

ICE HOCKEY

Russians cool, but agencies hot for new pan-European tournament

By Kevin McCullagh

Ice hockey's latest effort to create a premium pan-European club competition unexpectedly earned a guarantee for its media and marketing rights in a deal last month with the Infront Sports & Media agency.

The new competition has been created by the European Club Competition, a joint venture between top European clubs, leagues, and the International Ice Hockey Federation (see panel, page 3). The title and brand identity for the competition will be unveiled in 2014.

When the commercial rights were tendered in May, expectations were low, for two reasons. First, there is a history of failed attempts to create a pan-European competition. Second, there is uncertainty over the commitment of Europe's biggest ice hockey league, the Russian Kontinental Hockey League.

The KHL is planning its own pan-

European expansion which could eclipse the new competition and it is not yet clear if KHL clubs will take part in both.

Despite these issues, there was strong competition between three agencies: Infront, Sportsman Media Group, and IMG Media.

Infront is understood to be guaranteeing between €3m (\$4m) and €4m per year plus a share of revenue for global media and marketing rights. The deal is understood to cover nine years, from the inaugural season in 2014-15 to 2022-23.

Bruno Marty, the head of Infront's winter sports division, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "I am convinced that a pan-European club ice hockey competition has the potential to be the biggest development in European ice hockey for the last 20 years."

Infront eventually agreed the deal in

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FOOTBALL

Top leagues are still kings of content

By Frank Dunne

The value of the media rights to Europe's top five football divisions has increased by 25 per cent on the last rights cycle, according to research by *TV Sports Markets* and published in full in the *Football Media Money League* report.

England's Premier League, Italy's Serie A, Spain's La Liga, France's Ligue 1 and Germany's Bundesliga together are generating more than €5bn

(\$6.8bn) per season from their domestic and international media rights. This compares with just under €4bn per season in the last cycle.

The figures "emphasise once again how important football, especially 'premium' football, is in attracting new pay-TV subscribers and retaining current ones," according to Michael Mellor, senior vice

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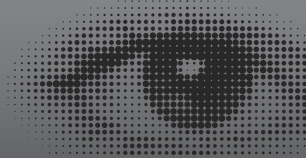
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FASTRACK 1

NEWS IN BRIEF

Scottish football takes online route into China

The deal between the Scottish Professional Football League and Chinese online television operator PPTV agreed last month will boost the image of the league in the region, the league has told *TV Sports Markets*.

"It will certainly give us a profile in China, which we never had previously," Neil Doncaster, chief executive of the SPFL, said. "A live Scottish football match had never been shown there before this deal."

PPTV has the rights to show all matches which are broadcast in the UK and Ireland by pay-television broadcasters BSkyB and BT Sport, and Gaelic-language public-service broadcaster BBC Alba. This includes about 58 matches across the remainder of the 2013-14 season. PPTV has about 60m subscribers in mainland China. The deal was brokered by the MP & Silva agency.

Last month, the SPFL agreed a one-year deal with MP & Silva for the agency to market its international rights in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. The deal is thought to be worth about £700,000 (€820,000/\$1.1m). The agency is also close to agreeing a deal with pay-television operator Al Jazeera in the Middle East.

The rights were previously held by the Sportfive agency as part of a four-year deal, from 2010-11 to 2013-14, worth more than £2.5m per year. Sportfive's minimum guarantee was about £2.25m per year, with the remainder from a revenue share.

The SPFL bought back the rights in Mena and Asia before selling them on to MP & Silva. Sportfive still holds the rights in the Americas, sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Oceania until the end of the 2013-14 season.

In June, MP & Silva agreed a nine-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2022-23, to sell the league's international rights for about £18m, or £2m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 17:12). The deal also

includes a revenue share element. It covers all territories outside the European Economic Area. ■

Booming north east targeted

The launch of a new Brazilian pay-television channel is part of broadcaster Esporte Interativo's plans to increase the distribution of its basic-tier main channel, with distributors having to acquire both as part of a package deal.

The main channel is distributed to more than 32m homes, which is just over half of Brazil's television households. However, it is not available on either the country's largest cable platform Net Serviços or the largest satellite platform Sky Brasil. Both are run by the Globo media group.

The Esporte Interativo Nordeste pay-television channel will launch in December. The channel's sport content is specifically tailored to the north-eastern region of the country.

This year, EI acquired rights to seven of the nine north-eastern state football championships in long-term deals. It also holds the rights to the Copa do Nordeste until 2022, which is made up of the winners and runners-up from the region's state championships. However, it does not hold the rights to the two biggest state championships in the region – Campeonato Baiano and Campeonato Pernambucano.

"We can't show this regional content on our main channel, as other parts of the country are not that interested," Guilherme Lenz, EI's commercial director, said. "That's why, among other reasons, it makes sense to launch a pay-television channel aimed at the north east."

Lenz said that the channel launch represented a huge opportunity for the broadcaster. Pay-television penetration in the region stands at about 13 per cent, which is below the country's average of about 28 per cent. The broadcaster plans to invest at least R\$100m (€33m/\$45m) in sports rights in the region over the next six years. ■

Dailymotion builds US content

Video-sharing website Dailymotion's one-season deal agreed last month for NFL rights was in part to bolster its American sports content, according to the company.

Marc Eychenne, Dailymotion's international content VP, told *TV Sports Markets* that the acquisition of NFL rights "made sense" as the website already had rights to basketball's NBA and ice hockey's NHL. The rights cover France, Belgium and Switzerland.

"Having the NFL meant we could have a strong offering of American sports across these territories – that was really important for us," Eychenne said. "Plus, we love the idea that the content is available with US commentary, as this is important for big NFL fans."

The deal is based on a revenue share but it is not thought to include a minimum upfront guarantee for the league. The NFL, however, is thought to be earning more than the 50:50 split that Dailymotion usually agrees.

The NFL agreed the deal to increase the exposure and audience of the league in markets where the sport is of only niche interest. The financial aspect of the deal is secondary to developing an audience.

The UK and Germany are the two strongest European markets for the sport. Dailymotion was initially hoping to agree a deal for all European territories outside the UK, but settled for the three territories included in the deal. It hopes to stream rights in more territories in future, Eychenne said.

