

AGENCIES

IMG goes back to its roots to find formula for global content markets

By Frank Dunne

IMG said this week that its new merged events and media division would create efficiencies and provide opportunities that had been stymied by the compartmentalised management structure operated by private equity owners Forstmann Little prior to the sale of the agency late last year.

In December, IMG was acquired by talent representation agency William Morris Endeavor and private equity company Silver Lake for about \$2.35bn (€1.72bn). A management restructure had been widely anticipated and was unveiled this week.

By adding its events and federations business, and divisions for fashion, golf and tennis, to its media business, IMG has created a new unit with an annual turnover of over \$900m – at least double the revenues of IMG Media, the previously separate sports rights and

production division.

The new division leapfrogs its main agency rivals Infront Sports & Media and MP & Silva in terms of revenue, even without the lucrative US college sports business, which will remain separate (see table, page 3).

Talking exclusively to *TV Sports Markets*, the new division's chairman Michel Masquelier and president Ioris Francini said that there were a number of benefits to the new structure, the most important of which was the creation of a single global sales force.

"Over the last few years, these divisions have been operating in silos," Masquelier said. "Now we are creating a genuinely worldwide sales force which physically will be present in more than 40 markets."

This had been how the company operated prior to its \$750m acquisition
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FOOTBALL DENMARK

Regulator clears way for six-year deals

By Robin Jellis

The Danish Superliga has increased its domestic rights fee despite limited competition by offering its rights for six years – an option opened up by a change in policy by the country's competition authority (see box, page 5).

Late last month, the league agreed deals with commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group and basic-tier broadcaster SBS Discovery

Media. The deals are for six years, from 2015-16 to 2020-21. Combined, they are thought to be worth about DKK400m (€54m/\$73m) per season.

This represents an increase of around nine per cent on the DKK367m per season which the league currently earns in the three seasons from 2012-13 to 2014-15 (*TV Sports Markets* 15:17).

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Silva seals raft of Pro League highlights and clips deals

The MP & Silva agency agreed deals for highlights and clips rights to the Belgian Pro League late last month, taking it towards breakeven on the property.

Combined, the deals are worth around €5.5m (\$7.5m) per season, and take the agency close to the €70m per season that it guaranteed the league in a deal agreed in February. It has so far agreed deals worth €67.5m per season with betting and international rights still to sell.

The agency agreed two highlights deals in Flemish-speaking Flanders. It sold match-day magazine rights plus live rights to the Belgian Super Cup, to commercial broadcaster VTM in a deal worth about €2.5m per season.

It also sold magazine rights on Monday evenings to public-service broadcaster VRT for around €500,000 per season. Both deals cover the three seasons from 2014-15 to 2016-17.

These two sets of rights were previously sold by pay-television broadcaster Telenet, which held all domestic rights, for €5.2m per season to VTM. VTM then sublicensed the Monday evening magazine rights to VRT for about €500,000 per season.

There was limited competition for the rights. VRT was not interested in the more expensive rights, while commercial broadcaster SBS is struggling financially.

MP & Silva also agreed 10 non-exclusive clips deals worth a total of close to €2.5m per season. It sold near-live clips rights to pay-television broadcasters Belgacom and Telenet, as well as media company De Persgroep.

In French-speaking Wallonia it sold delayed clips rights to Belgacom and public-service broadcaster RTBF. In Flanders it sold delayed clips rights to Telenet, Belgacom, De Persgroep, VRT and media company Mediahuis.

All clips deals are worth between €200,000 and €250,000 per season. As larger and wealthier companies, it is understood that Belgacom and Telenet

are paying slightly more.

The agency last month sold live rights to Belgacom, Telenet and BeTV for €60m per season and highlights rights in Wallonia to RTBF for about €2m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:12). ■

Pragosport breaks even on league

The Pragosport agency is understood to have broken even on its deal for the Czech football league following two broadcast deals it agreed at the end of last month.

The agency agreed a deal with Česká Televize for the public-service broadcaster to show three matches per week. It also sold the rights to one match per week to Slovak Sport. The broadcaster will show the match on its Slovak Sport.TV 2 pay-television channel.

Both deals cover just the 2014-15 season. It is understood that Česká Televize has an option to extend its deal in the spring of 2015.

Pragosport bought the rights to the Czech Republic's top football league in February in a four-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, for CZK120m (€4.4m/\$6m) per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:4).

Local media experts say that the agency has only agreed short-term deals because it was not happy with the offers it received. One suggested that Pragosport was hoping for a more competitive landscape next year, with new entrants expected.

