

FOOTBALL

Serie A stares at treasure but can't touch it without making enemies

By Frank Dunne

The 20 clubs of Italy's Serie A are trying to pick the best possible combination of bids from a rights auction marked by an extraordinary degree of tactical bidding that has thrown the process into confusion.

It ought to be a moment of triumph for the league. Competition was much fiercer than expected, with two completely new players – Fox Sports and Eurosport – entering the bidding.

But a summer of discontent – with threats and counter-threats from rival broadcasters and bickering between clubs – could well be on the cards instead.

Taking the highest bid received for each package would give the league income for its domestic live rights of nearly €1.1bn (\$1.5bn) per season (see table, page 3).

This would represent an increase of about 30 per cent on the €829m per season it currently earns for the same rights, and would be about 40 per cent

more than the combined reserve price of €783m per season for the relevant packages. It is far more than the league had expected.

However, the league can't take all the highest bids without doing one of the following:

- ignoring the rules of its own ITT on conditional bidding or convincing Mediaset to drop the conditions on at least one of its bids
- breaching the 2008 Melandri Law on collective selling, which prohibits a single buyer for all live rights on an exclusive basis.

If it gets it wrong, the league is likely to face a lawsuit from one of its two main broadcast partners, Mediaset Premium and Sky Italia.

The league, and its media rights adviser the Infront Sports & Media

Continued on page 3 ►

FOOTBALL

Ligue 1 follows trend of private deals

By Robin Jellis

France's top football league, Ligue 1, has become the third major rights-holder in just over a month to renew a long-term media-rights deal many years in advance without an open tender.

The league's €480m (\$653m) deal last week with Al Jazeera-owned beIN Sports for its international rights follows early, privately-negotiated deals struck last month by the International Olympic Committee


and the International Ice Hockey Federation (*TV Sports Markets* 15:9; 15:10).

Each deal has its own unique circumstances, but a common thread appears to be the increasing determination of buyers to secure rights of strategic value well into the future, against the background of an overheating global sports-rights market. In each case, the

Continued on page 4 ►

CONTENTS

- 1,3 Serie A receives blockbuster bids from Sky and Mediaset but cannot accept them
- 1,4 Ligue 1 joins growing list of rights-holders renewing long-term deals without tender
- 2 Fastrack: Bobsleigh on course; SRG picks up ice hockey; IMG rugby snatch; OTE renews
- 6 Small increase for Uefa in Poland
- 6 Digiturk helps Euroleague double its money in Turkey
- 7 ITV renews with minimum fuss
- 7 Olympics deal helps TVB cement dominance in free-to-air market
- 8 US leagues pushing the digital envelope with short-form content
- 9 Sports Clips

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Bobsleigh steers steady course with Infront renewal

The value of the media and marketing rights to the bobsleigh and skeleton federation's main events stayed steady in a renewal with the Infront Sports & Media agency last month.

The FIBT, the Fédération Internationale de Bobsleigh et de Tobogganing, agreed a two-year extension with Infront, from 2016-17 to 2017-18, worth about €1.5m (\$2m) per year.

Infront's current five-year deal, from 2011-12 to 2015-16, is thought to be worth a similar amount.

The deal was agreed in private talks between Infront and the federation. One source said that there had been interest in the rights from the IMG Media agency.

The rights are not thought to be particularly profitable for Infront, but complement its winter sports offering which also includes skiing, ice hockey and curling rights.

Both the current deal and new deal cover the worldwide media and sponsorship rights for men's and women's World Cup events and World Championships for both bobsleigh and skeleton.

The new deal also includes media production at the World Championships and all World Cup events from the 2014-15 season. HBS, an Infront subsidiary, will produce the events.

The deal continues a trend of Infront extending its rights deals a long way into the future. Some insiders believe that private equity owners Bridgepoint Capital may be looking to sell the agency as early as next year. ■

SRG picks up new ice hockey league

Media rights to the Champions Hockey League ice hockey club competition were sold last month in Switzerland for a fee of around €500,000 (\$680,000) per year.

The rights were bought by public-service broadcaster SRG and pay-television broadcaster Teleclub.

The deals run for three years, from 2014-15 to 2016-17.

The deals split into a rights fee of about €100,000 per year and production costs of about €400,000 per year.

The rights were sold by the Sportsman Media Group agency, which is selling them in Germany, Austria and Switzerland on behalf of the Infront Sports & Media agency. In October, Infront picked up the global media and marketing rights with a guarantee of between €3m and €4m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 17:20).

Teleclub will show live coverage of all home and away matches which involve a Swiss team up to the quarter-finals. SRG will show live coverage of all games with Swiss participation from the semi-finals. SRG will show highlights of Swiss teams in preceding rounds.

Ice hockey is popular in Switzerland. SRG also broadcasts the IIHF World Championship and the domestic ice hockey league.

The competition begins on August 21. Infront has so far agreed deals with: commercial and pay-television broadcaster MTV in Finland; public-service broadcaster SVT in Sweden; and digital sports media service Slovak Sport.TV in Slovakia. Sportsman is currently holding talks with broadcasters in Germany and Austria. ■

IMG rugby snatch confirmed

IMG Media's acquisition of the international rights to European club rugby was due to be confirmed late this week. The deal was reported exclusively in the last issue of *TV Sports Markets*.

The deal with European Professional Club Rugby, the new European governing body for club rugby, is for four years from 2014-15 to 2017-18. It covers global rights outside the UK, France and Ireland. The deal covers rights in Italy from 2015-16 for three years.

The rights include 67 European Rugby Champions Cup games, plus the play-offs, 19 matches from the second-tier European Rugby Challenge Cup and three games from the Challenge Cup qualifying tournament for emerging clubs/provinces.

In the last issue of *TV Sports Markets* it was reported that the deal value was €14m (\$19m) in total (*TV Sports Markets* 18:10). However, it is understood the value is substantially higher than this. As such, it represents a massive percentage increase on the €1.6m per year paid by the Pitch International agency in its deal from 2010-11 to 2013-14.

The loss is a blow for Pitch which has been trying to position itself as the dominant rugby agency. ■

OTE renews Greek MotoGP rights

Greek pay-television broadcaster OTE paid an increased fee in last week's renewal for rights to the MotoGP motorcycling series.

The deal is for three years, from 2015 to 2017, and is a "positive increment in fee" on the current deal, Pilar Gancedo, media sales director at Dorna Sports, the commercial rights-holder of the series, told *TV Sports Markets*.

OTE's current deal for the rights is also for three years, from 2012 to 2014. The previous deal, with commercial broadcaster Skai, from 2009 to 2011, is thought to have been worth between €250,000 (\$340,000) and €300,000 per year.

The deal was agreed by Dorna in direct talks with OTE. Dorna also spoke with other "national and international broadcasters," Gancedo said.