Dailymotion will stream at least one live, exclusive match per month but these will never be the top matches. The NFL may allow Dailymotion to show additional matches depending on audience ratings. Dailymotion will only show regular-season matches. The Super Bowl is not included in its deal. Matches and highlights will be available free of charge. ■

ICE HOCKEY

Infront bullish with or without the Russian clubs

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partnership with the Sportsman Media Group, against whom it had initially been in competition. The two agencies will also deliver a range of services including production of television and internet coverage, creating digital media products, and promotion. Sportsman's main duties are media rights distribution in German-speaking territories, digital media services, and selling one of the sponsorship rights packages.

Szymon Szemberg, head of the project at the ECC, told *TV Sports Markets* this week that the competition had not counted on receiving a guarantee. Its shareholders – the clubs, leagues and the IIHF – are pooling €1.1m per season to cover the basic running costs. “We didn't have any idea whether there would be a marketing partner before the process, so we had to have a modest approach when budgeting,” Szemberg said.

Agency interest turned out to be stronger than the ECC expected. Sportsman, Infront and IMG were the three agencies to make serious bids for the global rights. Another two agencies, one of which is thought to be Sportfive, expressed interest during the early stages of the tender. In the closing stages, Sportsman withdrew to allow its partner Infront to face off against IMG.

The bidding agencies at first did not offer guarantees, but began to do so as the level of competition became clear.

KHL key for IMG

The Infront and IMG offers were close in terms of the guarantee, but it is understood that IMG was only prepared to compete at this level with the full backing of KHL clubs. The KHL is in talks with the ECC, but has not yet committed to play, and even if it does, the question of the league's European expansion remains.

Kristian Hysen, senior vice president, IMG Nordic, told *TV Sports Markets*: “The

The ECC shareholders

The European Club Competition is a company with three groups of shareholders:

- the founding clubs, with 63 per cent
- the founding leagues (Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, and perhaps Russia), with 25 per cent
- the International Ice Hockey Federation, with 12 per cent

big question really is if the European Club Competition and the KHL's European plans can be pushed at the same time, or if there is an inbuilt conflict here. We don't believe the ECC can be a sustainable, premium property without full support from KHL and Russian teams.”

Infront's Marty said the ECC could succeed even without the involvement of Russian clubs. “Currently, there are six top leagues and big team brands in European ice hockey involved and fully backing the project,” he said. “This unity and strength will not remain unnoticed by the sports community, broadcasters, sponsors and fans.”

IMG's approach put the ECC in a tricky situation. It could not accept KHL participation as a precondition of any agency deal, because it would have handed KHL clubs a veto over the competition.

But some sources close to the talks said this was not the only factor in the ECC's decision.

Infront is thought to have been more aggressive than IMG in production commitments. Infront has agreed to produce all 149 matches. Broadcast partners will cover production costs of some matches, but Infront and Sportsman are still expected to spend over €1m per year on other matches.

Some sources said the greater experience of Infront and Sportsman in ice hockey rights was also a factor.

Russian conundrum

Ice hockey experts are divided on the importance of KHL participation in the ECC. Some say the competition will never be a success without KHL clubs and were the KHL to succeed in turning

The ECC tournament

Competing teams: 40 planned for the inaugural season, 2014-15.

Qualification: An expected 26 clubs will have A licences, securing their place in the competition for four years. Each season, the play-off winner and regular-season winner from the six/seven founding leagues will qualify with B licences. C licences, or wild cards, will be handed out to certain teams from other leagues to fill up the other places.

Competition structure: Group stage first round with 40 teams in 10 groups of four, with the 10 group winners and six best runners-up going into the second round; knock-out rounds from second round onwards, culminating in a final.

Number of games: 149 per season.

Season: August to February. Matches will be scheduled to avoid clashes with football's Uefa Champions League.

The European Trophy, a pan-European pre-season tournament involving 32 teams, will be scrapped once the ECC starts.

itself into a pan-European league, it might overshadow the ECC.

Infront and the ECC said they expect KHL teams to play in the ECC, although perhaps not in the first season. The KHL took a step closer to its pan-European ambition last month with the confirmation that Finnish club Jokerit would join the league from 2014-15.

Some suspect KHL clubs will take part in the ECC, but only to maintain their relationships with the rest of the ice hockey 'family'. The KHL was said to have taken a tough stance in its discussions with the ECC about participation, including asking for a fixture schedule that was very favourable towards its own schedule. However, in a sign that the league is moving closer to participation, it is thought to have now agreed to the ECC's proposed schedule.

Maximum exposure

Infront expects sponsorship and media rights to each account for roughly half of its revenues from the first year. “We will focus on the entire product, not just TV,”

Marty said. “Media rights will be sold market-by-market. We will seek the optimum mix of free-to-air and pay-television to earn rights fees and maximise exposure.”

Szemberg said the ECC had given Infront the “very basic direction that we want as much exposure as possible, including on free-to-air television and digital media. To make the tournament easily accessible to fans is the key to success.”

The countries of the founding leagues – Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland – and perhaps Russia will be the key television markets. One ice hockey rights expert

said deals with free-to-air broadcasters for matches of domestic teams, and deals with pay-television broadcasters for the rest of the matches, would be regarded as a successful distribution outcome.

World Championships

The World Championships are one of Infront’s biggest sports rights properties, and industry insiders say its deal with the IIHF is highly profitable.

Marty said that supporting another major competition within the sport was an added motivation in bidding for the ECC. But he rejected any suggestion that Infront was motivated by a desire to keep sweet its relationship with the IIHF, with

a view to renewing the World Championships.

“The IIHF is only a minority shareholder in the ECC. We believe that a strong pan-European league will support the value of the World Championship between national associations. But we would not enter into the bidding for such a premium property just to bolster one of our other properties. That would be the wrong approach.”

Infront and the IIHF are understood to be close to entering an exclusive negotiation period about a renewal of the World Championships deal.

[www.iihf.com](#) For the full interview with Bruno Marty visit our website. ■

FOOTBALL

Top Euro leagues are still driving pay-TV across the globe

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president and head of football at the IMG Media agency.

“In the domestic markets the value is already proven, but now that [growth in value] is increasingly the case in international markets, especially in Asia where European leagues take precedence over the domestic league in many countries – Japan, China and Korea being the exceptions,” he added.

Some European television markets are suffering from the continuing economic crisis, and in all regions market conditions can vary dramatically from market to market. But most experts believe the underlying trajectory for football content is still one of strong growth.

Mellor pointed to the recent deal in which Fox International Channels paid €80m to acquire the rights to the Bundesliga in 80 territories (*TV Sports Markets* 18:19).

