

BELGIAN PRO LEAGUE

Silva struggling to break even on €450m deal but has growth options

By Robin Jellis

The MP & Silva agency agreed deals with the three leading pay-television operators in Belgium last week for the Belgian Pro League but still has an uphill struggle to avoid losing money on the contract.

MP & Silva sold non-exclusive live rights for the league to Belgacom, Telenet and BeTV, owned by telco Voo, in deals worth a total of €60m (\$82m) per year. The deals cover the three years from 2014-15 to 2016-17.

In February, the agency became the league's media adviser in a deal under which it guaranteed the Pro League, the top division of Belgian football, €450m from 2014-15 to 2019-20. This breaks down into €70m per year in the first three seasons, and €80m per year in the last three seasons (*TV Sports Markets* 18:4).

The agency has also sold highlights rights in French-speaking Belgium, to

Wallonian public-service broadcaster RTBF. The deal is worth about €2m per year from 2014-15 to 2016-17.

This means the agency has a shortfall of €8m per year with some rights still to sell. It can still agree: a highlights deal in the country's Flemish-speaking region; deals for clips rights; and deals for the international rights. However, the value of these rights is not expected to make up the difference.

MP & Silva is understood to be considering establishing and distributing a league channel to operators in the second season of the deals, from 2015-16, to counter this shortfall. Each operator would pay a fee per thousand subscribers.

The agency will be hoping for a more competitive market for the second three-year cycle. It is said to be optimistic

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PAY-TELEVISION

The return of the telcos gathers pace

By Frank Dunne

Deutsche Telekom's surprise deal for exclusive domestic basketball rights in Germany last week is small in value but potentially rich in significance. Coming after the aggressive investments in sports rights by BT in the UK and Telefónica in Spain, it is arguably part of a pattern of European telcos coming back to the sports-rights market after having largely abandoned it.

The four-year deal for the Basketball Bundesliga is Telekom's first rights deal since it acquired IPTV rights to Bundesliga football in 2009 (see separate story, page 5).

More, and bigger, deals will be needed before Telekom's sports content strategy can be properly compared to those of BT and Telefónica (see table, page 4).

Nevertheless, some experts believe that

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Tokyo helps IOC towards decent increase in Japan

The International Olympic Committee and the Japan Consortium of broadcasters, which this month acquired exclusive Japanese rights to the Olympic Games from 2018 to 2024, are both likely to be happy with the ¥110bn (\$1.1bn/€0.8bn) deal, local experts say.

For the IOC, the 47-per-cent per-Games increase on the 2014-16 cycle is impressive given Japan's free-to-air broadcasters operate as a cartel through the consortium, which includes public-service broadcaster NHK and the Japan Commercial Broadcasters Association: Fuji TV, NTV, TBS, TV Asahi and Tokyo TV.

The IOC told *TV Sports Markets* that the Consortium, its long-term broadcast partner in Japan, had made the best proposal in terms of both exposure and rights fee in a formal tender process. However, it is thought that there was virtually no competition to the consortium. Japanese telco SoftBank is believed to have been invited to discussions with the IOC but is not thought to have made a bid.

The broadcasters – particularly NHK – were keen to close a deal including the 2020 summer Games in Tokyo as swiftly as possible, in order to begin preparations for the Games and discussions with the local organising committee as the official rights-holder.

Tokyo 2020 was the major factor in the value of the deal. The consortium paid ¥66bn for the 2020 Games and the 2018 winter Games in PyeongChang, South Korea, and ¥44bn for the 2022-24 events, which have yet to be allocated host cities. About 80 per cent of the value is in the summer Games.

The deal also includes rights to the third summer Youth Olympic Games, which takes place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2018.

Japan has been the IOC's most lucrative Asian market during the 2014-16 rights cycle, for which the

Consortium paid ¥36bn (*TV Sports Markets* 16:3). This was up 11 per cent, from ¥32.5bn, on 2010-12 (*TV Sports Markets* 12:8). ■

F1 taps into Canadian competition

Formula One has earned a 50-per-cent increase in its rights value in Canada thanks to intense competition between pay-television broadcasters.

Earlier this month, pay-television operator TSN and French-language sister network RDS agreed a deal with the championship's commercial rights-holder, Formula One Management, for five years, from 2015 to 2019. The networks increased their fee to about C\$5m (\$4.6m/€3.4m) per season. In the existing three-year deal they pay about C\$3.3m per season.

TSN and RDS have broadcast Formula One in Canada since 1992 and 1994 respectively. This was the first time they faced significant competition for the rights. Pay-television network Rogers Communications and French-language subscription channel TVA Sports are understood to have made a substantial joint bid. TVA Sports is a new player in the French-speaking market, having launched in 2011.

The rights deal immediately followed the agreement in principle of a new 10-year deal ensuring Montreal will continue to host a grand prix, which will take effect from the 2015 season. FOM is understood to have kept broadcast negotiators informed about the progress of this agreement, as the Canadian grand prix adds significant value to the domestic television rights.

Competition between TSN and Rogers has been intense since Rogers' \$5.2bn, 12-year acquisition of Canada's top sports property, the National Hockey League, late last year (*TV Sports Markets* 17:22).

"Rogers' competition for sports rights has really increased. It's never been higher," Phil King, president of sports at TSN's parent company Bell Media, told *TV Sports Markets* this week.

Beyond wanting to keep a tight grip on its major sporting properties, TSN was also prepared to pay more in the next cycle because the Formula One championship returned to the US – a favourable time zone – in 2012.

Most European races are staged at around 8am in Canada's east coast cities, and at 5am in Vancouver, which is the second-largest English-speaking audience for Formula One in the country.

French-speaking Canada is a strong influence on rights buyers: while other major sports have an audience split of 75:25 between the English- and French-speaking viewers, the divide is closer to 50:50 for Formula One. Montreal's role as a grand prix host and the past success of Canadian driver Jacques Villeneuve have helped entwine the sport with French-Canadian culture. ■

News Corp's last-minute clips deal

News Corp's deal for non-exclusive digital clips rights in Vietnam to the Fifa World Cup in Brazil was finalised about two hours before the opening match of the tournament kicked off.

News had been in negotiation over the price of the rights for months with the MP & Silva agency, which held the rights in Vietnam. In the end, the media group is thought to have paid about \$50,000 (€36,800) plus some production costs. No other local operators had closed deals, giving News, in practice, an exclusive deal.

The rights are for use on News's BallBall application and website, which can show three minutes of action per match for up to an hour after the game has taken place, as well as round-ups and themed content segments.

Agreeing the deal at the last minute limited opportunities to secure advertising but News expects to make a profit. Traffic levels in the group stage are understood to have been double those for the climax of the European club football season. ■

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that it will eventually break even or make a profit on the deal.