As well as a rights-fee increase, the deal will include more production on site and greater promotion of the championship.

OTE will broadcast live on site from 12 of the 18 races from the 2015 season onwards.

OTE also has pay-television rights to the Formula One motor racing series in a three-year deal from 2012 to 2014. ■

FOOTBALL

Sky, Mediaset, Fox and Eurosport all in the mix for Serie A

Continued from page 1 ►

agency, drew up a package structure for its rights for the three seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18 that independent experts thought was shrewd.

It appeared to guarantee each of its two main broadcasters, Sky Italia and Mediaset Premium, a block of non-exclusive rights to eight teams. This would ensure that each had the basis for maintaining a pay-television operation, and shift the real battleground to the exclusive package for the other 12 teams. The large number of matches that would be exclusive to one or other platform was seen as likely to attract high-level bids.

The bidding did not go as expected.

Tactical bidding

Mediaset and Sky both bid heavily for the eight-team package on both satellite (Sky's technology platform) and digital-terrestrial (Mediaset's), as well as bidding for the 12-team package. Sky made the highest bid for both eight-team packages, in each case bidding well above the reserve price.

There was nothing in the ITT to prevent a single bidder acquiring both packages and there are no antitrust reasons why a broadcaster cannot do so. However, if Sky is assigned both, its bid for the 12-team package almost certainly becomes invalid. The Melandri Law and the rules of the ITT rule out a single buyer for the live rights to all matches.

Sky's only possible case would be that another operator could still acquire the live internet rights to three matches per week in package E. But even if the league were able to sell the package – which it received no bids for – those rights would still be non-exclusive, as Sky would have the rights to simulcast all its matches online. It is not thought to be a strong argument.

Premium sports channel Fox Sports also bid for all three packages, despite having publicly announced the day before

Bids for Serie A rights, 2015-16 to 2017-18			
Package	Price (€m per annum)	Bidders	Bids (€m per annum)
A	274	Sky	355
		Mediaset	350 <i>If Mediaset does not win B</i>
		Fox	300
B	274	Sky	420
		Mediaset1	280
		Mediaset2	540 <i>if package A is not assigned at all</i>
		Fox	300
C	67	Sky	10
		Fox	15
D	235	Mediaset	306 <i>provided Mediaset wins A or B</i>
		Sky	150
		Fox	180
		Eurosport	140
E	109	none	n/a
Total	959		
Totals of highest bids			1081 <i>if Mediaset bid for D is sustained</i>
			955 <i>if Fox bid for D is accepted</i>
			915 <i>if Eurosport bid for D is accepted</i>
			plus deals for packages C and E
Serie A rights packages			
Package A: satellite, DVBH, IPTV, mobile rights for the home and away games of eight Serie A teams, including the top four (248 matches).			
Package B: digital-terrestrial, DVBH, IPTV, mobile internet and mobile rights to the same 248 matches.			
Package C: ancillary rights such as access to the changing rooms, the tunnel and the pitch-side for interviews with players and staff, to supplement Package A and Package B.			
Package D: exclusive platform-neutral live rights to the 12 teams not covered by A and B (132 matches).			
Package E: internet, mobile, IPTV rights to three matches per week (114 matches).			
Source: TV Sports Markets			

the auction that it would not bid. Fox was outbid on the eight-team packages.

The eligibility of its bid for the 12-team package is under scrutiny because Fox and Sky share the same owner: Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox. The league is thought to have sought the opinion of the national antitrust authority on the matter. If it assigned the rights to Fox, it would almost certainly face a lawsuit from Mediaset.

A senior European competition lawyer told *TV Sports Markets* this week that it was likely that the bid would be ruled invalid. He said: "Competition law – both EU and Italian – is concerned with 'undertakings,' not legal structures, an undertaking being a single economic entity. Two businesses that are 100 per cent owned by the same parent are presumed to be part of the same 'undertaking.'"

He added that it was "almost impossible" to overturn this presumption. "The fact that they have separate management doesn't do it, because they will both still be

Serie A media-rights deals, 2012-13 to 2014-15		
Rights	Winner	Fee (€m pa)
Live satellite, pay-TV, 20 teams	Sky Italia	561
Live DTT, pay-TV, top 12 teams	Mediaset	268
Free-to-air highlights, evening	Rai	11.5
Free-to-air highlights, afternoon	Cielo	3.2
Non-exclusive late night highlights	Mediaset	0.82
Non-exclusive late night highlights	Sportitalia	0.32
Local TV highlights rights	Various	n/a
Live, non-exclusive free-to-air tablet	Vodafone/Tim	8.4
Non-exclusive internet rights	Vodafone/RCS	n/a
International rights	MP & Silva	117
Total		970.24
Source: TV Sports Markets		

subject to ultimate management control by 21st Century Fox. The competition authorities will view Sky Italia and Fox Sports as one undertaking and therefore as, in effect, a single operator."

Conditional bidding

A further headache for the league was that each of Mediaset's bids was contingent upon outcomes in other bids, in breach of the ITT rules.

Mediaset made by far the highest bid for the 12-team package, package D, but

the €306m-per-season offer was only valid if it won one of the eight-team packages. It was outbid on both.

If the Sky, Fox and Mediaset bids for package D were considered ineligible, the bid from Eurosport would be the only bid remaining. However, it is understood to have been nearly €100m per season lower than the reserve price.

As expected, no internet operator was prepared to pay €109m per season for three non-exclusive matches per week in package E. Bids from Fox and Sky for package C, ancillary rights to supplement packages A or B, were far lower than the reserve price. Mediaset did not bid for the package.

Limited options

The league's options are relatively limited and each is fraught with risk. The main options appear to be:

1. Have a new auction for all packages, with a rule prohibiting a single winner for both eight-team packages.

Sky and Mediaset would have to focus on rights for their own platforms, rather than outdoing their rival, producing a more balanced sharing of the rights between the two and, in theory, a battle for the 12-team package.

The obvious counter-argument is that neither broadcaster would face much competition for its 'own' package. But in its last two auctions, covering the periods 2010-12 and 2012-15, the league sold satellite rights to Sky and digital-terrestrial to Mediaset, securing its reserve prices both times.

If the league merely hit its reserve prices, however, the total brought in would be far lower than the highest amount currently on the table.

2. Assign both eight-team packages to Sky and have a new auction for the unsold packages.

This would guarantee the league €775m per season against a joint reserve price of €548m per season, with packages C, D and E still to sell.

However, Mediaset and Eurosport would probably be the only bidders left at the table for the 12-team package, making it highly questionable that the league would hit its reserve price.

Eurosport's entry into the premium rights market in Italy is seen more as a

statement of intent by its new owners, Discovery Communications, than an aggressive blitz to win rights at all costs.