“Rumours suggest that it is worth a multiple of four to five of what they currently receive from those territories. This suggests that in some areas fees will continue to rise,” he said.

Another executive involved in the buying and selling of football rights said that domestic and international rights fees for the leagues would continue to increase, but with “one big and obvious proviso: that the competition between pay-television channels continues to be there.”

He said that at the moment, the signs were that this was still increasing rather than declining. “In addition, there are new platforms emerging, some of them easier to access, and this is bringing or will bring in new players. There is nothing like a platform war for pushing up prices.”

Leader of the pack

Among the big five, England’s Premier League remains the leader of the pack, with total media-rights income of €2.175bn per season, more than double the amount earned by the second highest-earning division, Italy’s Serie A, which is on €974.5m per season.

Spain’s La Liga follows on €709.6m per season and France’s Ligue 1 is on €639.5m per season. In the first two seasons of its new domestic cycle, 2013-14 and 2014-15, Germany’s Bundesliga 1 will be on €541m per season. This is expected to increase in the latter two seasons to €674.4m due to incrementally increasing payments from its domestic deal, and the start of a new international rights cycle.

Mellor said that there were multiple

reasons for the pre-eminence of the English league. These are:

- a well-established sales process open to agencies and broadcasters
- the pooling of club rights which are sold collectively (which is still not the case with Spain’s La Liga)
- match timings that are attractive to Asian broadcasters
- high production standards
- individual clubs driving strong commercial and marketing programmes globally, thus creating added value to the league
- a large quota of high-calibre international players
- an equitable redistribution of revenues among the clubs, which makes for a more competitive league.

Growth

Closing the gap on the Premier League looks impossible in the near future. The challenge for the other leagues is improving their rate of growth at home and abroad as rapidly as possible.

Germany’s Bundesliga had probably the most successful cycle in this regard. Bundesliga 1 enjoyed a 54-per-cent increase on the value of its domestic rights compared to the previous four-year cycle, from 2009-10 to 2012-13. It also enjoyed an increase of 51 per cent in the value of its international rights. This value is expected to double in the next cycle. All rights are sold by the league’s commercial arm, DFL Sports Enterprises. ■

FOOTBALL

Infront wants six years of Serie A but may only get three

By Frank Dunne

With one week to go until the league assembly at which Serie A clubs will vote on the media adviser role, it looks increasingly certain that the Infront Sports & Media agency will be offered a renewal. The questions now are: for how long and on what terms?

At a meeting of the 20 Serie A clubs taking place in Milan today, a number of provisos to any renewal will be put forward by a group of clubs led by Juventus. If accepted, they would make the renewal deal far less attractive than the contract Infront has in mind.

Infront has offered to guarantee the clubs €5.5bn (\$7.6bn) over six years from 2015-16 to 2020-21. The offer is thought to be based on broadly the same commission structure as at present, which nets the agency at least €35m per season in the current three-year rights cycle. Infront's current advisory deal is for six years, from 2010-11 to 2015-16.

Some of the ideas under discussion among the Juve-led clubs include:

- making a renewal beyond 2018 conditional on ambitious, yet-to-be-identified performance targets
- requiring the agency offer to be underwritten by a more solid bank or parent company guarantee than is the case in Infront's current deal
- linking commission payments to amounts of money collected rather than what is contracted, to limit the clubs' losses should a broadcast partner go bust
- proposing a separation of the advisory roles for international and domestic rights sales, with international rights being split up and sold in geographical blocks rather than in a single global package.

Profits

The most basic concern of the Juve-led clubs is that Infront and MP & Silva, the agency which sells the international rights, are making too great a profit.

On top of its commission for handling the sale of the rights, Infront also earns on deals between clubs and broadcasters for the clubs' archive rights, on the production of the match coverage and for various technical services, like providing the feed for the international coverage.

Some local rights experts believe that these additional fees push Infront's earnings to over €40m per season. This would put its annual income from Serie A roughly on a par with that of Fiorentina, which was the seventh-highest paid club in the 2012-13 season.

Failure

Another pressing concern is the extent to which the clubs would be protected if a broadcast partner went under during the lifetime of a contract, and the extent to which Infront should be rewarded in such cases. Last week, the league lost one of its current broadcast partners, with the closure of the sports channel Sportitalia.

The worst-case scenario is that the heavily loss-making Mediaset Premium pay-television platform folds, the way that digital-terrestrial pay-television platform Dahlia did, leaving the bulk of the contracted rights fee unpaid.

Dahlia had acquired the rights to eight Serie A teams for €31.5m per season for the period 2010-11 to 2011-12 but had paid the league only €8m when it folded in January 2011 (*TV Sports Markets* 15:1).

No other broadcaster stepped in to acquire the rights, leaving the clubs with a shortfall of €55m over the two seasons. It is thought that in Infront's present contract it is paid on the contract amount agreed, rather than the amount subsequently brought in.

Vote

It now appears accepted by all parties that in the final year of its current contract, Infront has the right to handle the sale of the rights for the next three-year cycle, and to earn commission on all three years, even though that extends two years beyond its current deal.

The Juve-led clubs might be simply outvoted on November 15. Infront needs 14 votes out of 20 to be reappointed for the next six years and some insiders claim that at least two of the seven clubs are

ready to defect and vote for the agency, giving it 15 clubs.

This would mean that rival offers for the advisory role would not be examined. The IMG Media agency, accountancy firms PricewaterhouseCoopers and KPMG, and consultants Wasserman Media Group have all contacted the league to express interest in the role. ■

FOOTBALL

IMG looks to IPL model to break Indian resistance

By Dan Horlock

The IMG Media agency believes that a new Indian football tournament modelled on cricket's Indian Premier League will act as a springboard for growth in the sport.

The Indian Super League, which will launch in September 2014, is financed by a newly-created company owned by IMG, Indian conglomerate Reliance and pay-television broadcaster Star. Each partner owns an equal share of the company.

The league is sanctioned by the All India Football Federation, the sport's governing body in India.

Key features of the new competition include: one international star player being signed for each team; a two-month format; and franchise teams based in cities around the country. Star will broadcast the competition domestically under a deal running until at least 2024. Its stake in the tournament is worth about Rs15bn (€177m/\$244m) over the period, according to the *Times of India* newspaper.

The move is part of the broadcaster's plans to spend Rs200bn overhauling its sports division in the next three to five years (see *Sports Clips*).

