009 and 2013 Ashes tours and was worth about \$20m. Fox sublicensed the free-to-air rights to Nine in a deal worth about \$13m. The Ashes is a

listed event in Australia. The deal also covers all of England's other home matches over the period.

It is thought that, unusually, the ECB did not hold talks with rights incumbent Fox Sports. The combination of an increased rights fee and greater exposure convinced it to take the Nine offer without going to the market. ■

## Belgian basketball suffers cut

The Basketball League Belgium this week agreed a two-year rights renewal with Belgian pay-television operator Belgacom with a fee cut of about 20 per cent.

The deal is for 2013-14 and 2014-15, and is worth about €1m (\$1.4m) per year. The previous deal ran from 2011-12 to 2013-14, but included a clause to renegotiate after two seasons. It was worth about €1.2m per year.

The value has fallen due to a lack of competition. The league is thought to have received one other offer for the rights, of around €100,000 per season. Pay-television broadcasters Telenet and BeTV, which operate in Flanders and Wallonia respectively, are not thought to have bid.

Belgacom also covers production costs, of between €5,000 and €10,000 per match. It uses between five and seven cameras at each match, and broadcasts in both French and Flemish.

Belgacom will show two live matches per week and all play-off matches on basic-tier channel Belgacom 5. It has agreed a two-year sublicensing deal for highlights rights with Wallonian public-service broadcaster RTBF, covering 2013-14 and 2014-15. The broadcasters had a similar deal covering the 2012-13 season.

There was no formal tender process for the rights, and the league negotiated the deals itself, without agency help.

Belgacom is thought to see the rights as useful in diversifying its portfolio beyond football. It has rights for the domestic Pro League, the Uefa Champions League and the top Spanish league, La Liga. ■



## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 10 to October 23

### MEDIA RIGHTS 1

## Football: Bundesliga, Serie A, Indian Super League, SPFL and more

- **Football:** Channel operator Fox International Channels acquired rights for the German Bundesliga in 80 territories in the Americas, Europe and Asia in a deal with DFL Sports Enterprises, the commercial arm of the league (page 5).
- **Football:** Al Jazeera acquired English-language rights in Australia for the Italian Serie A for two seasons, from 2013-14 to 2014-15 (page 6). The broadcaster already holds Arabic-language rights in the country.
- **Football:** Indian pay-television broadcaster Star India acquired rights to the new Indian Super League club competition. Star will pay Rs20bn (€240m/\$325m) for a 33.3-per cent stake in the competition and media rights for 10 years, from 2014 to 2023. The tournament is being developed by IMG-Reliance, a joint venture between the IMG agency and Indian conglomerate Reliance, which are also shareholders in the league.
- **Football:** Chinese online television service PPTV agreed a one-year rights deal with the Scottish Professional Football League for the 2013-14 season. The agreement, which was brokered by the MP & Silva agency, covers exclusive rights on television, mobile and the internet for more than 55 games from the top-tier Scottish Premiership.
- **Football:** Brazilian pay-television broadcaster ESPN Brasil acquired rights for highlights coverage of the Campeonato Série A, the top domestic club league, during the 2013 season, which ends next month. The rights were acquired in a sublicensing deal with rival pay-television broadcaster Globosat.
- **Football:** English Premier League club Aston Villa agreed a two-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2014-15, with US pay-television operator Time Warner Cable Sports. The broadcaster's regional channel Time Warner Cable SportsNet and Spanish-language platform Time Warner Cable Deportes will show the Aston Villa Weekly magazine programme in Southern California.

### SINCE LAST TIME

- The Creative Artists Agency was told by Texas Pacific Group, its partner in the bidding to take over sports, fashion and entertainment company IMG, that it may need to bring in outside investors to help finance the bid, which would dilute CAA's control over IMG, according to the *New York Post*. TPG is a private equity company that owns 35 per cent of CAA. The *New York Post* said IMG was expected to be sold for around \$2bn (€1.5bn). It said the company's current annual ebitda is around \$200m. The IMG College division, which sells media rights for around 100 US universities, was reported to account for 45 per cent of the value of the business. The London-based media-rights arm IMG Media is one of the biggest players in the global sports-rights business.
- Pay-television broadcaster Al Jazeera threatened to sue the state broadcasters of Algeria and Egypt, ENTV and Egyptian Television Network, after they showed 2014 Fifa World Cup qualifiers featuring the two countries' national football teams. ENTV showed Burkina Faso v Algeria on October 12. Egyptian Television Network showed Ghana v Egypt on October 15. Al Jazeera said the broadcasts breached its exclusive rights deals for the matches with the Confederation of African Football.
- The Infront Sports & Media agency has given Serie A clubs until the next league assembly on November 4 to respond to its offer of a guaranteed €5.5bn (\$7.5bn) in media income over six years if they renew its mandate as the league's media-rights adviser. The *Il Sole 24 Ore* newspaper reported this week that the agency has told clubs that a third party, neither Infront nor its parent company Bridgepoint, has offered to underwrite the fee so that clubs could bank their proceeds immediately. The agency needs the votes of at least 14 of the 20 clubs to be

reconfirmed. It has one year left, until June 30 2016, on its existing six-year deal. It is understood that it has obtained legal advice that it would be able to organise an auction and handle the rights sales for the next three seasons, through to 2017-18, under its existing deal and would be entitled to the commission for all three seasons. Some clubs dispute this.