The deal with Česká Televize makes up the bulk of the total value. It is believed that the agreement may have been a pre-deal between the broadcaster and the agency, to ensure the latter did not lose any money.

Slovak Sport beat competition from pay-television broadcaster and incumbent rights-holder Nova, which is struggling financially. One source estimated the Slovak Sport deal to be worth around €180,000 (\$250,000).

Lukáš Greguš, rights acquisitions manager at Slovak Sport, told *TV Sports*

Markets that the deal would help the broadcaster expand into the Czech Republic and the rights would also help it to generate advertising revenue. ■

BT threat spooks Sky into increase

The United States Golf Association was able to use the competition, or the threat of it, in the UK pay-television market to secure a 66-per-cent increase in value of the rights to the US Open.

Incumbent rights-holder BSkyB is believed to have paid about \$15m (€11m) per year for a five-year deal with the association, from 2015 to 2019. This compares with the \$9m per year it pays in the current cycle, from 2009 to 2014, and \$6m per year paid in the previous cycle from 2005 to 2009.

The association was advised during the sales process by Wasserman Media Group. The broadcaster has partnered with the USGA since 1991.

Although BT Sport stopped short of a formal bid, they are thought to have shown serious interest in the property.

Earlier this year, the US PGA Tour used BT's interest to negotiate an increase of £8m (€9.9m/\$13.7m) per year in its deal with Sky from 2015-16 to 2021-22, from £12m per year to £20m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:3).

The US Open is a major pillar of Sky's golf offering, not only due to its helpful time zone and positioning just after the conclusion of the football season, but as a part of the 'narrative' of US golf alongside Sky properties the US PGA and US Masters.

Alongside the US Open, Sky Sports channels will broadcast more than 35 US golf tournaments over the course of the deal, including the men's US Senior Open and US Amateur Championship as well as the 2017 Walker Cup match between a UK and Ireland team and a US team.

In women's golf, Sky will broadcast coverage of the US Women's Open, US Women's Amateur Championships and the 2018 Curtis Cup match between a UK and Ireland team and a US team. ■

AGENCIES

IMG breaks 'silos' to create unified global sales platform

Continued from page 1 ►

by Forstmann Little in 2004.

“We want to go back to our roots and create an infrastructure where all the sales people will be servicing our global portfolio as well as developing local opportunities,” Masquelier said.

“Anything to do with golf, with tennis, with federations, all events and media, will be under one management, with one strategy and one sales force.”

He said that Forstmann Little had put a number of business units under strict accounting control. It was good to have transparency and accountability for the various profit centres, but from a management perspective it was better to have “everyone under the mission of generating revenues and profit for the group and not looking through the window of their own specific sport.”

He said that in the past, if a title sponsor was needed for a tennis event, the tennis division looked for it. “Now you’re going to have 40 offices and 200 sales guys looking for a sponsor not only for the

IMG turnover by division in 2013 (\$m)	
College	487
Media	448
Events & Federations	153
Fashion	112
Golf	97
Tennis	90
Performance	83
Consulting	36
Licensing	35
Clients	20
Total	1561
Source: WME/IMG presentation documents	

Turnover for major agencies in 2013 (\$m)	
IMG	1561
Infront Sports & Media ¹	822
MP & Silva	650
Lagardère Unlimited	560
Source: TV Sports Markets	
Footnote: ¹ Estimate based on 2010 figure.	

IMG's strategic joint ventures now under scrutiny

One of the biggest challenges facing IMG Events & Media, the agency's newly merged division, will be deciding how to integrate IMG's strategic joint ventures into the new business.

Each of the joint ventures – with the Doğu Group in Turkey, Reliance Industries in India, the EBX Group in Brazil and CCTV in China – is a legal entity with its own board.

The joint ventures were at the heart of former owner Ted Fortsmann's personal vision of global expansion and to a large extent were driven by his extensive network of relationships. They are under scrutiny following the takeover of IMG by William Morris Endeavor in December.

Ioris Francini, president of IMG Events & Media, said that the structure of each joint venture was being analysed but that WME was committed to developing a strategic presence in the four territories in the long term.

“They [WME] share entirely the goal and the objective of being in those markets. What is being looked at is the means to that end.”

He said that the conclusion of the analysis could be “that the existing structure is the right one or that we have to tweak it one way or another. The underlying point is that all those markets are very important to our business and we definitely want to be in those markets.” ■

tennis division but for the other divisions and events within our portfolio.”

The merger with WME/Silver Lake had created a company that was uniquely placed to tap into the growing global demand for sports and entertainment content, Masquelier said.