"India is an enormously attractive place, where both sponsors and media want to invest and wealthy guys want to own franchises," Jeff Slack, senior vice president for global business development in football at IMG, told *TV Sports Markets* this week.

"The idea is to get an IPL-style tournament that gets people very excited about football and has high quality football played in India. It is needed," he

added. "This is a way for Indians to touch and feel world class football."

In other developing football markets, pre-season tours by top European teams have helped raise interest levels but this has proved very difficult in India. "The European clubs struggle to get there as the summer is a tough time to play football in India," Slack said.

IMG believes that Indians will respond to the IPL model because they are familiar with it. "They've seen what you can do when you can bring top cricketers, top celebrities, great production values and an innovative approach to it in a short tournament lasting eight weeks with eight teams. If this was a different market we'd be having a different conversation but because it's India and because they have that history and experience, we believe this sort of approach to a football tournament would make some sense."

The spread of teams across the country marks the competition out from India's domestic league, the I-League, whose teams are heavily focused in two regions of the country – on the west coast in Goa and Maharashtra and in the north east in West Bengal and Meghalaya.

Newco

The newco has a wider role, beyond the Super League. It will hold all of the AIFF's commercial rights, superseding a 2010 deal between the federation and an IMG-Reliance joint-venture. These rights include media rights for the I-League and Indian national team matches. The newco's control of the rights will run until the end of the 2024-25 I-League season, reflecting the duration of the original deal.

The joint venture has so far failed to stimulate sufficient interest in the re-launched I-League and the sport as a whole. Slack conceded that the I-League had failed to take off, due to the relatively poor quality of the football, which had not improved despite investment.

IMG-Reliance signed a deal with the AIFF worth a minimum of Rs6.55bn over 15 years, from 2010-11 to 2024-25, for the commercial rights for Indian football including the I-League and national team.

Star's investment in the new league is part of a wider strategy. In addition to the ISL, the broadcaster is also supporting

new leagues, with similar formats in hockey and badminton, played over short periods and using a franchise model.

A similar football tournament in India was set to be staged in the state of West Bengal last year but was cancelled by the Indian Football Association, the sports governing body in the state of West Bengal (*TV Sports Markets* 16:3).

The association cited logistical issues and investors backing out of franchises as reasons to cancel the tournament. It also said that the timing of the tournament from March until May was unsuitable for foreign players.

Indian Super League

The Indian Super League will take place over two months, between September and October, and consist of eight franchise teams. There are 10 candidate cities competing to host a franchise.

Each squad will be made up of one marquee player, seven experienced international players aged between 25 and 32, and a group of Indian players.

The inaugural season was initially planned for January 2014, but was put back to later in the year due to scheduling problems with the broadcaster Star.

The first round of the competition will be a league, in which each team will play 14 matches, home and away. The top four franchises will qualify for the play-offs, which will consist of two semi-finals and a final.

Advantages

The make-up of the newco would allow it to maximise revenues for the Indian Super League, Slack said. For example, a centrally-sold sponsorship package will be integrated with Star's coverage. "That is the part of the process that's very exciting," Slack said. "We are looking at the whole nut and everything we can bring in."

It is thought that Star will show coverage of the ISL in both English and Hindi, as it has for its English Premier League coverage. The broadcaster is contemplating showing both the ISL and the Premier League in more regional

languages to increase the reach of the tournaments in the country.

Star is expected to pick up the rights to the I-League and the national team when they become available at the end of the 2014-15 season. They are currently held by pay-television broadcaster Taj Television. Slack said there was no obligation to sell the rights to Star, but as a partner in the newco it would have a "preferred" position. Under the current deal, Taj is paying \$400,000 (€290,000) per season. Production costs of about \$3m per season are paid for by IMG-Reliance.

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

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

TV2 and spectre of SBS push MTG to pay 15% more

By Robin Jellis

Uefa, European football's governing body, achieved an increase of about 15 per cent in the value of its Champions League rights in Scandinavia in its renewal with Modern Times Group.

MTG, the multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster, agreed to pay just under €220m (\$304m) across the three years from 2015-16 to 2017-18, or about €73m per year.

The previous Champions League deal with MTG, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, was worth just under €190m, or about €63m per year. Both deals were brokered by Team Marketing, Uefa's sales agent for its club competitions.

The fee increase was primarily due to competition from commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 in Norway, which bid for rights in Norway alone. State-owned commercial broadcaster TV2 in Denmark bid for free-to-air rights in Denmark alone. MTG's deal covers Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

It is thought that the threat of a potential bid from SBS Discovery Media, which operates basic-tier and free-to-air channels across the region, also prompted a higher bid from MTG. Neither SBS nor pan-regional pay-television broadcaster C

More bid for Champions League rights.

Uefa also received bids for the Europa League but did not close a deal and will come back to the market later.

Bidding

The rights were sold market by market, with the intention of generating competition in each territory. There were three packages in each territory: one for first-pick matches on a Tuesday, a second for first-pick matches on a Wednesday, and a third for all other matches. MTG won all packages in each territory.

There were two rounds of bidding in Norway, with TV2 Norway and MTG bidding strongly. MTG won the rights in the first round in both Denmark and Sweden.

One source close to the auction said that MTG bid strategically by putting a lot of money on the table for Norway, the market where it predicted it would receive the most competition. It is thought that the level of bids from MTG and TV2 increased by between 25 and 30 per cent from the first to the second round in Norway. Norway is the most valuable market in the new deal.

Denmark is the second most valuable territory, as it is a key market for the broadcaster. MTG won the rights in the first round, with TV2 Denmark's bid rejected as too low.

The rights are worth the least in Sweden, as MTG did not feel as threatened by rival bidders.

In the previous Champions League deal, Uefa secured an increase of about 120 per cent in the value of the rights due to aggressive bidding from both MTG and Bonnier, the majority owner of C More (*TV Sports Markets* 15:12).

Uefa is understood to be pleased with the value of the new deal considering that the only real challenge to MTG came from TV2 Norway, and taking into account the number of television households and the population of the region. At about €220m, the deal is the most valuable sports-rights deal in Scandinavia.

MTG is not permitted to agree sublicensing deals for any matches, although one source doubted that MTG would even consider this "as they put a huge premium on exclusivity."

MTG v C More

MTG was willing to pay a high price to retain what are key rights for the broadcaster across the region.