Live rights

The deals with Belgacom, Telenet and BeTV mean that each of the operators will show all Pro League matches. Each acquired the two packages covering all live matches which were put on the market by the league and MP & Silva in April (see table).

All three operators chose to acquire non-exclusive rights as they believe exclusive rights are too expensive for their businesses. It is thought that Telenet struggles to break even on its current deal, in which it holds all rights and has sublicensed some.

Premium channel operators Fox International Channels, which is due to launch in Belgium, and Al Jazeera-owned broadcaster beIN Sports, with which MP & Silva has close ties, had been expected to bid. Neither did. Both spoke to the league, with FIC's interest more serious, but neither was prepared to pay close to €60m per year for exclusive rights.

MP & Silva was hindered by agreeing its deal with the league with a limited lead time for the new season, making it difficult for FIC or beIN Sports to launch a dedicated Belgian channel and get a fair commercial return from the market.

The agency could agree non-exclusive deals if and when FIC and beIN Sports launch in Belgium to generate more rights fees. If they were launching, it would make sense to have the rights, but both are premium channels and would need other exclusive content to differentiate their offers.

In the next cycle, from 2017-18 to 2019-20, MP & Silva will hope for strong bidding for exclusive Pro League rights, with competition from the potential two newcomers and the existing three operators. Alternatively, it could agree

Pro League rights packages, 2014-15 to 2016-17		
Package	Content	Winner
1	5 live matches per week, plus highlights	Belgacom, BeTV, Telenet
2	3 live matches per week, plus highlights	Belgacom, BeTV, Telenet
3 ¹	Magazines each matchday, plus live rights to the Belgian Super Cup	RTBF
4 ¹	Exclusive magazine rights on Monday evenings	RTBF
5	Near-live clips of all matches (10 clips per match, 20 seconds each)	Unsold
6	Delayed clips of all matches (3 clips of 3 minutes each per match)	Unsold

Source: TV Sports Markets Footnote: ¹The Flemish-language rights are available for both packages 3 and 4.

non-exclusive deals with all operators.

The €60m per year which the three operators will pay is the same as the combined value of the deals offered to the league by the operators in February, before the league agreed its deal with MP & Silva.

The fee will be split among the operators according to the size of subscriber base. As the biggest operator, Telenet will pay the most, Belgacom second most, and BeTV will pay the least. MP & Silva is thought to have unsuccessfully pushed for a higher rights fee in a second round of talks.

In the last cycle, from 2011-12 to 2013-14, the league earned €55.2m per year for all rights from Telenet. Telenet sublicensed live rights to Belgacom and BeTV.

Belgacom had the least attractive set of rights in the previous cycle, so looks to be the winner. One source close to the talks said the operators have "let go of the idea of exclusivity" because "it's difficult to steal customers away from each other."

The Pro League rights have switched hands between Telenet and Belgacom in recent cycles but subscriber gains were limited compared to the high rights fees which were paid.

Telenet is also a big beneficiary of the new deal as it has maintained its core sports property for less than half the cost.

League channel

MP & Silva and the league are thought to be looking at launching a channel from the second season of the live rights deals, from 2015-16 onwards.

Under the plan, each of the three operators which has acquired non-exclusive rights would carry a channel specifically for the Pro League, and would pay a fee based on its number of subscribers to the channel to MP & Silva. This would replace the existing rights fees.

It is understood that production costs

for the league channel would be divided equally among operators. Top matches cost about €40,000-€50,000 to produce, while smaller games cost about €10,000-€15,000.

Highlights struggle

MP & Silva is struggling with the sale of highlights rights in Flanders, following a lower-than-expected rights fee in Wallonia. It issued two packages, one for highlights in the evenings after every match, plus live rights to the Belgian Super Cup, the other for a Monday evening highlights show. Both were available in Flemish and French.

The agency agreed a €2m per year deal with RTBF, a 28.5-per-cent decrease on the €2.8m per year RTBF paid Telenet in the previous cycle in a sublicensing deal. Commercial broadcaster RTL was not interested in the rights.

Bids in Flanders are understood to have been lower than expected. The league said it had received no "formal" offer for the rights. The rights were last held by commercial broadcaster VTM in a sublicensing deal with Telenet worth about €5.2m per year. There is limited competition for the rights between public-service broadcaster VRT and VTM. This fee is also expected to fall.

MP & Silva is also trying to sell two packages for clips rights via internet and mobile. There has been interest from newspapers and websites, but the offers have so far been low.

One expert said that it would be difficult for a company to develop a mobile app for such clips rights with just four weeks until the start of the season.

International rights

The Pro League's international rights were previously held by the IMG Media agency, but are included in MP & Silva's contract.

It is understood that IMG paid the league about €1m per year for the rights, and sold them on for close to €1.5m per year. Revenue above the guarantee was split between IMG and the league.

MP & Silva is likely to bundle the Pro League rights along with its other football content when agreeing deals with broadcasters to try to bump up the fees.

Some local industry experts believe the agency could reduce its shortfall by agreeing a lucrative deal with Al Jazeera for Pro League rights in the Middle East. The agency has a close relationship with the Qatari satellite broadcaster, which could help it get a higher rights fee, despite limited local interest in the league. There is some interest in the rights in

the Netherlands due to the proximity of the two countries.

The Belgian league is not strong on the international market, despite the emergence of a strong national team. Belgium are ranked 11th in the Fifa rankings, but only three players in the national team's 23-man squad for the World Cup play in the domestic league. ■

PAY-TELEVISION

Sports rights back in play as jostling telcos eye digital future

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the thinking of the three telcos is not unrelated – that the deals should be seen as a response to a longer-term challenge facing the industry.

William Field, of the Prospero Strategy consultancy, and former adviser to English football's Premier League on new technologies, said: "In defending their broadband market share and being able to offer a bundled proposition to consumers, telcos need to become more content-focused. They are looking at themselves and asking: can we be the digital content gateway of choice in the future?"

He said that other telcos will have been encouraged by the performance to date of BT in the UK. "They are probably all looking at the BT share price, which has nearly doubled in the two years since its Premier League deal in 2012, and concluding that they at least have a window of opportunity to try [a similar approach]."

He added that the BT precedent has created "positive expectations" around buying content, which for years had had "a bad odour, given the amount of money that was wasted on it by operators that didn't get very far with it."

History repeats itself

At the beginning of the last decade European telcos started buying up exclusive sports rights, either to drive embryonic 3G operations or to create IPTV or other digital pay-television platforms to challenge existing pay-

television operators.