3. Assign both eight-team packages to Sky and assign the 12-team package to Eurosport.

This would give the league a guaranteed €915m per season against a combined reserve price of €783m per season. It would keep at least two major media groups in play for next time.

If Sky, as expected, were to sublicense the digital-terrestrial rights to its eight teams to Mediaset – in return for a share of Mediaset's exclusive rights to the Champions League in the next three-year cycle – there would be three major media groups broadcasting Serie A and in the market for the rights for next time.

Because Eurosport is carried on both Sky (with whom it extended its carriage deal for a further two years in February) and on Mediaset Premium, each platform would each be able to provide its subscribers with all Serie A matches.

However, there is no guarantee that Sky would share the rights to the top Serie A teams with Mediaset. If Mediaset was cut out of broadcasting Serie A completely for three seasons, the platform would be weakened and less able to bid strongly next time.

4. Move immediately to private negotiations with all bidders.

This option would give the league greater flexibility to strike a compromise behind closed doors. However, it would almost certainly antagonise the antitrust authority, which sees private negotiations as a last resort in cases where there has been little interest in the rights.

There would still be no guarantee that the league could match the values currently on the table. Further, it would mean annulling Sky's 'winning' bids, which would alienate the broadcaster going into the talks.

Informed sources say that the broadcaster is looking at legal avenues of redress should its bids be annulled. However, the rules of the tender were clear: the league retained the right to reject any offer if it did not secure the reserve price on all packages.

A league assembly is expected on June 23 to vote on the bids. ■ [www.football-italy.com](#)

LIGUE 1

BeIN has commercial and political reasons for long-term deal

Continued from page 1 ►

rights-holder felt the offer on the table was too good to turn down or to even test against rival bids.

New deal

The French football league's new deal, from 2018-19 to 2023-24, will be worth €80m per year, up 146 per cent on the €32.5m per year that beIN Sports pays in the current deal, from 2012-13 to 2017-18.

There are several commercial reasons why the rights have increased in value.

BeIN Sports has been making a decent profit on the current deal. One insider estimated it to be earning about €40m per year – a profit of about €7.5m per year.

The standard of the league has also improved since the last time a deal was agreed. Top clubs Paris Saint-Germain and Monaco, in particular, have been investing in world class players. The presence at PSG of Swedish star Zlatan Ibrahimović makes the rights "10 times more valuable" in Sweden, one expert said. Ligue 1 rights are also more valuable in Brazil, with many top Brazilian players in the league. PSG alone have signed Thiago Silva, Lucas Moura, Maxwell and Marquinhos since the last international rights deal was agreed.

French clubs are becoming more competitive in Europe. PSG reached the quarter-finals of the Uefa Champions League in both the 2012-13 and 2013-14 seasons, as did Olympique de Marseille in 2011-12.

The league is also trying to make the rights more valuable outside France by hosting the Trophée des Champions, the match between the winners of the league and the domestic cup, in different – and strategically valuable – territories each year. The 2014 match will be in Beijing, China. Last year it was in Libreville, Gabon.

The fact that France will host Euro 2016, with improvements being made to stadiums, is also expected to make

the league a more attractive product to broadcasters.

Since acquiring the Ligue 1 rights in its current deal, Al Jazeera has expanded beyond its core market of the Middle East and North Africa. It has launched beIN Sports in several territories, including France, the US, Canada and South East Asia.

The company was prepared to pay a premium to ensure it didn't lose the rights to rivals in these markets. Had the rights come to the market, it would almost certainly have faced competition from global channel syndicators such as Fox International Channels and Discovery Communications, which are buying rights on a pan-regional basis, as well as major sports-rights agencies.

It is understood that Al Jazeera was prepared to offer the league a higher per-annum fee if it could secure the rights early and on a long-term basis. Talks over the new deal began at the end of last year, but were suspended during the domestic tender in March and April.

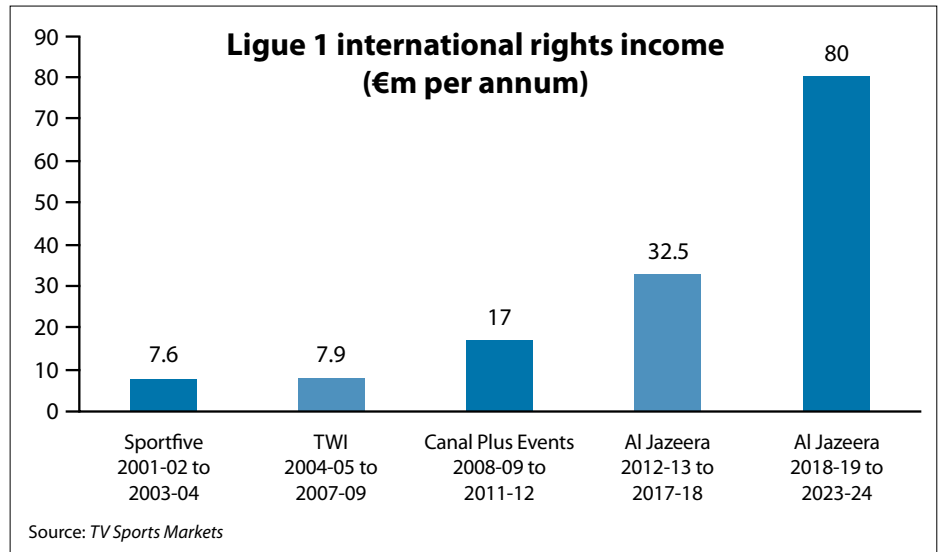
Special relationship

To view the contract purely as a commercial agreement and evaluate the rights fee purely in terms of market forces, however, would be to miss the real significance of the deal: it cements a strategic relationship between Al Jazeera and French football, and, more widely, between France and Qatar.

In June 2011, Al Jazeera came to the rescue of the French league in the current domestic rights cycle, saving the league from an even bigger fee decrease than was expected (*TV Sports Markets* 15:12).

The deal came one month after Al Jazeera had bought the international rights to Ligue 1, and the Qatar Investment Authority had taken a 70-per-cent stake in PSG. It has since acquired the remaining 30 per cent. Both Al Jazeera and the QIA are controlled by Qatar's ruling family. The president of PSG, Nasser Al-Khelaifi, is also director general of beIN Sports.

The Qatari investment in French football came after a well-documented meeting in November 2010 between the French president at the time, Nicolas Sarkozy, the crown prince of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, Michel Platini, the president of



Ligue 1 international rights deal details

Ligue 1's six-year deal, from 2018-19 to 2023-24, for its international rights with beIN Sports is worth €480m, or €80m per year. The deal includes a 50:50 share of revenues brought in above the guarantee.

The current six-year deal with beIN Sports, from 2012-13 to 2017-18, is worth €195m, or €32.5m per year. There is also a revenue split in the current deal, but the league's share is minimal.