Peter Nørrelund, head of sport at MTG, told *TV Sports Markets*: "There are some rights which can determine the success of a business, and, of course, the Champions League is one of those properties. We are the only broadcaster of all Champions League matches since the beginning of the tournament in 1992, so it is close to our hearts and crucial to our business."

He added: "We also have the Premier League in Denmark and Sweden, we have Danish football and we have ice hockey in Sweden. I think we have a very, very strong position, and continuing with the Champions League is underlining that for us."

The broadcaster's Premier League rights in Denmark and Sweden combined are thought to be worth close to €100m. The rights cover the three years from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

Since MTG snatched the Premier League rights from C More in the previous cycle, from 2010-11 to 2012-13, C More's profitability has been hit in Denmark and Norway.

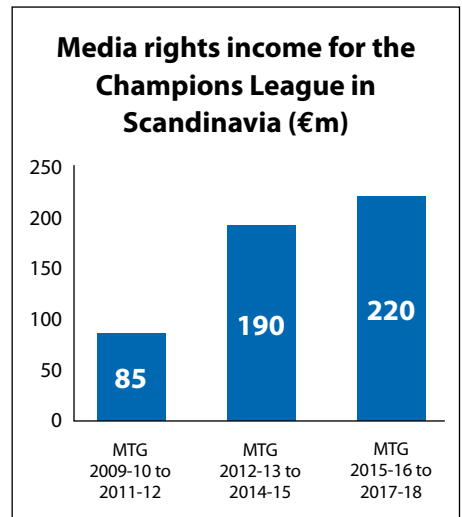
C More's owner, Bonnier, is looking to sell its 65-per-cent stake in the broadcaster. Fox International Channels and Al Jazeera are thought to be possible buyers. Norwegian telco Telenor owns the other 35 per cent.

Despite its struggles, C More earlier this year renewed its rights to the top-tier Swedish football league and Sweden's top ice hockey league in deals worth a combined value of about €60m per year.

It is thought that SBS did not bid for Champions League rights as the broadcaster first wants to assess the performance of its European Qualifier rights. In July, Discovery-owned SBS secured a deal worth between €70m and €75m for the qualifiers – its first major sports-rights deal following Discovery's takeover (*TV Sports Markets* 17:14).

Europa League

Uefa also tendered rights for the Europa League, its second-tier club competition, but did not agree a deal. It is understood to have received bids at a similar level



to what it earns at present. In its current deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, C More pays about €27m, or €9m per year, for rights across Scandinavia.

SBS, C More, TV2 Denmark and TV2 Norway all bid for the rights. It did not agree a deal for two reasons. First, it was focused on the Champions League rights sale. Second, it did not feel offers were high enough.

C More and SBS bid for the rights across the region. TV2 Denmark and TV2 Norway bid in their respective territories only. Local sources say that SBS was the most serious bidder, and at least matched the value of the current C More deal.

Uefa is under little pressure to agree a deal at below what it considers market value this early in the sales cycle, and will look to monitor the market and take advantage if further competition arises. It is thought that Uefa is hoping to generate interest from other free-to-air players across the region.

Scandinavian teams have been faring better in the last two to three seasons than previously in the competition, which should make it more attractive to broadcasters.

In the 2013-14 season, for example, there is one team from each territory in the group stages of the competition: Esbjerg fB from Denmark, Tromsø IL representing Norway, and IF Elfsborg from Sweden. This means broadcasters will have at least 18 matches involving local teams.

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

FASTRACK 2

NEWS IN BRIEF

ATP doubles its money as Sport1 renews in Germany

German sports broadcaster Sport1 last week renewed its deal for ATP men's tennis in a three-year deal thought to be worth up to €1.5m (\$2.1m), or about €500,000 per year.

The rights are for three years, from 2014 to 2016, and cover the ATP World Tour 500 and World Tour Masters 1000 tournaments, as well as the World Tour Finals event. It is thought that the deal includes a clause to extend the agreement for a further two years.

The previous deal, from 2011 to 2013, is thought to have been worth up to €250,000 per year for the same rights.

Both deals were agreed with the ATP's commercial arm, Tennis Properties Limited, which has been advised by the IMG agency since 2001. There was no formal tender process, with the deal agreed following direct talks with Sport1.

It is thought that the fee increase was due to interest in the rights from the dominant German pay-television operator Sky Deutschland, and also from commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1. Sat.1 plans to launch pay-television sports channel ran Plus HD next year.

One source also suggested that the value of the deal increased due to the growing popularity of tennis, and the fact that more hours of production are included in the new deal.

Olaf Schröder, chief editor and head of programming at Sport1, told *TV Sports Markets* that along with its international football rights, the ATP World Tour is the "crowd-puller" for the broadcaster's Sport1 Plus pay-television channel.

The broadcaster has rights to the Italian Serie A, France's Ligue 1 and the Brazilian Campeonato Brasileiro Série A following a deal with the MP & Silva agency agreed in June.

Schröder said that German interest in tennis is high, as in Tommy Haas, Philipp Kohlschreiber and Florian Mayer, Germany currently has three

players ranked in the world's top 40. The German public is also interested in top tennis featuring non-German players like Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal among others, Schröder added.

The deal covers live and highlights rights in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

IMG's deal to advise TPL is thought to have been extended to cover the next seven years, from 2014 to 2020. ■

Villans moving quietly into US

English Premier League club Aston Villa is in talks with US pay-television operator Time Warner Cable to expand its regional rights deal to more markets across the country.

Last month, the club signed a two-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2014-15, with the broadcaster for its "Aston Villa Weekly" programming, which includes the latest Villa match on a 48-hour delay. The deal covers Southern California, Nevada and Hawaii.

Russell Jones, head of marketing and communications at Aston Villa, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "The US is a key market for us and this is an entry point. We are having conversations with TWC to increase our reach into other regional markets where they have a presence."

TWC did not pay a rights fee for the content but will split advertising revenues around the programming with the club. However, any remuneration will be limited as US regional network revenue streams revolve around local, live programming.

Last season, the club's programming was shown on the regional satellite broadcaster America One. The broadcaster decided not to renew the deal, which left Villa looking for a new broadcast partner. Villa was introduced to TWC by a US-based media agent. The club is owned by US businessman Randy Lerner.

Villa also has a deal for its programming with pan-regional pay-television broadcaster Eurosport Asia.

That deal is also set to end at the end of the 2014-15 season. It is understood to be worth between \$20,000 (€14,500) and \$30,000 per season.