Telefónica was in the vanguard and was probably the most aggressive in its spending. Other telcos which followed included BT, Deutsche Telekom, Telecom Italia in Italy, France Télécom's Orange, KPN in the Netherlands, Romtelecom in Romania and Belgacom and Telenet in Belgium. Major mobile operators like Vodafone, TIM and 3 also joined the fray.

The strategy was largely a failure, both as a revenue driver and as a marketing exercise. Most of the operators pulled out of buying exclusive sports rights completely. The chief exceptions to this were in Romania and Belgium (see separate story, page 1).

They are now coming back because changes in the marketplace, particularly with the development of 'unified' services such as triple-play (fixed line telephony, internet and television) and quad-play (the above plus mobile) dragging content to the heart of the business model.

As one telecommunications analyst put

Major sports rights deals by telcos in the UK, Spain and Germany			
Territory/Operator	Property	Contract period	Fee €m pa
UK: BT Sport	Uefa Champions League and Europa League	2015-16 to 2017-18	359
	Premier League	2013-14 to 2015-16	308
	FA Cup	2014-15 to 2017-18	33
	English Premiership Rugby	2013-14 to 2016-17	28
	Rugby Champions Cup/Challenge Cup	2014-15 to 2016-17	26
	MotoGP	2014 to 2018	9
	Ultimate Fighting Championship	2013-14 to 2015-16	5
	Bundesliga football	2015-16 to 2016-17	3
	WTA Premier Tournaments	2013 to 2016	3
	NBA	2013-14 to 2014-15	1.5
Spain: Telefónica	Formula One	2016 to 2017	70
	MotoGP ¹	2014	8
	Formula One	2014 to 2015	3
	European Qualifiers, third party	2014-15 to 2017-18	1.5
Germany: Deutsche Telekom	Basketball Bundesliga	2014-15 to 2017-18	1

Source: TV Sports Markets Footnote: ¹Live rights to 10 races. Telefónica is in talks to extend the deal at a far higher fee.

Telco financial performance		
Operator	Revenue (€bn)	Ebitda (€bn)
BT	22.859	7.645
Deutsche Telekom	60.100	15.800
Telefónica	57.061	19.077

Source: TV Sports Markets, company annual reports

it, "in a quad-play bundle you can differentiate your service with a faster pipe but I would argue that the main point of differentiation is the content. I think that that is broadly where things are heading."

He said that until quite recently Vodafone's favoured business model of acquiring non-exclusive content had looked as though it would prevail. But the intensity of the competition between telcos was changing things.

"For Vodafone's unified services, content is at the heart of everything, as it drives data usage and therefore revenues," he said. "Their position is that they don't want to buy content directly, just to deal with aggregators. They want everyone else to be rational and do the

same thing, with all telcos acquiring the same content on a wholesale basis from third parties. The problem is if someone moves first to gain the advantage of exclusivity over content, the strategy changes and the likes of Vodafone have to start buying exclusive content too.”

Buy not build

In Spain, Telefónica has advanced on two fronts: acquiring exclusive rights to top sport like Formula One and MotoGP and buying up the shareholdings held by Prisa and Mediaset in the Canal Plus pay-television platform. In March the company launched its converged service, Movistar Fusion TV, which offers the same content across all screens.

Vodafone has responded to the strategy by buying the cable pay-television platform Ono for €7.2bn (\$9.8bn) ahead of a launch of its own unified service, which is planned for September.

Field suggested that telcos using their huge financial resources to buy

existing pay-television services rather than having to create one from scratch, often without the relevant pay-television know-how, could be replicated elsewhere.

“It’s so difficult to change organically if you are a telco,” he said. “They have to find the right way to bring on board the skills to enable them to do this and that might be through acquisition. Buy rather than build might be a very sensible approach.”

Telco advantages

Europe’s established telcos, especially those which are state-run or were formerly state run, have some advantages over the pay-television operators they are increasingly in competition with.

They generally have a very large household penetration which has given them long-standing relationships with a huge customer base to whom they can upsell pay-television products as part of a unified service.

They are also delivering content through internet-based services which

allow for a far greater degree of personalisation and interactivity than satellite or digital-terrestrial delivery.

As Field put it, “ultimately, we are heading towards internet delivery as the norm for most content. I am sure of that happening within a decade. And, if you are a telco, you understandably see yourself as a big part of that kind of future.”

There are important caveats, however, about internet-delivered content. The medium in many places still needs a lot of reinforcement of its capacity, Field pointed out, particularly if the stream of live HD or 4K video to multiple sets in the home becomes the norm.

“We have some way to go to being able to do that in a way that matches customer expectations of broadcast quality and reliability. The point at which there is no need for satellite and it can be forgotten about is probably quite a long way off,” he said. ■

[www. For the full interview with William Field visit our website.](#)

BASKETBALL 1

Telekom moves back into sport with Bundesliga

By Robin Jellis

German telco Deutsche Telekom last week moved back into buying exclusive sports rights with a deal for the domestic basketball league worth three times the previous value.

Last week’s four-year deal with the Basketball Bundesliga, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, is worth close to €1m (\$1.4m) per season. Sports broadcaster Sport1 paid about €300,000 per season in its two-season deal for the rights, from 2012-13 to 2013-14.

Deutsche Telekom has not acquired any exclusive live sports rights since losing out on the rights to Bundesliga football to pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland in the current four-season cycle, from 2013-14 to 2016-17.

Then, Sky upped its rights fee to just under €486m per season from €250m per

season in the previous deal to secure exclusive rights. In the previous deal, Telekom had held IPTV rights to the league (*TV Sports Markets* 16:8). Telekom subsequently agreed a deal to carry Sky’s channels in the current cycle.

The telco this week told *TV Sports Markets* that the basketball deal would help it to be “the best integrated provider of fixed network and mobile communications services” in Germany.

Local experts say it is too early to tell if Deutsche Telekom will bid aggressively for other top sports rights, potentially threatening Sky’s dominant position.

Telcos BT in the UK and Telefónica in Spain are buying exclusive sports rights to bolster their core telephone and broadband internet businesses (see separate story, page 1).

Why basketball?

Deutsche Telekom this week said that the Basketball Bundesliga would provide its IPTV platform Entertain with “attractive content,” and would make its range of TV services “even more interesting across all platforms.”

“Basketball fits very well into our

portfolio due to the very young internet and technology-oriented target group,” the company said. “In addition to the positive effects it will have in terms of customer retention and acquisition, the partnership with the Beko Basketball Bundesliga will also boost our brand image.”

The telco agreed a four-year deal for the rights as it believes media attention for the sport cannot be built up in the short term, and needs a longer-term partnership.