Al-Jazeera-owned beIN Sports will pay €10m per year in advance in each of the four seasons before the new deal begins as part of a renegotiation of the current deal. This total amount of €40m will be deducted from the new deal.

BeIN Sports will pay this money upfront

because of the way it has paid the league in its current domestic deal. From 2012-13 to 2015-16, beIN Sports pays an average of €150m per year. However, it paid more in the first two years of the contract, meaning there will be a shortfall in the last two years.

Both the new and current deals cover rights in all territories outside France.

The rights were sold directly by the Ligue de Football Professionnel, which operates Ligue 1 and Ligue 2, the top two tiers of French football.

Of the league's international rights revenue, about 80 per cent is distributed to the top eight clubs to help them compete in Europe.

Uefa, European football's governing body, and Sébastien Bazin, a representative of the former owners of PSG.

Good for league

The massive increase in the value of its international rights is timely for the league. It follows what some experts believe was a slightly disappointing domestic sales process in April, in which the league achieved a less than brilliant result (*TV Sports Markets* 18:7).

League president Frédéric Thiriez was criticised by some club presidents for 'only' securing a 20-per-cent increase in domestic rights fees, with the league's rights increasing from €607m per year to €726.5m per year.

The new deal represents the second successive big increase the league has enjoyed for its international rights (see table). Al Jazeera's current deal is worth almost double the €17m per year paid by Canal Plus Events in its four-year deal, from 2008-09 to 2011-12.

Despite the increases, the French league is still the lowest earner of the top five European leagues from international rights.

MP & Silva role

In the current deal, Al Jazeera shows the games on its channels in territories where it operates, with rights in other countries sold by the MP & Silva agency, with which Al Jazeera has a close relationship.

Some local experts expect Al Jazeera to

do the same in the new deal. However, there are indications that Al Jazeera may begin to operate more like an agency following the appointment of two top executives with experience of selling media rights in recent weeks.

Dan Markham, formerly senior vice president, media distribution and emerging markets for basketball's NBA and Alex Wright, formerly director of television for the Team Marketing agency, have been recruited by the broadcaster. ■ [www.aj.com](#)

FOOTBALL

Uefa gets small increase in tough Polish market

By Robin Jellis

Uefa was able to secure a modest increase in rights fee for the Champions League from Polish pay-television broadcaster NC Plus in its renewal last month, despite there being no rival bids.

The new deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, is understood to be worth close to €20m (\$27m) per year. It is thought that NC Plus was the only bidder. The current deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, is worth about €18.7m per year. The new deal is for the same rights as in the current deal.

Both deals were agreed by the Team Marketing agency, which sells rights to club competitions organised by Uefa, European football's governing body.

The deal reflects the stasis in the Polish market, which has seen levels of competition cool in recent years. Poland, the biggest market in Eastern Europe, has stuttered in recent years, mainly due to consolidation among pay-television players.

In 2009, there were four competing pay-television operators: Polsat, Canal Plus, N and Orange. Canal Plus and N have merged to form NC Plus, while Orange has become less active in the sports rights market.

The anticipated launch of a Fox Sports channel by syndicator Fox International Channels, expected at some point this year, may see levels of competition increase.

The deal is in stark contrast to two cycles ago, from 2009-10 to 2011-12,

when Uefa increased its rights fee by more than 200 per cent, from just under €6m per year to almost €19m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 13:10). When the current deal was agreed in 2011, the fee is understood to have stayed steady.

As well as consolidation in the market, Poland has also been hit by the recession, with broadcasters spending less on sports rights. The finances of free-to-air broadcasters have been particularly badly affected, one expert said.

Another reason why there may have been limited interest in the rights is that broadcasters may be keeping their powder dry for the rights to the top-tier domestic league, the Ekstraklasa.

The rights, currently held by NC Plus, expire at the end of the 2014-15 season and are expected on the market in the coming months. It is understood that Uefa chose to sell the rights ahead of the Ekstraklasa as it feared the market could become even less competitive.

Uefa was able to secure an increase because the rights are important to NC Plus, which has positioned itself as a broadcaster of premium sport. Uefa also has a good relationship with the broadcaster, and the strength of the product makes it an easier sell.

There is strong interest in the performances of Polish players. Top German club Borussia Dortmund, which reached the Champions League quarter-finals in 2013-14 and the final in 2012-13, currently has three internationals in the squad: Robert Lewandowski, Jakub Blaszczykowski and Łukasz Piszczek.

Free-to-air coverage

In the current rights cycle, public-service broadcaster TVP sublicensed from NC Plus the first-pick match each Wednesday. In the new cycle, NC Plus has said it will make matches of a Polish team, should one reach the group stages, the semi-finals and final, available on a free-to-air channel.

It is unclear whether NC Plus would agree a sublicensing deal, or decrypt one of its own channels. One other possibility could be to show matches on commercial channel TVN. Both are owned by the ITI media group.

Tenders for both the Champions League and Europa League were issued

at the end of February with bids due by April 2. The Europa League rights, which are currently worth about €4m per year, are yet to be sold for 2015-16 to 2017-18. ■ [www.uefa.com](#)

BASKETBALL

Euroleague nets double income as Digiturk moves in

By Richard Welbirg

The Euroleague doubled the value of its media rights in Turkey this month as pay-television operator Digiturk ousted incumbent rights-holder, NTV Spor.

The new deal is for five seasons, from 2014-15 to 2018-19, and is worth an average of €3m (\$4.1m) per season. This is approximately double the value of the current deal, with commercial channel NTV Spor, which was worth about €1.5m per season from 2011-12 to 2013-14. The final value was linked to the performance of Turkish clubs.

Turkey is a major market for Euroleague basketball, usually supplying three teams from its domestic league to the continental competition. Turkish Airlines, the league's title sponsor, last year extended its investment to 2019-2020 in a deal worth an average of €6.7m per season.

NTV had helped to expand the Euroleague audience, which drove up the rights value. However, Digiturk is understood to have submitted a considerably stronger bid than NTV Spor and two other bidders, public network TRT and the Saran Media agency.

The Euroleague joins a number of other basketball properties in Digiturk's portfolio including the domestic Beko Basketball League, US college basketball, and men's and women's Turkey Cup games.

The league carved out some rights from the deal to allow it to show live games on its online subscription channel Euroleague TV. Any future betting sponsor will also be able to show games online subject to restrictions such as screen display size.

Digiturk will show matches on its

Lig TV 2 and Lig TV 3 satellite channels. At least one game per week involving one of the three Turkish clubs – Fenerbahçe Ülker, Galatasaray and Anadolu Efes – must be shown on a free-to-air channel. Digiturk is yet to strike a sublicensing agreement. Both the league and Turkish clubs were keen to ensure the continuation of some free-to-air provision.