Last season, it had a deal with pan-regional pay-television broadcaster Setanta Africa, which was not renewed. Premier League rules dictate that broadcasters may only show programming from four Premier League clubs. "When one club drops out one steps in, at least that's what seems to happen," Jones said. He said that Villa was in conversations with Qatari-based satellite broadcaster Al Jazeera for North Africa and the Middle East.

There are five other Premier League clubs that sell and distribute their own programming: Manchester United, Manchester City, Chelsea, Arsenal and Liverpool. ■

Handball bidders must wait

The International Handball Federation has postponed until January or February the award of the global media rights for its 2015 and 2017 World Championships. They were expected to be awarded last month at its 34th Ordinary Congress in Doha, Qatar.

Qatari satellite broadcaster Al Jazeera is still considered favourite to win the rights. Other bidders include the European Broadcasting Union and previous rights-holder the Ufa Sports agency.

Sources close to the bidding suggested a couple of reasons for the delay. One is that the IHF needs more time to consider offers that turned out to be more varied and complicated than they expected. Another is that the federation is not yet convinced that the offers guarantee it broad enough exposure.

The IHF, which declined to comment this week, has to protect the global profile of the sport, which was downgraded by the International Olympic Committee in May. This will result in a smaller cut of future Olympic revenues – the second-biggest revenue stream for the federation behind World Championships media rights. ■

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 24 to November 6

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: World Cup play-offs, Champions League and women's football

- **Football:** US Spanish-language broadcaster Univision acquired rights to live coverage of Mexico's Fifa World Cup play-off fixtures against New Zealand on November 13 and November 20.
- **Football:** Modern Times Group, the multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster, acquired rights in Denmark, Norway and Sweden for the Uefa Champions League club competition. The deal, struck with the Team Marketing agency, will run for three years, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The agreement, which covers free-to-air television, pay-television, mobile and online rights, also includes coverage of four editions of the annual Super Cup match between the winners of the previous year's Champions League and Europa League, from 2015 to 2018. In Denmark, MTG will show Tuesday and Wednesday matches on basic-tier channel TV3+, with all other matches on the Viasat pay-television channels. In Norway, one match per week and highlights will be shown on basic-tier channel TV6, with all other matches on Viasat. In Sweden, the matches will be split between basic-tier channel TV10 and Viasat. MTG has the right to show all matches on its online pay-television service, Viaplay (page 6).
- **Football:** The Spanish federation, the RFEF, agreed a rights deal with the Mediapro agency for coverage of the Primera División de Fútbol Femenino, the country's top division of women's football. Mediapro's pay-television channel Gol TV will broadcast one game live every Saturday. The length of the agreement was not revealed.
- **Football:** Football Federation Australia agreed a new rights deal with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports for the 2013-14 season of women's club competition the W-League. Fox Sports will broadcast two W-League matches live on December 15 and January 24.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Media group Vivendi agreed to buy out media conglomerate Lagardère's 20-per-cent stake in French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus, a major platform for sports coverage in the country, for €1.02bn (\$1.41bn). The two parties agreed on the price following a mediation process.
- Public-service broadcaster the BBC could lose the rights for some of UK sport's top events under a proposed reform of the licence fee, according to the *Daily Telegraph*. At present the BBC uses about £150m (€176m/\$242m) of the fee to acquire rights deemed to be part of the UK's 'crown jewels' list of sporting events reserved for coverage on free-to-air television. A proposal was put to Culture Secretary Maria Miller to allow other free-to-air broadcasters to bid for a portion of the licence fee in order to show sporting events on the list.
- Online video company Base79 agreed a partnership with Paris Saint-Germain to manage the French Ligue 1 top-tier football club's content on video-sharing website YouTube. Base79 will operate the club's official YouTube channel and will sell advertising and aim to agree video syndication deals around the content.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

FOOTBALL

- The Football Association, the sport's governing body in England, renewed a deal with London-based production company Input Media for five years, from 2013-14 to 2017-18. Input Media will continue to produce live programming around England national team matches at Wembley Stadium for the FA's international rights-holders, as well as live match coverage, highlights shows and a magazine programme around each round of the FA Cup. Input Media will also continue to provide its FA Cup "super-feed" featuring several live games for international rights-holders.
- Spanish Liga club Real Madrid will make its in-house television channel, Real Madrid TV, available on digital-terrestrial television across the country in January 2014. Real Madrid TV may replace the now-defunct sports channel Marca TV, whose licence is currently being used by a shopping channel, or entertainment channel AXN.
- The US Federal Communications Commission, the country's media regulator, proposed the scrapping of the broadcast blackout rule, which blocks US sports events from being shown live on television in their local market unless they meet a specified level of ticket sales. Acting FCC chairwoman Mignon Clyburn said that changes in the marketplace had raised questions about whether the rule was still in the public interest, "particularly at a time when high ticket prices and the economy make it difficult for many sports fans to attend games."
- UK telecommunications company BT said that more than 2m customers had signed up to its BT Sport pay-television service, which launched in August with live coverage of English Premier League football.
- UK pay-television channel Premier Sports agreed a carriage deal with pay-television operator Virgin Media ahead of the start of the 2013 Rugby League World Cup national team tournament. In October, the UK's Parliamentary Rugby League Group of MPs urged the two parties to agree a deal before the event, with Premier Sports showing all 28 matches from the tournament.
- UK bookmaker Betfred became a shareholder of Racing Post Greyhound TV, the dedicated pay-television service of daily racing news and betting newspaper the *Racing Post*. Under the deal, agreed through Betfred subsidiary Totepool, RPGTV will be available in Betfred's 1,730 UK retail outlets as well as via the Betfred.com website.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 24 to November 6**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****American football, archery, baseball, basketball, hockey and horse racing**