The agency has spent the last two weeks replying to club queries about its proposals, including its plan to launch a league channel, should offers from broadcasters be lower than the league earns at present. Research conducted for the league shows that 5.6m fans said they would pay for a standalone league channel, made up of 2.3m existing subscribers to Sky Italia, 1.4m to Mediaset Premium, with 1.9m completely new subscribers.

Meanwhile, Infront Italy, the Italian division of the agency, filed a lawsuit against newspaper *Corriere della Sera* concerning "false rumours and misinformation" contained in reports about its role as media-rights sales adviser to Serie A. Infront said the reporting had resulted in "serious allegations that damage the reputation and image of Infront Italy."

### MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- Russian state broadcaster VGTRK said its free-to-air channel Russia 2 would be dedicated solely to the 2014 winter Olympic Games for the duration of the event in Sochi. VGTRK also abandoned plans to make its pay-television channel Sport available on a free-to-air basis. The broadcaster decided it would not be able to afford the annual \$30m (€22m) licence fee after it was announced that state subsidies would fall in the 2014 to 2016 period.
- UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB's marketing expenditure increased by £55m (€65m/\$88m) to £320m in the three

**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from October 10 to October 23**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****Basketball, cricket, cycling, darts, golf, gymnastics and ice hockey**

- **Basketball:** Belgian pay-television operator Belgacom extended its rights for the Belgian domestic league for two years, 2013-14 and 2014-15. As well as live coverage, the broadcaster will show interviews, behind-the-scenes footage and instructional programmes (page 8).
- **Basketball:** The IMG Media agency agreed a consultancy deal with Euroleague Basketball to advise on the distribution of rights for the competition in the UK, Africa and the Flemish-speaking region of Belgium from 2013-14, and rights in the Asia-Pacific region from 2014-15.
- **Basketball:** Channel operator Fox International Channels agreed a four-year rights deal, from 2013-14 to 2016-17, with Euroleague Basketball for selected territories in Europe and Africa.
- **Basketball:** German basic-tier sports broadcaster Sport1 agreed a three-year extension to its rights deal with Euroleague Basketball, covering the 2013-14 to 2015-16 seasons. Selected regular-season games of German teams Brose Baskets Bamberg and FC Bayern Munich will be broadcast live on the basic-tier channel Sport1 on Thursday and Friday evenings. Other games will be shown on pay-television channel Sport1 Plus. Games will also be streamed live on the Sport1.de website.
- **Basketball:** Greek public-service broadcaster New Hellenic Radio, Internet and Television acquired rights for the home games of Olympiacos and Panathinaikos during the 2013-14 season of the Greek Basketball League (page 2).
- **Basketball:** Chinese internet operator Sina expanded its partnership with North American basketball league the NBA to show live coverage of games via social networking website Weibo and on the company's mobile service.
- **Cricket:** Free-to-air broadcaster the Caribbean Media Corporation acquired live rights for the inaugural Caribbean international women's tri-nations Twenty 20 series, between West Indies, England and New Zealand, in a deal with the West Indies Cricket Board.
- **Cycling:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired highlights rights for the 2013-14 edition of UK indoor track competition the Revolution Series.
- **Darts:** The British Darts Organisation agreed a rights deal with the Pitch International agency for the global distribution of rights to the World Professional Darts Championship.
- **Golf:** US broadcaster NBC extended its rights for the Ryder Cup and the Senior PGA Championship in a 16-year deal, from 2015 to 2030, with the PGA of America.  
The Ryder Cup deal covers eight editions of the event. Coverage will include previews, reports and updates on NBC and NBC-owned pay-television broadcaster Golf Channel; a Ryder Cup documentary series on both networks; live coverage of practice rounds for the first time; and the Ryder Cup Captain Selection Show on Golf Channel. NBC's Spanish-language broadcasters Telemundo and Mun2 will show highlights. The deal includes simultaneous online streaming rights.  
Golf Channel will continue to cover the weekday opening rounds of the Senior PGA Championship, with NBC picking up coverage of the final rounds at the weekend. The channel also extended its rights for live coverage of all four rounds of the PGA Professional National Championship.
- **Golf:** The Total Sports Asia agency was appointed by the Ladies European Tour to market and distribute the circuit's events worldwide, excluding Europe and North America. The deal will run until at least the end of 2014.
- **Gymnastics:** The International Gymnastics Federation appointed the IEC in Sports agency as the global rights distributor for events including the Artistic World Cup, Challenge Cup (Artistic) and Rhythmic World Cup.
- **Ice Hockey:** The Infront Sports & Media agency was appointed as the exclusive commercial partner of a new pan-European club competition that will launch in August 2014. Infront was selected by the board of the European Ice Hockey Club Competition following an international tender process. Infront will be responsible for the worldwide distribution of media rights and multimedia production of all games as well as the centralised marketing and merchandising rights.
- **Ice Hockey:** US broadcaster NBC agreed a three-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, for rights to Notre Dame university home games. Pay-television channel NBC Sports Network will show 12 live matches per year. Online platform NBC Sports Live Extra, will stream a further eight live matches.
- **Ice Hockey:** The NHL's Buffalo Sabres agreed a rights deal with Canadian telco Bell. Sabres games that were previously available on the NHL's out-of-market Center Ice package will be shown by Bell TV in certain regions. The deal covers 50 games in 2013-14.