It said that the Basketball Bundesliga was one of the “most dynamic and attractive leagues in terms of media attention,” and believes the appeal of the sport will help the league achieve its aim of becoming the best European basketball league by 2020.

Deutsche Telekom also has a naming rights sponsorship deal with one of the teams in the league, Telekom Baskets Bonn. Deutsche Telekom is headquartered in Bonn.

Impact

Deutsche Telekom will need to bid more aggressively for rights in future if sport is to become a key differentiator of its offering. As one local expert put it, “this deal will not lift Telekom to new

dimensions. They need a top property if they want to make the next step.”

Deutsche Telekom, as one senior broadcast executive put it, has “very big pockets” and could “do something which changes the market.” It could challenge Sky Deutschland, the country’s leading pay-television broadcaster, for premium sports rights. In 2013, Deutsche Telekom had revenues of €60.1bn.

However, if Telekom had wanted to make a big play for premium top sports rights it could have bid for the Uefa Champions League rights which were on the market at the end of last year (*TV Sports Markets* 17:23). Local experts caution against reading the new deal as a major strategy change regarding sport.

Bundesliga deal

Jan Pommer, the league’s chief executive, this week told *TV Sports Markets* that the new deal proved that “basketball in Germany has a huge potential for growth,” and that it would provide planning security for the clubs.

The four-year deal was agreed following a tender process which was launched at the end of April. It is understood that the league wanted any deal to last for at least two years.

In February, the league opened talks with broadcasters including Sport1, the basic-tier broadcaster Eurosport Germany and online sports service Laola1.tv (*TV*

Sports Markets 18:3).

It is understood that Sport1 and the Sportsman Media Group agency bid together – Sport1 for 40 free-to-air matches, and Sportsman for the international rights. There was also interest from newspaper publisher Axel Springer, and both the IMG Media and MP & Silva agencies. The league received more than 10 offers.

Deutsche Telekom’s deal includes both domestic and international rights. The telco is expected to sell on the international rights to an agency, with either IMG or MP & Silva thought the most likely buyer.

In the last cycle, the international rights were sold by Sportsman, whose main deals were with bookmakers. One expert estimated these rights to be worth about €200,000 per year. There is limited interest in the international rights, although there is a strong basketball following in countries such as Spain, Greece and Turkey.

The agreement with Telekom is a good one for the league, which in February told *TV Sports Markets* it was hoping to double its rights fees. The new deal is 233 per cent up on the previous deal.

Coverage

Deutsche Telekom will show all matches on its Entertain IPTV platform. The deal covers all 306 regular-season games, all play-off matches, the Top Four season-ending event, the All Star Day and the

Champions Cup. It also includes mobile and online rights. A season ticket for all games will cost less than €10 per month.

Telekom will cover all production costs. Sport1 previously covered costs to the 50 games it showed per year – 40 on free-to-air and 10 on pay-television. It produced games in high quality, with each game costing €15,000-€20,000.

Telekom will sublicense about 40 games per season for free-to-air coverage. These games will be produced at similar quality, and will cost the telco a similar amount to produce. The two most likely buyers are Eurosport and Sport1. A decision is expected in about two weeks’ time. Telekom is expected to produce all other games at a lower quality, at a cost of about €3,000 per match.

Sport1 has several basketball sports rights, including the NBA, the Euroleague and this year’s Fiba World Cup (*TV Sports Markets* 18:9). In its current deal for the Bundesliga, Sport1 generated viewing figures of between 120,000 to 140,000 per match, with peaks of around 300,000 for top games. Audiences are expected to be much lower on Entertain.

Public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF are expected to agree a deal for highlights rights with the league in the coming months. ■

[www. For the full interview with Jan Pommer visit our website.](#)

BASKETBALL 2

Sport1 pays more to keep ‘sexy’ NBA away from Fox channels

By Robin Jellis

Dutch pay-television broadcaster Sport1 last week agreed to pay an increase of 27 per cent in the value of its rights to the National Basketball Association.

The deal is a three-year renewal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and is worth about \$700,000 (€515,000) per year. This compares with the \$550,000 per year Sport1 pays in its current three-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

Sport1 was keen to renew its deal as it

faces increasing competition for sports rights in the Netherlands from Fox International Channels. Will Moerer, vice president of Sport1, told *TV Sports Markets* there were three main reasons for renewing the rights.

First, Sport1, and its precursor Canal Plus, is the league’s long-term broadcast partner in the Netherlands and has developed a loyal fan base.

Second, Sport1 wanted to see off potential interest from Fox. Fox acquired rights to Euroleague basketball last October in a multi-territory deal, from 2013-14 to 2016-17. Its live rights in the Netherlands begin from the 2015-16 season. Sport1 feared Fox may go after more US sports rights, in addition to the NFL and MLB rights it currently holds.

Third, Sport1 was keen to get more

content in a new deal. The new deal is similar to the current deal, but includes rights to more games during the end of season play-offs.

This extra content, as well as potential interest from Fox, was the main reason for the fee increase. The broadcaster was also willing to pay a premium to wrap up the deal early.

The deal was initiated by Sport1. The broadcaster had a meeting with the league at the All Star games in February this year, where it expressed its interest in renewing.

It is understood that the league was happy to renew with Sport1 without opening up the rights to the market because it has a long-standing relationship with the broadcaster and was securing a decent fee increase.

“It is a sport which appeals to other audiences, who don’t just like football,” Moerer said. “There are a lot of people in the Netherlands who appreciate a good NBA game. It’s a fast game and is sexier than a sport like golf, for instance. It’s very good to have in our line-up.”

The NBA is a strong brand but it generates low audience ratings in the Netherlands as most games take place in the early hours of the morning.

Sport1 will broadcast live games every Friday and Sunday during the regular-season, as well as coverage of the play-offs, the finals and the All Star games – about 100 games per year in total.

Sport1 will also broadcast this year’s NBA Global Games, which will take place in Berlin, Germany, from October 8-11.

Public-service broadcaster NOS has a deal for highlights rights which will expire at the end of the 2014-15 season. ■

[www. For the full interview with Will Moerer visit our website.](#)

FOOTBALL CYPRUS

FA to press on with own channel plans without top clubs

By Richard Welbirg

The Cyprus Football Association is to push ahead with its plan to create a television channel for the country’s football league despite three top clubs refusing to take part. The clubs believe they can get better fees through individual deals with broadcasters.

Clubs in Cyprus have sold their rights individually since the country’s competition regulator and Supreme Court outlawed collective selling in 2007. The association, under chairman Costakis Koutsokoumnis, wants the clubs to pool their rights from 2016-17 onwards.

The association believes it would earn €16m (\$22m) per season by producing two television channels showing the home matches of participating First Division and Second Division clubs. This compares with the estimated €11.5m currently earned by the clubs in total rights fees.