- **American Football:** Video-sharing website Dailymotion struck a deal with the NFL to stream live coverage and highlights of games in France, Belgium and Switzerland for the remainder of the 2013-14 season (page 2).
- **Archery:** The World Archery governing body extended a deal with the Broadreach Media agency for the distribution of media rights in India, subcontinental Asia and Russia. The length of the deal was not disclosed.
- **Baseball:** The Fox International Channels broadcast subsidiary of media company 21st Century Fox acquired rights for Major League Baseball across 30 European territories. The rights cover all MLB games including the All-Star Game, Home Run Derby, wild card match-ups, divisional series and league championship series as well as support programming and classic games. The length of the multi-year deal, which covers all media platforms, was not disclosed.
- **Basketball:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia acquired exclusive rights for the NBA in a three-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. NBA games will be broadcast on the Sky Sports 2 HD channel, with Sky Italia showing four matches live per week. The deal includes more than 110 regular-season games per season as well as the play-offs, conference finals and season-ending finals. *TV Sports Markets* understands that the deal is worth about €5m (\$7m) per season.
- **Basketball:** Indian pay-television channel Sony Six renegotiated its rights deal with the NBA to include more games. After showing 72 regular-season games and 18 play-offs matches during the 2012-13 season, the first year of a three-year partnership that will run to 2014-15, Sony Six will now show up to 14 NBA games live per week during the 2013-14 campaign.
- **Basketball:** Greek digital publishing group 24 Media agreed a deal with Euroleague Basketball to stream video highlights of the continental club competition on its Sport24.gr website in Greece and Cyprus. The content will also be accessible via the Sport24 mobile applications on iOS and Android mobile devices.
- **Basketball:** Spanish broadcaster EiTB, which is available in the Basque region, agreed a three-year rights deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, with the Euroleague Basketball continental club competition. EiTB will broadcast all games featuring Basque club Laboral Kutxa Vitoria.
- **Basketball:** Regional US pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Florida extended a regional rights deal for live coverage of games featuring the Orlando Magic NBA team. The length of the multi-year deal was not revealed. The broadcaster will show 81 regular-season games during the 2013-14 campaign plus live pre- and post-game programming such as news conferences and player interviews.
- **Hockey:** The Hockey Australia national governing body agreed a rights deal with Australian public-service broadcaster the ABC. The one-year agreement will ensure free-to-air coverage of all of the body's biggest events until the end of 2014. Hockey Australia will not receive any rights fee from the ABC, but the body will not have to cover production costs for the coverage, as was the case in previous years.
- **Horse Racing:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand's national free-to-air channel Prime agreed a deal with the NZ Racing Board sanctioning body. Prime will show the body's top events as well as the Melbourne Cup, when it is staged in New Zealand. The length of the deal was not disclosed.

- The Spanish Liga's requirement that one match per week from the top football division is shown live on free-to-air television could be abolished as part of a new Professional Sports Act being drafted by the government. Commercial broadcaster Mediaset is the current rights-holder of the free-to-air match in a deal running until the end of the 2014-15 season.
- Italian sports broadcaster Sportitalia closed down on Friday, November 1 after several years of financial problems. Its three channels – Sportitalia, Sportitalia 2, and news channel Sportitalia 24 – were available free-to-air on digital-terrestrial platforms and as part of pay-television operator Sky Italia's sports package. The channel operator, businessman Valter La Tona, launched three new free-to-air sports channels this week, Sport Uno, which will be dedicated to football, Sport Due and Sport Tre, employing all 35 of the journalists who had worked for Sportitalia. Sportitalia's creditors include the top football league, Lega Serie A.
- Indian pay-television broadcaster Star India plans to spend Rs200bn (€2.4bn/\$3.3bn) over the next three to five years as part of a major overhaul of its sports division. The investment will comprise media and sponsorship rights acquisitions in sports other than cricket, traditionally the focus of the broadcaster. Star India also confirmed it would rebrand its sports channels and scrap Star Cricket, creating six general sports channels: Star Sports 1, 2, 3 and 4, and two high-definition channels.
- Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, the country's state broadcaster, will launch three new pay-television channels dedicated to sport in the coming months. One of the channels will be dedicated to football.
- American football's NFL said it was looking at auctioning broadcast rights for a new set of regular-season games on Thursday evenings. Steve Bornstein, president and chief executive of the league's pay-television channel, NFL Network, and the NFL's executive vice president of media, said that discussions were at an early stage.
- German public-service broadcaster ARD is considering a bid for Uefa Champions League rights, which could put it into competition with sister public-service broadcaster ZDF, the current free-to-air

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 24 to November 6

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

Ice hockey, Olympics, rugby union, tennis, volleyball and US college sport

- **Ice Hockey:** German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF acquired rights for highlights of the German top division, the DEL. The deal with the Sportsman Media Group will run for the duration of the 2013-14 season and include the end-of-season play-offs.
- **Olympic Games:** Mexican telecommunications company América Móvil agreed to sell on exclusive domestic media rights for the 2014 winter Olympic Games to state-owned broadcaster Canal 22, according to the *Reforma* newspaper. In March, América Móvil, which is owned by tycoon Carlos Slim, acquired rights across Latin America, excluding Brazil, for the 2014 winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, and the 2016 summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- **Olympic Games:** Portuguese pay-television broadcaster Sport TV acquired pay-television rights for the 2014 winter Olympic Games in Sochi and the 2016 summer Games in Rio de Janeiro. It acquired the rights from the Sportfive agency.
- **Rugby Union:** French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sport acquired rights to 14 autumn international matches hosted by national teams in the northern hemisphere, excluding France.
- **Rugby Union:** Pay-television sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired rights in France for the 2014 Women's Rugby World Cup. Eurosport will show 13 matches live, including three matches per day in the group stages as well as the semi-finals, the third-place play-off and the final of the tournament in France. Eurosport's coverage will include all France national team games.
- **Tennis:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 extended a rights deal for the ATP World Tour, the professional men's tour, for three years, from 2014 to 2016. The exclusive agreement comprises live coverage and highlights of the tour's Masters 1000 and 500 tournaments plus the season-ending World Tour Finals. The deal covers television, online and mobile rights in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The broadcaster will show more than 400 hours of live tennis per year across pay-television channel Sport1 Plus, the Sport1.de website and free-to-air commercial channel Sport1 (page 8).
- **Tennis:** Russian state broadcaster VGTRK acquired rights for the WTA Championships, the season-ending tournament of the Women's Tennis Association. VGTRK, which said it would provide coverage on its Sport 1 channel after pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus declined to bid, is also interested in acquiring a broader deal for other tournaments on the WTA Tour.
- **Volleyball:** The Saran Media agency acquired exclusive global rights for the Turkish Volleyball League's top-tier men's and women's competitions. The deal covers three seasons, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, and includes all media platforms.
- **US College Sport:** Middle Tennessee State University agreed a deal with local US broadcaster MyTV30 for the rights to 11 games featuring various teams from the university's athletics department. The rights include one American football game, six men's basketball games and four women's basketball games. All 11 games will be shown on MyTV 30 with the exception of the women's basketball game on January 25, which will be shown on local channel CW 58. Students in the university's electronic mass communications department will produce and direct all broadcasts.

rights-holder. But some German media sources said ARD would be deterred by the political controversy that would arise from two licence-fee funded broadcasters bidding against each other. Germany's biggest commercial broadcasters, RTL and ProSiebenSat.1 have played down their interest in the rights due to the cost and, in RTL's case, the recent acquisition of rights for Germany qualifiers for Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup.