months to September 30 as it countered the threat of new rival BT Sport, the pay-television service run by telco BT. Sky's adjusted operating profit in the quarter was down eight per cent to £285m, in part due to the increased cost of its English Premier League football rights in the 2013-14 to 2015-16 cycle.

- Thailand's Siam Sport Syndicate agency said that it is keen to secure a digital-terrestrial television licence to launch the country's first free-to-air sports news channel. Siam Sport

formed a joint venture, I-Sports Media, with information technology company Samart Corp to bid for the licence. The auction process for the licence will take place in December.

- South African public-service broadcaster the SABC formed a partnership with telecommunications company Telkom to acquire media rights for sports and other programme genres. The SABC's acting chief operating officer, Hlaudi Motsoeneng, said that hundreds of millions of rand had been set aside for the

## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 10 to October 23

### MEDIA RIGHTS 3

## Motorcycling, Olympics, rugby, sailing, skiing, swimming, tennis and more

- **Martial Arts:** Internet-connected television portal provider NetRange agreed a rights deal with the IEC in Sports agency for the 2013 World Combat Games. The deal covers worldwide internet-connected television rights, excluding Brazil, Canada, France, Mexico, Russia and the US. NetRange will provide live coverage of judo, sumo, karate, aikido, kickboxing, wrestling and other disciplines, plus daily highlights and replays.
- **Motorcycling:** Pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport extended a rights deal for five years, from 2016 to 2020, for the British Superbike Championship. Eurosport, which struck the deal with the championship's operator, MotorSport Vision, acquired exclusive live television and digital rights for all rounds in 54 European markets and 17 Asia-Pacific markets. The deal includes live coverage of qualifying sessions and the championship's support classes.
- **Olympic Games:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand acquired rights for the 2014 and 2016 Olympics in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands in a deal with the International Olympic Committee (page 2).
- **Powerboating:** Promoter P1 agreed a deal with US pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Florida for the SuperStock USA competition and AquaX jet ski series in 2014. Fox will show 12 programmes and more than 20 hours of coverage on its Sun Sports channel.
- **Rugby Union:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus acquired rights for the 2013-14 Sevens World Series. Canal Plus will show live coverage on its Rugby Plus channel and highlights on its Canal Plus Sport channel.
- **Sailing:** The Clipper Round the World Yacht Race agreed a distribution deal with BBC Worldwide, the commercial arm of UK public-service broadcaster the BBC, and named production company 1080 Media TV as its host broadcast partner. BBC Worldwide will distribute two series produced by 1080 Media TV about the race, one focusing on sporting action and the other focusing on the human story.
- **Skiing:** The Infront Sports & Media agency extended its news clip distribution deal with the International Ski Federation for two seasons, from 2013-14 to 2014-15. Infront produces video news releases for FIS Alpine, Cross Country, Ski Jumping, Nordic Combined, Snowboard and Freestyle World Cup events. Snowboard and freestyle news will be available via dedicated players on the federation's website, which will be revamped by the end of October.
- **Surfing:** The Association of Surfing Professionals agreed deals with US pay-television broadcaster ESPN and video-sharing website YouTube. ESPN will show highlights under a three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016. The association's YouTube channel will show more than 3,000 hours of programming per year, including live coverage of the men's and women's World Championship Tours and the Big Wave World Tour.
- **Swimming:** The European Broadcasting Union renewed its rights deal with the Fédération Internationale de Natation for four years, 2014 to 2017 (page 8).
- **Swimming:** The IEC in Sports agency extended a deal with the Fédération Internationale de Natation to distribute the federation's annual events for four years, 2014 to 2017 (page 8).
- **Tennis:** Channel operator Fox International Channels, owned by Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox, agreed a five-year deal, from 2014 to 2018, for rights to the French Open in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, China, Cambodia, South Korea, North Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Myanmar, Brunei, Laos, Papua New Guinea, East Timor, Fiji, Mongolia and the Pacific Islands. The broadcaster acquired rights in Singapore from the 2016 event (page 1).
- **Various:** US pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN agreed a video syndication deal with media company AOL. AOL's website and more than 1,700 of AOL's affiliate websites will show ESPN-branded news, highlights and analysis, and programming that has been broadcast on ESPN's television channels.