The association would distribute the

channels via IPTV networks for a monthly subscription fee of €25. It would also sell centralised advertising and sponsorship packages on the channels. After production costs of €1.5m to €2m per season, earnings would be redistributed to the clubs.

Eight of the 12 First Division clubs have signed pre-deals with the association. Champions Apoel, along with Omonia and Apollon Limassol have rejected the proposal. The federation believes that it can persuade one undecided club, AEL Limassol, to join.

The €16m per season projection was predicated on all 12 top-flight clubs joining the scheme, but the association believes it could earn close to that amount even without carrying the home games of Apoel, Omonia and Apollon. It would still have all the away games to the three clubs.

Broadcast sources, not surprisingly, are sceptical of the association’s projection, saying that platforms would pay lower carriage fees if the channels were missing home games of the major clubs.

Negotiations

For the 2014-15 season, the rights to the home games of eight First Division clubs are held by CytaVision, the IPTV service of the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CyTA). Telco PrimeTel holds the rights to Omonia and Apollon. Pay-television operator Lumiere TV (LTV) holds the rights to home games of Apoel and to smaller First Division club Ermis Aradippou. All deals expire after the 2015-16 season.

CyTA and PrimeTel are in discussions with the four major clubs – Apoel, Omonia, AEL Limassol and Apollon Limassol – about their rights for the 2016-17 to 2019-20 cycle. CyTA have made Apoel an offer of between €1.6m and €2m per season. PrimeTel have also made a bid. Apoel’s current deal with LTV is worth €1.1m per season.

Apoel is said to be keen to get out of its deal with LTV. The broadcaster will not be able to match the offers of CyTA and PrimeTel in any new contract. Further, it has had problems keeping up with its payment commitments in the current deal.

The company has been beset by financial problems since reportedly losing €2.3m in the aftermath of Cyprus’s

banking crisis. Rights-fee payments have been inconsistent. In April, Apoel and Ermis Aradippou launched lawsuits against LTV in the Nicosia District Court to try to recoup unpaid fees of €370,000, and €230,000 respectively.

With Apoel on the verge of dissolving its deal in March, LTV paid the club €670,000 with the assistance of a €500,000 payment from CyTA.

As a condition of the deal, CyTA took part-ownership of several of LTV’s football rights properties. The primary driver of the agreement was a one-third share in LTV’s €2m-per-season English Premier League deal, which runs until the 2015-16 season. It also included a one-third share of the Bundesliga and La Liga rights until 2014-15.

In March, the two companies jointly launched a new sports channel covering the three leagues, which replaced the existing LTV Sports Channel 2. ■

WORLD CUP

UK and Germany confirm trend of low fee increases

By Frank Dunne

The World Cup rights deals signed by Fifa in the UK and Germany just before the current tournament kicked off confirmed the difficulties the governing body has had in securing decent fee increases in both markets and in Europe generally.

In the UK, public-service broadcaster BBC and commercial broadcaster ITV agreed deals covering the 2018 and 2022 competitions understood to be worth just over £200m (€250m/\$340m). In Germany, public service broadcasters ARD and ZDF agreed a deal for 2022 thought to be worth about €205m.

Each represented a fractional increase in value. The UK deal for 2010 and 2014 was worth about £196m. The ARD/ZDF deal for 2018 is worth about €200m.

Fifa enjoyed a huge leap in income in Europe when it moved to market-by-market sales for 2002 and 2006, following a three-tournament deal with the European Broadcasting Union. By the

time of the 1998 World Cup it was widely acknowledged that EBU members were paying well below the true market rate for the competition.

Since that big market correction, however, rights-fee growth has been flat. The value of the competition in the UK and Germany will be lower in 2022 than it was in 2006, when BBC/ITV jointly paid £105m and ARD/ZDF paid €180m for 49 matches.

Zero growth for the world's major football competition in the sport's heartlands appears at odds with the boom for top football rights in Europe generally. But there are good reasons for it.

As football rights expert Phil Lines put it this week, "Fifa has two difficulties with World Cup rights. First, being played only every four years and lasting only a month, it's not a great pay-television property. Second, as a listed event in a number of European markets, the free-to-air channels know the pay channels can't challenge them. All this adds up to rights value not growing in the way Fifa would hope."

Fifa is not alone in this problem. The value of the rights to Euro 2012 in the top five European markets fell by seven per cent, to just under €438m, when compared with the rights to Euro 2008 (*TV Sports Markets* 16:7). However, Uefa's global media rights income from the competition was up. Fifa is also enjoying dramatic levels of growth in the value of the World Cup in the Americas and Asia-Pacific, which more than compensate for low growth in Europe.

Sky ducks out

One of the reasons why ARD/ZDF were reluctant to pay a big increase is that the broadcasters are unlikely to be able to offset those costs by sublicensing rights to the matches to pay-television operator Sky Deutschland.

For the 2006 and 2010 competitions, Premiere, as the platform was known before its rebrand in July 2009, acquired rights to all 64 matches in deals with the Infront Sports & Media agency and Fifa respectively. ARD/ZDF acquired rights to 49 matches in 2006 and 46 matches in 2010, including all Germany matches, the final and semi-finals. Germany's matches must be shown free-to-air under the

World Cup fees in the top 5 European TV markets since 2010					
Market	Broadcaster/agency	World Cup	Fee (€m)	Fee per match (€m)	
France	TF1	2010	120	1.88	
	TF1	2014	130	2.03	
Germany	ARD/ZDF ¹	2010	175	3.80	
	Sky Deutschland ²	2010	40	0.63	
	ARD/ZDF	2014	210	3.28	
	ARD/ZDF	2018	200	3.13	
	ARD/ZDF	2022	205	3.20	
Italy	Rai	2010	170	2.66	
	Rai	2014	170	2.66	
	MP & Silva ³	2018	n/a	n/a	
	MP & Silva ³	2022	n/a	n/a	
Spain	Prisa	2010	95	1.48	
	Mediaset/Mediapro	2014	50	0.78	
UK	BBC/ITV	2010	122.5	1.91	
	BBC/ITV	2014	122.5	1.91	
	BBC/ITV	2018	125	1.95	
	BBC/ITV	2022	125	1.95	

Source: *TV Sports Markets* Footnotes: ¹Free-to-air rights to 46 matches. ²Pay-television rights to all 64 matches in Germany and Austria. ³The deal is not a buy-out, it is performance-related but is thought to guarantee comparable income levels to 2010/2014.

country's listed-events provisions.

This time, ARD/ZDF held the pay-television rights for all matches and asked Sky for between €25m and €30m but Sky refused. Premiere paid about €40m in 2010 in a deal which also covered Austria.