Despite the increased value of the Euroleague, the NBA remains the most valuable basketball property in Turkey. The rights to the US league are currently held by satellite television platform D-Smart, which is owned by the Doğan media group, in a \$5.5m per season deal over three seasons, from 2011-12 to 2013-14. ■

TENNIS

No UK battle for French Open as ITV renews deal

By Robin Jellis

UK commercial broadcaster ITV this week agreed to pay a 10-per-cent increase for its free-to-air rights to the French Open tennis tournament.

The new four-year deal, from 2015 to 2018, is thought to be worth about £2.2m (€2.7m/\$3.7m) per year. This is up from about £2m per year in the current three-year deal, from 2012 to 2014.

The rights were sold by the MP & Silva agency on behalf of the Fédération Française de Tennis, the French tennis federation. A tender for the rights was issued last year, before ITV entered into direct talks with MP & Silva.

There is thought to have been little interest from public-service broadcaster the BBC or ITV's commercial rival Channel 4 for a combination of price and scheduling reasons.

There was little interest from pay-television broadcasters BSkyB and BT Sport as sports broadcaster Eurosport also has rights in the UK. It holds rights on a pan-European basis in a deal from 2015 to 2021 worth about €20m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 17:19).

Eurosport's rights in the UK are non-exclusive as MP & Silva has to provide the federation with certain guarantees of free-to-air coverage.

All parties were happy with the longer deal. MP & Silva and the federation have secured a decent long-term deal in one of the most important markets for the tournament in Europe, while ITV has renewed what has become an increasingly important property. In the past 12 months it has lost its rights to the domestic football FA Cup, the Uefa Champions League and cricket's Indian Premier League.

Having one of tennis's four grand slams confers prestige on ITV. The French Open also provides healthy ratings. There is strong interest in the performances of top British player Andy Murray, who reached the semi-finals of this year's competition before losing to eventual winner Rafael Nadal. These factors enabled MP & Silva to secure the increase.

ITV must show both the men's and women's finals on its flagship ITV1 channel. All other games will be shown on ITV4. It is understood that the broadcaster has the right to show more games on ITV1 should it choose to do so.

MP & Silva profits

The ITV deal, and the more valuable deal agreed with Eurosport in October last year, with Eurosport increasing its fee from €14.5m per year to €20m per year, means that MP & Silva will make a profit on the rights in 2015.

The agency guarantees the federation about €22m per year in a deal which runs to 2021. MP & Silva's deals with Eurosport and ITV take it close to €23m per year. The agency could also increase its margin if it is able to agree a free-to-air deal in the tough Spanish market.

The free-to-air rights in 2014 in Spain went unsold as broadcasters could not afford them due to the deep impact of the recession.

As a result, Eurosport sublicensed the rights to the men's and women's finals to Discovery Communications-owned digital terrestrial channel Discovery Max. Discovery owns 51 per cent of Eurosport. ■

OLYMPIC GAMES

Rights acquisitions and distribution strategy boost TVB

By Richard Welbirg

The acquisition last week by Hong Kong broadcaster TVB of the rights to the 2016 Olympic Games underlines the determination of the broadcaster to protect its dominant position in free-to-air television while making inroads into the pay-television market.

The position of its pay-television platform, TVB Network Vision, in a market long dominated by i-Cable and PCCW, is also currently strengthened by being the only one of the three operators to have agreed a carriage deal with Al Jazeera's beIN Sports premium channel.

The deal for the Rio Games follows TVB's last-minute acquisition of the exclusive rights to the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics in February.

The rights to the 2010 and 2012 Games had been held by i-Cable in a deal worth \$15m (€11m). One local expert put the value of TVB's deal for exclusive rights to Rio across all media platforms between \$20m and \$25m, suggesting that TVB's emergence is breathing some life back into what had become a moribund sports-rights market.

I-Cable was also outbid by TVB for rights to this month's Fifa World Cup. The company's new sports channel TVB Sport, which is available on TVB Network Vision, is carrying all 64 matches. It will show 22 matches on its free-to-air channels. TVB paid \$40m for the rights last year.

In October, TVB also signed a two-year carriage deal with beIN Sports. The channels beIN Sports 1 HD and beIN Sports 2 HD are packaged with the TVB Sport channel.

They carry football from Italy's Serie A, France's Ligue 1, North America's MLS and England's Championship, rugby union's Six Nations tournament, tennis's ATP World Tour 250 series events, Spanish basketball's Liga Endesa and International Baseball Federation tournaments.

BeIN Sports is also the exclusive

rights-holder in Hong Kong of Uefa's Euro 2016 tournament. This could leave TVB Network Vision as the only pay-television provider offering all three of the biggest events in sport. However, beIN Sports, which launched its Asian channels in a joint venture with the MP & Silva agency, is still trying to secure carriage deals with i-Cable and PCCW.

TVB has long been dominant in the Hong Kong free-to-air market, with its channels enjoying over a 90-per-cent share. The only other free-to-air broadcaster is the smaller ATV.

However, TVB's position is set to be eroded. In October, PCCW and i-Cable were granted licences to operate free-to-air channels.

In pay-television, TVB is still an entry-level player. TVB Network Vision had 200,000 subscribers as of 2013, compared to PCCW's Now TV and i-Cable which had 1.18m and 1.09m subscribers respectively.

Rio deal

TVB agreed the deal for Rio with the Denstu advertising agency, which paid

the International Olympic Committee \$64m for the rights to the 2014 and 2016 Games in 17 territories in Asia.

TVB will show at least 400 hours of live coverage and daily highlights from Rio 2016 on its free-to-air channels. The deal also includes the 2014 summer Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, China.

The 2012 London Games were also shown on TVB after lengthy negotiations with i-Cable, which was obliged in its contract with the IOC to allow at least 200 hours of free-to-air coverage. ■

DIGITAL MEDIA

NFL goes it alone as leagues push out short-form content

By Andy Fry and Frank Dunne

Two services due to launch soon show the increasing strategic and commercial importance of short-form content to the big US sports leagues and underline the degree to which US sport is leading the way in exploiting digital media.

American football's NFL will next month launch NFL Now, a personalised on-demand digital content service. Later in the summer – the date has yet to be confirmed – multiple rights-holders including ice hockey's NHL, baseball's MLB and basketball's NBA will launch a service called 120 Sports, based around two-minute clips. It is thought that the NFL was also approached to be involved in the project but declined, to focus on its own offerings.

With NFL Now, fans provide the NFL information about their favourite teams, players and other interests and receive a video feed tailored exactly to those preferences. The content includes brief highlights, archive footage and behind-the-scenes content.

The app will initially be offered free on an advertising-funded basis across Windows, iOS, Android, Xbox One and PCs. The NFL already has agreements in place with some of its existing

commercial partners to acquire the inventory. These include its mobile partner Verizon, plus Microsoft, Yahoo and Gillette.