- German commercial broadcaster RTL and pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland will not acquire rights for live coverage of games from the 2014 Fifa World Cup. Sky said that the lack of exclusivity offered by the World Cup's blanket coverage on free-to-air television, via public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF, was the reason it would not seek a sublicensing deal for live coverage. RTL said that it had clearly positioned itself by acquiring rights for Uefa Euro 2016 and 2018 World Cup qualifying matches.
- UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB expects to agree a deal to sell on free-to-air highlights rights for the 2013-14 Ashes cricket series between England and Australia before the first Test match on November 21. According to the *Daily Mail*, Sky can stipulate that the free-to-air broadcaster can only show highlights after 10pm UK time, just before the start of the following day of play in Australia.
- Italian commercial broadcaster Mediaset is close to acquiring free-to-air rights to the Sochi 2014 winter Olympic Games in a sublicensing agreement with pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia, according to the *Gazzetta dello Sport*. The proposed deal would allow Mediaset to show 100 hours of coverage of the Games on its Italia 1 channel. Sky had been expected to show the Games on its own free-to-air channel Cielo but decided to sell the rights to a third party for "economic reasons." The negotiations were part of wider talks which also cover the the MotoGP motorcycling championship. Sky is expected to sell Mediaset the free-to-air rights to eight of the 18 championship races from next season, 2014. Mediaset has held the rights for over a decade but from next season Sky has exclusive rights in Italy.
- French commercial broadcaster TF1 wants to sell on the rights to 36 of the 64 games of the 2014 Fifa World Cup in order to recoup a portion of the €130m (\$179m) rights fee it paid. TF1 offered a package comprising four second-round games, two quarter-finals, full repeats of all games and a magazine programme to pay-television broadcasters beIN Sport and Canal Plus.
- French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sport is interested in acquiring the rights to the Top 14, France's top-tier rugby union

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 24 to November 6

club competition. Ligue Nationale de Rugby, which operates the Top 14, will decide on December 3 whether to cancel its deal with pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus in order to negotiate a new agreement. The Canal Plus deal is worth €158.5m (\$219m) over five years, from 2011-12 to 2015-16, an average of €31.7m per season.

- Pan-Nordic media company Modern Times Group's Viasat pay-television channels will retain exclusive rights in Sweden for the 2014 winter Olympic Games after public-service broadcaster SVT and commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV4 failed to agree sublicensing deals for the event in Sochi, Russia.
- Several Malaysian broadcasters may team up to make an offer to the Dentsu agency for the rights to the 2016 summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. *The Star* newspaper said that a joint bid would comprise state broadcaster RTM, the Media Prima Group and pay-television operator Astro, while telecommunications company Telekom Malaysia and new pay-television operator Asian Broadcasting Network could also be part of the group. Dentsu is currently in talks with individual broadcasters.
- Australian public-service broadcaster SBS is considering dropping coverage of the country's main domestic cycling races unless it receives six months of payments owed to it by the Cycling Australia governing body, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Cycling Australia is said to owe SBS A\$150,000 (€105,000/\$142,000) in fees, covering May to October, as part of a two-year rights deal, from 2012 to 2013. SBS will not sign a new two-year contract for 2014 and 2015 until the amount is paid in full.
- The CAA Eleven agency launched invitations to tender for the media rights in the Netherlands, the Philippines and Iceland to European qualifiers for the Uefa Euro 2016 and 2018 Fifa World Cup tournaments. Bids must be in by December 3 for the rights in the Netherlands, December 5 for the rights in the Philippines and November 26 for the rights in Iceland. The agency also invited bids for the media rights in Poland and Russia to the Euro 2016 national team competition. Bids must be in by

November 20 for the rights in Poland and November 21 for the rights in Russia.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- Australian commercial broadcaster Seven said that it had no plans to switch coverage of the ongoing Rugby League World Cup national team tournament to its main channel despite complaints from some people who had been unable to watch the action. Seven has shown coverage of the tournament on digital-terrestrial channel 7mate. A Seven spokesperson said that it was a "business decision" of pay-television operator Foxtel not to carry 7mate.
- Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, agreed a deal to carry Sport 24, the live sports channel produced and distributed by the IMG Media agency exclusively for the in-flight and in-ship markets.
- The New Zealand Rugby Union said that it was satisfied with its experiment of showing live coverage of the New Zealand v Australia Test match on October 19 on video-sharing website YouTube despite only 22,000 viewers tuning in. The coverage was available in 45 countries where the television rights had not been sold.
- The Australian Football League, the country's top Aussie rules championship, will allow commercial broadcaster Seven to show up to three primetime Sunday night games during the 2014 season. The league prefers Sunday night fixtures to Monday night games in the long term.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- The Fox International Channels broadcast subsidiary of media company 21st Century Fox appointed Simon Thomas as executive vice-president of global sports and content sales. Thomas, formerly the chief executive of the Team Marketing agency, will begin his new role in January 2014. • Christoffer Cederblad was appointed as the new director of operations at the Spring Media agency. He will oversee the agency's production and distribution business division.

EDITORIAL

Editor Frank Dunne
@frankdunneTVSM

Deputy Editor Kevin McCullagh
@kevinmccullagh

Senior Reporter Dan Horlock
@DanHorlock

Reporter Robin Jellis
@robinjellis

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7954 3506
Fax +44 (0) 20 7954 3511
Email tvsm@tvsportsmarkets.com

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Designer Stewart Henson

SALES & COMMERCIAL

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7954 3483
Email sales@tvsportsmarkets.com

Paul Santos Head of Sales & Commercial
paul.santos@tvsportsmarkets.com

Scott Longhurst Account Manager
scott.longhurst@tvsportsmarkets.com

TV Sports Markets

Registered Office:
St Mark's House, Shepherdess Walk, London, N1 7LH
© TV Sports Markets Ltd.
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235-245 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7JD



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