"Being played only every four years and lasting only a month, the World Cup is not a great pay-television property."

Phil Lines, former director of international broadcasting for the Premier League

The competition has good marketing value but was not a subscriptions driver. Changes in management following the increase by Rupert Murdoch of his stake in the platform have resulted in an investment strategy much more focused on properties that drive subscriptions.

ARD/ZDF are thought to have faced no real competition from their main commercial rivals RTL and ProSiebenSat.1. At the level the state broadcasters pay, commercial broadcasters would struggle to refinance the acquisition through advertising,

despite top World Cup games pulling in audiences upwards of 25m.

RTL shared free-to-air coverage of the last two tournaments, acquiring eight matches in 2006 and nine in 2010 from Premiere through sublicensing deals. For 2010 it paid €20m for the rights.

Since then, however, the broadcaster has invested €110m in the rights to Germany's qualifying matches for Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup in a deal with the CAA Eleven agency (*TV Sports Markets* 17:13).

SportA, the sales agency of ARD and ZDF, agreed a deal for highlights rights with bild.de, the website of publisher Axel Springer, which is said to be worth about €300,000.

List limits value

The UK, in particular, is a tough market for both Fifa and Uefa because every match in the World Cup and the Euros is listed. This leaves BBC/ITV with no competition and a long-standing practice of not competing with each other.

The governing bodies last year failed in a legal challenge to the UK listed-events regime in the European Court of Justice and have limited bargaining power (*TV Sports Markets* 17:14).

Under the terms of the Royal Charter which guarantees the BBC's licence fee, the corporation is required to pay "a fair and reasonable" price for sports rights. ■

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from June 12 to June 25

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: World Cup, Champions League, Belgian Pro League and more

- **Football:** Sports media company Seven3Sports acquired rights for the 2014 Fifa World Cup across the Indian subcontinent in a deal with Multi Screen Media, the owner of pay-television broadcaster Sony Six. The sublicensing deal, which excludes India, covers Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and the Maldives. The agreement includes exclusive free-to-air coverage and non-exclusive pay-television coverage, plus mobile and broadband rights.
- **Football:** NWS Digital Asia, a subsidiary of News Corp, acquired non-exclusive mobile and internet rights in Vietnam for the 2014 Fifa World Cup (page 2).
- **Football:** The Lebanese government brokered a deal with cable-television provider Sama to show the 2014 Fifa World Cup in the country on free-to-air television. The country's ministry of telecommunications agreed to pay Sama \$3m (€2.2m) in compensation for the company to show games for free. Sama had planned to charge viewers to watch coverage. State-run broadcaster Tele Liban, which had been in talks with Sama about acquiring the rights and showing the games on free-to-air television, said it would continue to show matches even though it does not have rights.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports, which operates in the Indian subcontinent, extended a rights deal with the sport's European governing body, Uefa, for the Champions League and Europa League, for the three seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The agreement covers exclusive rights in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives and Afghanistan. The deal also includes the annual Uefa Super Cup.
- **Football:** Belgian pay-television broadcasters Belgacom, Telenet and Voo acquired non-exclusive domestic rights for live coverage of the top-tier Pro League. The Sporting Telenet, Belgacom 11 and VooFoot channels will be able to show live coverage of all Pro League matches for three seasons, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. Public-service broadcaster RTBF acquired French-language rights for Pro League highlights and live rights to the Belgian Super Cup (page 1).
- **Football:** Media group Turkuvez Medya extended a rights deal for the Turkish Cup and Super Cup club tournaments. The deal, which was agreed with the Turkish Football Federation, will cover three seasons, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. It is worth \$13.75m (€10m) in the first year and will increase by 10 per cent each year.
- **Football:** The MP & Silva agency extended a worldwide rights distribution deal with the Kuwait Football Association for five years, from 2014-15 to 2018-19. The deal covers the national team's friendly and qualifying home matches for the 2018 Fifa World Cup and 2019 Asian Football Confederation Asian Cup. MP & Silva will be the exclusive distributor of the rights across pay-television, betting platforms, terrestrial television, web-television, IPTV and mobile platforms.
- **Football:** International sports broadcaster ESPN and US media company Liberman Broadcasting acquired rights for the 2014 Socio MX Tour, which features five friendly matches featuring top-tier Mexican clubs Monterrey, Cruz Azul, Pumas, Tijuana and Chivas, plus North American Soccer League second-tier team the San Antonio Scorpions. The games will take place in five different US cities from July 3-12. ESPN will broadcast the games in more than 20 countries outside of the US. Liberman Broadcasting will show games in the US via its Estrella TV Spanish-language channel.
- **Football:** Benfica TV, the basic-tier channel operated by Portuguese Primeira Liga top-tier club Benfica, acquired rights for the 2014 edition of the FA Honor Cup annual pre-season tournament. Benfica TV will broadcast the semi-final matches on July 18 plus the third-place play-off and the final on July 20.
- **Football:** New Zealand-based Wellington Phoenix, which competes in the Australian A-League, agreed a rights deal with pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand for its Football United Tour event. The tournament will feature the Phoenix, A-League rival Sydney FC and English Premier League clubs Newcastle United and West Ham United in Auckland, Dunedin and Wellington in July. The Sky Arena pay-per-view service will broadcast the tournament.

SINCE LAST TIME

- A joint bid by media companies Liberty Global and Discovery Communications to acquire a 49-per cent stake in Formula One is worth about \$500m (€368m) less than the owners of the motor-racing world championship are seeking, according to the Bloomberg news agency. The companies approached private equity group CVC Capital Partners, which has a stake of about 35 per cent in the championship and has full voting rights, earlier this year. Liberty Global and Discovery are offering about \$4bn for the stake.
- Telco BT's spending power in the auction for the next cycle of rights for football's English Premier League could be restricted by proposals put forward by Ofcom, the UK media regulator. Ofcom will include the cost of BT Sport, which is available for free to BT's broadband subscribers, when it performs a 'margin squeeze' test of whether the telco's rivals are able to make a profit in the internet market due to BT's charges.
- Canal Plus had a claim for €293m (\$398m) in compensation from rival French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports thrown out by the Tribunal de Commerce business court. Canal Plus, which had accused beIN Sports of unfair competition practices, was ordered to pay court costs of €100,000. The broadcaster claimed that it had lost 187,000 subscriptions since the launch of beIN Sports in France in 2012. The court said that the positioning of the two broadcasters was different, with beIN Sports focusing exclusively on sport.
- Spanish commercial broadcaster Atresmedia accused the Spanish Football Federation of negotiating a rights deal covering Spain national team friendly matches with commercial rival Mediaset