project. Telekom will also upgrade the SABC's technology infrastructure and assist in developing the broadcaster's mobile television service.

### MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- Uefa, football's European governing body, invited bids for the media rights in the UK, Germany and Austria to the Uefa Champions League in 2015-16 to 2017-18, and the Super Cup in the four years from 2015 to 2018. Bids in the UK auction are due by November 5. UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport has said it will consider a bid. Bids in the Germany and Austria auction must be submitted by November 27. The Team Marketing agency is running the sales processes.
- German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF had a joint bid for the rights to the 2014 Wimbledon tennis championships rejected by the IMG Media agency. Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland, which held the rights from 2011 to 2013, is in talks with IMG about a new deal.
- France's Ligue Nationale de Rugby will make a decision over its future media rights strategy at a meeting on December 3. The LNR is considering activating a cancellation clause in its domestic rights deal with Canal Plus for the Top 14 club league in order to negotiate a more lucrative deal.
- American football's NFL denied a report that it is considering selling a new domestic media rights package covering an additional set of Thursday evening games. The *Wall Street Journal*

## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 10 to October 23

said that preliminary talks had taken place between the league and media companies about the rights. League-owned pay-television channel NFL Network currently shows 13 games per season on Thursday nights.

- The Sportfive agency launched the sales process for home video rights covering the Sochi 2014 winter Olympic Games in 40 territories across Europe, including the event's host nation Russia. Sportfive said that offers including the rights to the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro would be considered.

### ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB began posting links on Twitter to near-live clips from its coverage of Uefa Champions League matches, which were available to UK users free-of-charge. Sky's rights for the competition cover the UK only. Sky also agreed a deal with Twitter to get the tweets 'promoted', so that they appeared at the top of users' Twitter feeds even if they were not followers of Sky's feeds. Sky introduced the initiatives in order to promote its internet-based pay-television service Now TV.
- LiveBasketball.TV, an online streaming platform for basketball, was launched by digital sports media company Perform in association with the International Basketball Federation, continental governing bodies, and the Euroleague Basketball club competition. The platform will provide coverage of more than 300 national team games and every Euroleague game each season, as well as coverage from leagues in China, the Philippines, Australia, Argentina, the Americas and Eastern Europe. Fans will be able to watch live coverage of games plus highlights, clips and on-demand replays of classic games.
- The Formula E Championship, the new electric motor racing competition launching next year, agreed a multi-year partnership with production company Aurora Media Worldwide. The company will produce coverage of all Formula E races plus qualifying and practice sessions.

- The English Football League, which runs the three divisions below the top-tier Premier League, launched an in-house programming division to produce and distribute content on multiple platforms. Football League Productions will work with existing and new content partners, clubs, sponsors and fans to develop new formats for television, online and radio.
- The rugby union Sevens World Series will be streamed live online in its entirety for the first time in 2013-14. Coverage of all nine rounds of the series will be available to watch on the competition's official website, IRBSevens.com, with geo-blocking applying in territories where broadcast agreements are in place.
- The European Handball Federation will stream live coverage of five qualification matches for the 2014 European Women's Championship via its EHFTV.com online platform. The federation has plans to stream more games in future.

### INDUSTRY MOVES

- Richard Carrión, the International Olympic Committee's chief negotiator of broadcast deals outside Europe, announced his resignation from the body following his failed bid for the presidency. The Puerto Rican quit his different positions within the IOC, including that of chairman of the organisation's finance commission, but he will continue to lead the IOC's media rights negotiations outside Europe until the Sochi 2014 winter Olympic Games.
- Racecourse Media Group, the umbrella organisation for 33 of the UK's racecourses, appointed Adam Binns as its new director of broadcast and production. Binns starts his new role on January 1, 2014.
- The CSI Sports media company's pay-television broadcaster Fight Sports Network appointed Adam Zecha as its managing director for the Asia-Pacific region.

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