Although the total advertising income from such services is small compared to what the major television networks can earn around NFL live content, the relative value of the airtime is high, given its highly targeted nature. As such, the venture has commercial as well as promotional value.

Hans Schroeder, the league's senior vice president of media strategy, told *TV Sports Markets*: "The more information fans provide the more personalisation we can offer. That will drive deeper engagement with our fans and advertising partners."

The venture follows the NFL's one-season agreement in September to provide short-form content to Twitter's Amplify platform (*TV Sports Markets* 17:18).

Schroeder said the agreement had worked well – and may be extended – because the NFL had seen "incremental consumption, as well as an overall growth in our TV ratings. This is a central tenet of ours."

The Twitter deal is based on a share of advertising revenues between the NFL and Twitter. Pre-sales of the inventory brought in about \$10m.

One of the advantages of short-form content is that it can be syndicated across multiple platforms without undermining the value of the main live broadcast deals or taking eyeballs away from the league's own digital operations.

Unlike many other sports leagues, the NFL does not, however, have its own channel on YouTube.

"YouTube is an incredible consumption platform but we're not convinced as yet that it is an effective distribution platform for our content," Schroeder said. "I'm sure in the long run we'll find a way to get some business done together though."

Two minutes

120 Sports is an online streaming platform set up by Time, publisher of the sports magazine *Sports Illustrated*, and digital sports media company Silver Chalice.

At launch it will carry short clips from the NHL, NBA, MLB, motor racing's Nascar, and college sport from Campus Insiders, a joint venture between IMG College and Silver Chalice.

Programming will be in specially-produced two-minute segments. As well as match clips, it will include news, match updates and player interviews.

Bob Bowman, president and chief executive of MLB Advanced Media, the league's digital media subsidiary, said earlier this year that the content would be produced and presented "in a way that no-one has done before."

The service will initially be free and ad-funded, with Time handling the ad sales. It will be available on all major mobile and tablet platforms as well as having a dedicated website, 120Sports.com. A premium version of the service is planned for 2015. ■ www.120sports.com

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 29 to June 11**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: World Cup, Ligue 1, Eredivisie, Copa Libertadores, MLS and more**

- **Football:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC and commercial broadcaster ITV agreed rights deals with Fifa, the sport's global governing body, for the 2018 and 2022 World Cup tournaments. The deals include television, online and radio rights.
- **Football:** German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF extended a rights deal with Fifa for the 2022 World Cup.
- **Football:** TrueVisions acquired rights in Thailand for the 2014 Fifa World Cup in a sublicensing deal with rival pay-television operator RS International. The deal includes live coverage of all 64 matches. TrueVisions will also show highlights, match re-runs and World Cup magazine programming.
- **Football:** Liberian state broadcaster LNTV acquired free-to-air rights for the 2014 Fifa World Cup. The deal was struck on behalf of LNTV by Liberia Broadcasting System, the country's public-service radio station. The contract was agreed with pan-regional consortium the Africa Union of Broadcasting.
- **Football:** The state-run Malawi Broadcasting Corporation acquired exclusive rights for all 64 matches of the 2014 Fifa World Cup in a deal with the Africa Union of Broadcasting.
- **Football:** Sport 24, the live sports channel produced and distributed by the IMG Media agency exclusively for the in-flight and in-ship markets, struck a deal with Fifa to show live coverage of the 2014 World Cup. Sport 24 will show all 64 matches, the majority of which will be live.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports agreed a six-year renewal, from 2018-19 to 2023-24, for international rights to France's top-tier Ligue 1. BeIN Sports will pay a guarantee of €480m (\$653m), or €80m per year. Any revenue generated above the guaranteed minimum will be shared on a 50:50 basis between the broadcaster and the league, the Ligue de Football Professionnel (page 1).
- **Football:** The IMG Media agency extended its international rights deal for the Eredivisie, the top division in the Netherlands, for four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18. IMG sealed its first deal under the new agreement with UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB, which acquired rights for the same four-year period. Both deals were reported in *TV Sports Markets* 18:6, published on March 28.
- **Football:** The Saran Media agency acquired exclusive rights in Turkey and Iceland for Latin America's Copa Libertadores club tournament. The deal will run for two years, from 2015 to 2016, and include a minimum of 48 matches per season, including the quarter-finals, semi-finals and final, plus a weekly highlights programme. The deal covers rights on free-to-air, pay-television, pay-per-view and IPTV platforms.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Latin America struck a multi-year deal with Mexican top-tier club Pachuca and extended a deal with another club, León. The deal with Pachuca includes exclusive television rights and non-exclusive online rights. The lengths of the deals, which begin in 2014, were not disclosed.
- **Football:** US cable-television operator Time Warner Cable Sports acquired Spanish-language rights for games featuring Major League Soccer club Chivas USA. Time Warner Cable will broadcast 16 regular-season games this year, including 10 home matches and six away matches, via the Time Warner Cable Deportes Spanish-language channel.
- **Football:** US pay-television broadcaster ESPN sealed a one-year rights deal for the National Women's Soccer League, the top division in North America. The ESPN2 channel will show nine games of the 2014 season. Online service ESPN3 will stream live coverage of three regular-season games.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Media and entertainment company Discovery Communications completed its acquisition of a controlling interest in pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport, from 20 per cent to 51 per cent, in a deal with French commercial broadcaster TF1 Group. The closing price for Eurosport International was based on an average enterprise valuation for the Eurosport Group of €902m (\$1.23bn). TF1 will retain the ability to sell its remaining 49-per-cent stake in Eurosport International to Discovery. The deal covers Eurosport's six pay-television brands: Eurosport, Eurosport HD, Eurosport 2, Eurosport 2 HD, Eurosport Asia-Pacific and Eurosport News.
- UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB launched a new channel, Sky Sports 5, dedicated to coverage of European football. Sky Sports 5 will show up to 600 matches live next season, including coverage of European national team qualifiers, the Uefa Champions League, the Spanish top-tier Liga and Spain's Copa del Rey knockout tournament, plus magazine programming. Sky Sports 5 is available at no extra cost for subscribers to the Sky Sports package of channels. Customers who activate the channel by visiting the Sky website can also register for two years of free broadband from the company.
- Spanish telecommunications company Telefónica is in talks with Mediaset to acquire the Italian media group's 22-per-cent stake in Spanish pay-television operator Canal Plus after agreeing to acquire a 56-per-cent shareholding in the sports broadcaster from media company Prisa, which would increase its overall stake to 78 per cent. Mediaset is considering an offer of about €350m (\$476m) from Telefónica for the shareholding, according to the Bloomberg news agency. The €750m deal with Prisa requires the approval of Spain's competition authorities.
- Thailand's Supreme Administrative Court ruled against the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission regulator's attempt to force pay-television broadcaster RS International to allow free-to-air broadcasters in the country to access coverage of all games in football's 2014 Fifa World Cup. RS International will allow 22 of the 64 games to be shown on free-to-air channels 7 and 8.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 29 to June 11