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from June 12 to June 25**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****American football, basketball, cricket, cycling, dance sport and golf**

- **American Football:** The NFL agreed a rights deal with pay-television broadcaster ESPN across Australia and New Zealand. The length of the multi-year deal was not disclosed. ESPN will show three live regular-season games per week, including a total of 17 Sunday Night Football games, 17 Monday Night Football games, 16 Thursday Night Football games and one Thanksgiving Day game, as well as the play-offs, Pro Bowl and Super Bowl. ESPN will make the NFL Red Zone service available on the ESPN2 channel every Sunday.
- **American Football:** The NFL agreed a television and online rights deal with Australian commercial broadcaster Seven for five years, from 2014-15 to 2018-19. Seven will show three games on Sundays and digital-terrestrial channel 7mate will broadcast live coverage of the Monday Night Football game. Seven will broadcast live coverage of the season-opener, Thanksgiving Day match-ups, play-offs and the Super Bowl plus magazine programmes. Seven will serve as the NFL.com website's digital advertising representative in Australia and will promote the NFL Game Pass digital subscription service in the country.
- **Basketball:** German telecommunications company Deutsche Telekom acquired rights for the top-tier domestic Basketball Bundesliga in a four-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18. The deal includes national and international rights. Deutsche Telekom will exploit the rights through its IPTV platform Entertain and will broadcast all games live in Germany. The deal includes television, online and mobile rights and covers all 306 Bundesliga regular-season and play-off games plus the Top Four season-ending event, the All Star Day and the Champions Cup (page 5).
- **Cricket:** Pakistani pay-television broadcaster Geo Super acquired rights for Bangladesh international matches in a sublicensing deal with the Sporty Solutionz agency. The deal will run for six years, from 2014-15 to 2019-20. The agreement includes two tours by Pakistan to Bangladesh.
- **Cricket:** Asian pay-television broadcaster Star Sports acquired rights for the Bangladesh v India One-Day International series in June in a sublicensing deal with pay-television broadcaster Gazi TV.
- **Cycling:** British Eurosport, the UK division of pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport, acquired rights for the 2014 National Road Championships in a deal with the British Cycling governing body. British Eurosport will show highlights of the women's road race and will broadcast the final two hours of the men's road race live on June 29.
- **Cycling:** UK commercial broadcaster ITV acquired rights for the 2014 National Road Championships in a deal with British Cycling. The ITV4 digital-terrestrial channel will show highlights of the event.
- **Dance Sport:** The World DanceSport Federation appointed the IEC in Sports agency to distribute the international media rights for its GrandSlam Series on an exclusive basis.
- **Golf:** UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB extended an exclusive rights deal for the US Open as part of a deal with the United States Golf Association that will run for five years, from 2015 to 2019, and includes more than 35 tournaments. Sky will also show the men's US Senior Open and US Amateur Championship, the 2017 men's Walker Cup match between the US and the UK and Ireland, the US Women's Open, US Women's Amateur Championships and the women's 2018 Curtis Cup match between the US and the UK and Ireland.

without conducting a proper tender process. Atresmedia said that the federation had "almost closed" the deal with Mediaset without the rights being offered to the market and accused it of a lack of transparency. Atresmedia complained to Spain's competition authority and Miguel Cardenal, the secretary of state for sport.

- Telco Telefónica submitted a bid to acquire media company Mediaset's 22-per-cent stake in Spanish pay-television operator Canal Plus. Telefónica tabled a bid of €295m (\$401m) for the stake in Canal Plus, which changed its name from Digital Plus in 2011 and is a major sports broadcaster in the country. Telefónica president César Alierta said that Mediaset would receive a further €10m if the telco's separate deal to acquire a 56-per-cent stake in Canal Plus from media company Prisa for €750m receives regulatory approval. The Prisa deal would increase Telefónica's stake in Canal Plus to 78 per cent, and the Mediaset deal would give the telco a 100-per-cent shareholding. Telefónica already holds a 22-per-cent stake in the platform.
- Twitter acquired video-editing company SnappyTV in an effort to strengthen video-sharing opportunities on the social networking website. The deal will enable media companies to edit, distribute and share videos, including highlights of sporting events.

FOOTBALL

- A vote by Serie A clubs on the award of packages of domestic rights for the next cycle, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, was postponed due to a dispute between the two main bidders, pay-television broadcasters Mediaset Premium and Sky Italia, about the rules of the tender. Sky outbid Mediaset for the two packages of live rights for the top eight teams – one covering satellite delivery and the other via digital-terrestrial. Sky does not have a digital-terrestrial television platform, but last week agreed a deal with Telecom Italia to broadcast matches on five channels on the former state telco's digital-terrestrial multiplex. Mediaset outbid Sky for the exclusive live rights to the other 12 Serie A teams, but the bid was conditional upon it also winning one of the eight-team packages.
- Spanish Liga football club Real Madrid will "listen to offers" for its media rights covering the 2014-15 season whilst it appeals against a decision by the CNMC, Spain's competition authority, to block a deal with the Mediapro agency. The club gave bidders until July 1 to register an interest in the rights. Last year, the regulator decided that the Mediapro agreement, due to cover the 2014-15 season, breached rules regarding the maximum length of rights deals.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from June 12 to June 25

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

Horse racing, ice hockey, MMA, DTM, rugby Champions Cup and more

- **Horse Racing:** Racecourse Media Group acquired the rights for events at Ascot racecourse in the UK in a five-year agreement, from 2014 to 2018. RMG will be responsible for the distribution of all the racecourse's rights in the UK and overseas, while its pay-television channel Racing UK will show every race live from Ascot.
 - **Horse Racing:** UK racecourse owner and operator Arena Racing Company agreed a five-year extension, from 2014-15 to 2018-19, to its rights agreement with pay-television channel At The Races. Arena will retain its major shareholding in At The Races alongside its partner in the venture, pay-television broadcaster BSkyB.
 - **Ice Hockey:** UK pay-television broadcaster Premier Sports acquired rights for Europe's Champions Hockey League club tournament. The three-year deal, which was brokered by the Infront Sports & Media agency, will run from 2014-15 to 2016-17. During the inaugural 2014-15 season, Premier Sports will broadcast live coverage of 25 games, including the final and all six group-stage games involving Nottingham Panthers, the UK's only team in the competition.
 - **Mixed Martial Arts:** Irish commercial broadcaster TV3 acquired rights for the Ultimate Fighting Championship Fight Night Dublin on July 19. TV3 will broadcast live coverage of the event via its 3e free-to-air channel plus several dedicated features and programmes in the run-up to the event.
 - **Motorsport:** German public-service broadcaster ARD took up an option to extend a rights deal for the DTM German touring car series for one year, covering the 2015 campaign.
 - **Motorsport:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven acquired rights for the 2015 Bathurst 12 Hour endurance event. Seven will broadcast live coverage of all 12 hours of the race in Australia. Coverage will begin on Seven's digital-terrestrial channel 7mate before switching to main channel Seven for the final three hours of the race.
 - **Olympic Games:** The Japan Consortium, a consortium of broadcasters which includes public-service broadcaster NHK and the Japan Commercial Broadcasters Association, extended a deal for the Olympic Games through to the 2024 summer edition. The deal with the International Olympic Committee also covers the 2018 winter Games in PyeongChang, Korea; the 2020 summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan; and the 2022 winter Games, plus the 2018 summer Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The agreement covers all media platforms (page 2).
 - **Rugby Union:** European Professional Club Rugby, the operator of the new European club tournaments, awarded global rights to the IMG Media agency in a four-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18. The deal covers rights outside the UK, Ireland and France, for the inaugural Champions Cup and Challenge Cup, plus the Challenge Cup qualifying tournament. Rights in Italy will be part of the agreement from 2015-16. IMG will market live and highlights rights across all platforms.
 - **Tennis:** Swedish public-service broadcaster SVT acquired rights for the men's and women's finals of the Wimbledon Championships in a three-year sublicensing deal, from 2014 to 2016, with Nordic pay-television broadcaster C More Entertainment. The IMG Media agency assisted in brokering the deal.
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- The Delhi High Court issued an injunction to prevent about 400 private websites in India from streaming coverage of the 2014 Fifa World Cup. Multi Screen Media, owner of pay-television broadcaster Sony Six, which has exclusive rights for the tournament in India, applied for the injunction.
 - The Kenyan High Court blocked Zuku TV and Star Times from showing further coverage of the 2014 Fifa World Cup after state-run broadcaster KBC applied for an injunction against the pay-television operators. KBC, the exclusive rights-holder of free-to-air World Cup coverage in the country, accused Zuku TV and Star Times of broadcasting the opening match of the tournament between Brazil and Croatia on June 12 without permission.
 - The Ultimate Fighting Championship agreed a multi-year content deal with fellow mixed martial arts series Invicta Fighting Championships. Female MMA organisation Invicta will allow content to be carried by the UFC Fight Pass digital subscription service. UFC president Dana White is keen to add further content to the UFCFightPass.com digital streaming service.
 - US media group Time launched 120 Sports, a new live streaming service, on June 25. The service will provide game footage, analysis and social commentary of several sports for mobile, tablet and online platforms.
 - UK commercial broadcaster ITV signed an agreement with social video platform Grabyo to share match highlights and post-match commentary clips from its live television coverage of football's 2014 Fifa World Cup across ITV.com and social networking services Facebook and Twitter.
 - The All England Lawn Tennis Club agreed a deal with Grabyo to show highlights of the 2014 Wimbledon Championships via social networking services Facebook, Twitter and Google Plus. The club will provide at least 25 clips per day in real time from

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- US sports broadcaster ESPN signed a video content partnership with internet company Google for football's 2014 Fifa World Cup. Users of the Google search engine in the US can access links to the ESPN FC football-dedicated website for highlights immediately after games across computers, smartphones and tablet platforms.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from June 12 to June 25

centre court, court No.1 and court No.2 plus daily highlights via video-sharing website YouTube.

- James Murdoch, co-chief operating officer of 21st Century Fox, said he remained hopeful that its German pay-television subsidiary Sky Deutschland could acquire sports production company Plazamedia. In May, a deal between Sky and media company Constantin Medien for Plazamedia, and significant minority stakes in German sports broadcaster Sport1 and Constantin Sport Marketing, collapsed.
- Olivier Schrameck, the president of the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, said that the French media regulator must intervene in sports-rights negotiations to ensure major events are available on free-to-air television. Schrameck said that he had met with the French secretary of state for sport to discuss new legislation that would allow the regulator to play a greater role in rights talks and added that the current list of events reserved for free-to-air television should be extended, particularly for women's sports.
- The Irish government will review the showpiece sporting events that are protected for free-to-air broadcast coverage in the country. The review, which takes place every three years, will be led by Pat Rabbitte, the minister of Ireland's department of communications, energy and natural resources.
- Australia's Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull said that no changes would be made to anti-siphoning regulations, which protect certain sporting events for free-to-air television, without a consensus being reached between free-to-air and pay-television operators. Turnbull will consider several changes, including shortening the list, allowing free-to-air channels to show more sport on multi-channels and partially de-listing NRL rugby league and AFL Aussie Rules coverage.
- The Nigerian Olympic Committee is seeking sponsors to fund a live rights deal on terrestrial television for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. The committee needs \$300,000 (€220,000) to finance the deal. The Games take place in Glasgow from July 23 to August 3.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- US satellite operator Dish Network is interested in bidding for the NFL American football league's Sunday Ticket out-of-market

package if rival DirecTV fails to extend its deal. DirecTV is in talks with the NFL over renewing the rights for Sunday Ticket, which allows subscribers to access Sunday afternoon games broadcast by US networks CBS and Fox, beyond the 2014-15 season.

- The CAA Eleven agency launched an invitation to tender for the rights in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Cyprus to European Qualifiers for football's Uefa Euro 2016 and 2018 Fifa World Cup tournaments. Bids for the rights in Germany, Austria and Switzerland must be submitted by June 30, with offers for the Cypriot rights due by July 3. The tenders exclude qualifiers featuring the respective countries' national teams.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The Chicago Cubs is considering launching a new channel for local over-the-air broadcasters to show games covered by the US Major League Baseball franchise's local rights deal with cable-television broadcaster WGN-TV, according to the *Chicago Tribune*.
- National Hockey League commissioner Gary Bettman intervened in talks over the San Jose Sharks' local rights deal by contacting executives at broadcaster Comcast. Sharks chief executive John Tortora is trying to renegotiate a deal with regional broadcaster Comcast Sportsnet Bay Area which has another 14 seasons to run and is worth \$7m (€5.2m) per season.
- Eurosport recorded its best ever French Open viewing figures for the 2014 edition of the tennis tournament. The event attracted an average television audience of 1.36m European viewers, a 17-per cent rise on Eurosport's previous best in 2012.
- Organisers of the Caribbean Premier League expect the 2014 edition of the Twenty20 cricket tournament to reach 200m viewers worldwide.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- The Fox International Channels subsidiary of 21st Century Fox appointed Christian Brent as senior vice-president of global research and audience strategy. • The IMG and William Morris Endeavor agencies appointed Greg D'Alba as president of global sales and marketing.

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