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

American football, Euroleague basketball, bobsleigh, GAA, golf and more

- **American Football:** Canadian pay-television broadcaster Rogers Sportsnet expanded its Thursday Night Football rights deal with the NFL. The deal now includes multimedia rights and additional games, beginning in the 2014-15 season. Sportsnet's coverage will include all 14 Thursday Night Football games, two Saturday games and all three games on Thanksgiving Day.
- **Basketball:** Turkish pay-television operator Digiturk acquired rights for the Euroleague club competition in a five-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2018-19. Digiturk, which struck the deal directly with Euroleague Basketball, will exploit the rights on the Lig TV 2 and Lig TV 3 channels and must show one game per week, featuring a Turkish team, on a free-to-air channel (page 6).
- **Basketball:** Dutch pay-television sports broadcaster Sport1 extended a rights deal for the NBA. The length of the multi-year renewal was not disclosed. Sport1 will broadcast live NBA games every Friday and Sunday during the regular-season plus coverage of the play-offs, finals, All-Star games and the Global Games, which will take place in October in Berlin, Germany.
- **Basketball:** Australian public-service broadcaster ABC acquired rights for the 2014 World Cup and women's World Championship in a deal with Fiba, the sport's global governing body. ABC2 will show live coverage of all Australia national team games and all games from the quarter-finals onwards.
- **Bobsleigh:** The International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation extended a media rights and marketing partnership with the Infront Sports & Media agency for two years, from 2016-17 to 2017-18. Live streaming rights will be retained by the governing body in selected territories for exploitation on the federation's official digital platforms. Infront will also produce coverage of all World Cup and World Championship races (page 2).
- **Boxing:** UK pay-television channel BoxNation acquired rights to the June 21 fight between British middleweight Martin Murray and Ukrainian Max Bursak.
- **Cricket:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport struck a two-year rights deal for exclusive live coverage in the UK and Ireland of the Caribbean Premier League Twenty20 tournament. BT Sport will broadcast all 30 matches plus a one-hour highlights show following every contest.
- **Gaelic Sports:** The News UK newspaper publishing group agreed a deal with the Gaelic Athletic Association to show clips of Gaelic football and hurling tournaments. The clips, including highlights of 85 matches from the All-Ireland Championships and coverage of the national leagues, are available to subscribers of *The Sun*, *The Irish Sun*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* newspapers via PC, smartphone and tablet devices in the UK and Ireland. Viewers in the US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada can also access coverage via a subscription to *The Irish Sun*.
- **Golf:** Canadian pay-television sports broadcaster TSN and French-language sister channel RDS extended a rights deal with the United States Golf Association. The deal, which includes the US Open, US Women's Open, US Senior Open Championships and other tournaments, will run for eight years, from 2015 to 2022. The agreement covers television, online and radio platforms.
- **Golf:** Polish pay-television broadcaster NC Plus acquired exclusive rights for the 2014 editions of the US Open and PGA Championship.

- Mexico's telecommunications regulator, the Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones, allowed Televisa and América Movil to retain existing 'exclusive' rights deals for major sporting events, despite having blocked the media companies from striking such agreements in the future. The watchdog had been considering whether to force the companies to share exclusive rights covered by previously-agreed deals as well as future agreements.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- US network NBC is seeking a record price per advertiser of about \$4.5m (€3.3m) for a 30-second spot during its coverage of the 2015 NFL Super Bowl American football championship game, according to Variety. The report said that between 20 and 25 of the 40 separate 30-second spots are likely to have been acquired already through multi-year packages.
- The NFL sealed carriage deals with the Roku, Amazon Fire TV and Kindle Fire digital platforms for NFL Now, an online service that will launch ahead of the 2014-15 season and allow fans to tailor content, including highlights of games, to focus on their favourite teams and players.
- US pay-television broadcaster Tennis Channel launched a digital subscription service, Tennis Channel Plus. The service, which is available via the Tennis Channel Everywhere authentication application and through the tennischanneleverywhere.com website, will offer live coverage of 300 matches from 40 tournaments per year as well as programming that is not available on the Tennis Channel. The service will also provide highlights and on-demand content, including archive programming.
- US regional cable-television broadcaster NESN linked up with mobile video technology company Burst to introduce fan-generated mobile video content into its live coverage of Boston Red Sox Major League Baseball games. NESN, the local rights-holder for Red Sox games, will utilise the Burst platform to show fan videos during live game broadcasts within minutes of their submission.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 29 to June 11**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****Horse racing, kickboxing, MMA, Formula One, DTM, French Open and more**

- **Horse Racing:** TSN struck a new rights deal in Canada with race track and casino operator Woodbine Entertainment Group. TSN will broadcast every race from the Canadian Triple Crown series – which comprises the Queen’s Plate, Prince of Wales Stakes and Breeders’ Stakes – and will show coverage of seven other races, including the North America Cup. The length of the multi-year agreement was not disclosed.
- **Kickboxing:** BoxNation acquired exclusive rights in the UK for the Enfusion Live: Edition 19 world championship event on June 29. BoxNation agreed the deal with the Fighting Spirit agency.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** The IMG Media agency agreed new rights deals with Asian pay-television channel Kix and pay-television channel Kombat Sport in Europe and Africa for the World Series of Fighting. Kix will broadcast coverage across 15 territories in South East Asia until the end of 2015. Kombat Sport will show the series in French-speaking Europe and several African territories.
- **Motorcycling:** Pay-television broadcaster OTE renewed an exclusive rights deal in Greece for the MotoGP world championship. The deal is for three years, from 2015 to 2017. OTE will show all grands prix, free practices and qualifying sessions plus the Moto2 and Moto3 series, the ‘Paddock Pass’ magazine programme, highlights, previews and reviews on the OTE Sport channels (page 2).
- **Motorsport:** TSN and RDS extended a rights deal in Canada for the Formula One world championship for five years, from 2015 to 2019. The broadcasters will show coverage of all qualifying and practice sessions as well as races.
- **Motorsport:** The CBS Sports division of US network CBS acquired rights for the DTM German touring cars series. CBS Sports will show races in full on a delayed basis on Sundays in the US and Canada until the end of the 2014 season. In February, the IEC in Sports agency agreed a partnership with Wige Media to distribute the production company’s portfolio of motor racing media rights, including the DTM, on a global basis.
- **Motorsport:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired rights for the DTM series until the end of the 2014 season. BT Sport will broadcast all races on a live or delayed basis.
- **Rugby Union:** The RDA Television and IEC in Sports agencies jointly agreed a deal with USA Rugby to market the global rights for the US national team’s matches against Scotland on June 7 and New Zealand on November 1. The deal excludes the US market.
- **Tennis:** UK commercial broadcaster ITV extended a rights deal for the French Open for four years, from 2015 to 2018. ITV will show a minimum of 90 hours of coverage per year on its main channel as well as the ITV4 digital-terrestrial channel and the ITV Player on-demand service (page 7).
- **Tennis:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport struck a rights deal with the Lawn Tennis Association, the sport’s governing body in Britain, for live coverage of three UK grass-court tournaments. BT Sport acquired exclusive live coverage of the Women’s Tennis Association Classic in Birmingham from June 9-15, and the Association of Tennis Professionals and the WTA International in Eastbourne from June 16-21. BT Sport also acquired non-exclusive rights for the Queen’s Club men’s tournament, from June 9-15.
- **Tennis:** Digital-terrestrial television broadcaster Discovery Max acquired rights in Spain for the men’s and women’s finals of the 2014 French Open tournament on June 7 and 8 in a sublicensing deal with pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport (page 7).
- Canadian pay-television broadcaster Rogers Sportsnet launched a new live streaming service, Sportsnet Now. The service will offer all of the broadcaster’s television programming via PCs, tablets and smartphones for Sportsnet subscribers.
- Italian sports broadcaster Sportitalia relaunched on DTT in the country on June 2. The broadcaster’s three channels, Sportitalia 1, Sportitalia 2 and news channel Sportitalia 24, closed down in October due to financial problems.
- Portugal’s competition tribunal upheld a finding by the country’s competition regulator, the Autoridade da Concorrência, that pay-television broadcaster Sport TV had adopted ‘discriminatory practices’ in how it imposed minimum carriage fees to pay-television operators between 2005 and 2011. The tribunal reduced Sport TV’s original fine of €3.7m (\$5m) – imposed by the regulator – by €1m to €2.7m.
- Telecommunications company UPC Romania and sister satellite-television broadcaster Focus Sat will show coverage of the domestic top-tier football league, Liga 1, and league cup, Cupa Ligii, after agreeing a carriage deal with media company Intel Sky Broadcasting. UPC Romania and Focus Sat will carry Intel Sky Broadcasting’s Look TV and Transilvania Live channels for five years, covering the 2014-15 to 2018-19 domestic seasons. Intel Sky Broadcasting acquired the free-to-air channels in March, with the plan of transforming them into pay-television channels.
- Boxing promoter Top Rank linked up with Macao resort and casino operator Sands China and Chinese promotional company Seca to launch a new television series in China. The one-hour weekly magazine programme, Fist Power – Fight to Win, will be distributed to regional channels in cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou from July. The show will include fights from the Top Rank library plus behind-the-scenes footage, profiles and weekly updates on Chinese fighter Zou Shiming’s professional flyweight career. Live coverage of two boxing events featuring fighters from China against international opposition will also be produced, with the first fight scheduled for August.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 15 to May 28

- Sony-owned Indian broadcaster Multi Screen Media launched livsports.in, an online service which will offer live video content from high-profile sporting events.
- The Game, the agency that markets media rights for the Bolivian Professional Football League, will pay the league \$250,000 (€184,000) more per year following an expansion of the top division from 12 to 14 teams from this year. The total value of The Game's rights distribution deal, which runs until 2016, was not disclosed.
- The DFB, the German football association, launched a tender for the domestic media rights to Germany national team, lower-league and women's football matches. The rights cover two seasons, from 2016-17 to 2017-18, and include national men's and women's team friendly matches plus the third-tier 3. Liga and the women's top-tier Bundesliga. The men's national team matches will have to be shown on free-to-air television as they are listed events. No deadline was given for the bids to be submitted.
- ARD will no longer attempt to acquire rights for the Wimbledon tennis championships in a sublicensing deal with pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland, after Sky extended its contract for the tournament until 2018 in April, according to the German public-service broadcaster's sports coordinator Axel Balkausky.
- European Professional Club Rugby, the new European governing body for club rugby union, launched a tender for the rights to the new Champions Cup and Challenge Cup competitions in France. The rights were split into four packages and cover four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18. The deadline for responses to the tender is June 18.
- the sport's global governing body, Fifa. Ericson told the Reuters news agency that the match schedules are convenient for viewers in Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas.
- Carsten Schmidt, the chief executive of German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland, warned that some television channels operated by clubs in the Bundesliga, the country's top football division, are monopolising interview access to players and coaches.
- Online video distribution and marketing company Rightster agreed a partnership with the International Table Tennis Federation to develop the global governing body's official channel on video-sharing platform YouTube. Rightster will be responsible for selling advertising and sponsorship for the channel.
- UK public-service broadcaster the BBC will show coverage of three Fifa World Cup football matches in 4K ultra high definition via selected televisions at BBC research and development sites. The BBC said that the trial 4K coverage of one game from the round of 16, a quarter-final and the final, could pave the way for more widespread use of the technology. Japanese electronics company Sony, a partner of football's global governing body Fifa, will produce the coverage.
- Ligue 1 champions Paris Saint-Germain earned the most media-rights income of clubs in the top division of French football during the 2013-14 season. PSG earned €44.7m (\$60.8m) from media rights followed by Olympique de Marseille (€41.9m), who finished sixth in the table. Relegated club Ajaccio (€13.2m) earned the least in the division.
- Asian pay-television broadcaster Star Sports reported a record-breaking audience of 2.8m for its live online streaming coverage of the Indian Premier League Twenty20 cricket play-off matches between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians, and Kings XI Punjab versus Kolkata Knight Riders, on May 28.
- David Kogan and Sara Munds will leave senior roles at the Wasserman Media Group agency's global media division in August to pursue new opportunities.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- Television viewer-friendly kick-off times are likely to result in football's 2014 World Cup generating a record global television audience, according to Niclas Ericson, director of television at

EDITORIAL		DESIGN & PRODUCTION		TV Sports Markets Registered Office: St Mark's House, Shepherdess Walk, London, N1 7BQ © TV Sports Markets Ltd 2014. Printed by Rapidity, Citybridge House, 235-245 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7JD
Editor	Frank Dunne @frankdunneTVSM	Designer	Stewart Henson	
Senior Reporter	Richard Welbirg @richardwelbirg	SALES & COMMERCIAL		
Reporter	Robin Jellis @robinjellis	Telephone	+44 (0) 20 7954 3483	
Telephone	+44 (0) 20 7954 3506	Email	sales@tvsportsmarkets.com	
Fax	+44 (0) 20 7954 3511	Paul Santos	Head of Sales & Commercial paul.santos@sportbusiness.com	
Email	tvsm@tvsportsmarkets.com	David Hunt	Senior Account Manager david.hunt@sportbusiness.com	



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