“The big boys – the Googles, the Facebooks, the Twitters, the Murdochs, the ESPNs, the Discoveries of this world, in addition to all the key players playing a local role, including telcos – that world is going to be ever-expanding. The appetite of these big guys for content is going to grow for the foreseeable future.”

He said that as the leading content creators, aggregators and distributors in sports and entertainment, WME/IMG would be able to “expand significantly.”

Rights strategy endorsed

Francini, IMG Media's global head of sales and acquisitions prior to the creation of the new merged division, ruled out any major change to the underlying sports-rights acquisitions strategy which IMG Media has developed in recent years.

“There are a few properties that we are either going to be renewing, extending or winning – but it's typical, daily recurring business,” he said. “The new owners

understand what the management in IMG Media was doing and fully endorse it. It's one of the reasons why they wanted to buy the company.”

The division will, however, look more into channel creation, both in sport and entertainment, to maximise the company's huge content portfolio and production expertise. Channels would only be rolled out where they created no conflict with existing clients.

The agency has taken tentative steps in this area in the last three years, with the creation of channels like EDGESport, the premium action sport and lifestyle channel, and Sport24, the airline live sports channel.

“We are involved in many sports and distribute many thousands of hours of content. Whether it is a niche sport or a sports segment or a genre, we have an eye on channels,” Francini said. “It's one of the things we are looking at going forward, without losing track of our core business, which is sourcing rights and distributing those rights.”

Not just cost-cutting

It has been widely reported that WME are looking to make \$151m of cost savings by merging with IMG. This has triggered

speculation that merging events and media operations is primarily a cost-cutting exercise, designed to cut out areas of overlap between the different divisions. It is an idea rejected by Francini:

“Will we be doing some restructuring and cost-cutting? Yes, we will. Is that why we have brought together all these different businesses? Quite the opposite.”

The division will analyse all of the events that it is involved with to decide whether to keep them, drop them or change them. “The order is: first we take a look at how we want to be shaped, structured and designed to tackle the future. On the back of that we will make the changes,” Francini said. “We want to be efficient but it’s not just about tightening the belt. We are looking at growing further; we will also be hiring, both in media and outside.”

He said that the primary objective of the merged division was to “create synergies and release the energies that have been contained in silos by having all the sports under one roof.”

Under one roof

Francini pointed to cricket’s Indian Premier League and motorsport’s Rallycross as examples of why having a single structure for events and media made sense.

When Lalit Modi, the former president

of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, decided to launch a 20-over version of the game in the subcontinent in 2007, he brought in IMG to advise on all aspects of the new league’s development. This required input from IMG on areas as diverse as television production, the distribution of media rights, the creation and sale of franchises and the creation of a sponsorship programme, tapping into know-how across a number of divisions.

“The IPL was created, designed and implemented by IMG,” Francini said. In future, IMG wanted all that expertise “to be at the touch of a button under one management structure.”

Last year, IMG took control of the FIA European Rallycross Championship, expanding into a world championship which launched in May (*TV Sports Markets* 18:8).

Running the championship requires event management expertise and media-rights sales expertise, which meant that the company had to put together a de facto internal joint venture to operate it.

As Francini put it, “you had a motorsports division which previously was sitting in a silo called Events and Federations. Last year that division reached out to us in Media, and said: ‘Why don’t we do this together? So that as two different business units we co-own this thing; we take risks jointly and we

take rewards jointly.’”

He said that the “silo structure” of the company forced the agency into thinking in this way. “With these silos removed there is no longer a conversation between one and the other. You can apply that to any number of sports.”

Fashion in, college out

Incorporating the agency’s fashion activities into the new division but leaving out IMG College, which is essentially a sports-rights business, appears curious. It makes sense to include fashion, Masquelier argued, when viewed in terms of the functions involved.

Fashion events are no different to events in tennis or rugby, he said. “Anything to do with events – which involve ticketing, licensing, merchandising, hospitality, and sale of sponsorship and which has a media component – it makes sense to have one central management. We also have arts and entertainment and food festivals.” There are benefits in scale in being able to merge these functions on a global basis, he said.

IMG College, he said, was a very different kind of business, managing all areas of college sport interests and completely US-focused.

[www.](#) For the full interview with Michel Masquelier and Ioris Francini visit our website. ■

FOOTBALL DENMARK

Regulator U-turn enables league to secure increase

Continued from page 1 ►

In the current cycle the rights were won by MTG and pay-television broadcaster TV2 Sport, the joint venture between MTG and commercial broadcaster TV2. MTG now owns 100 per cent of TV Sport. MTG sublicensed some rights to Bonnier-owned basic-tier broadcaster Canal 9.

MTG and SBS were prepared to pay more per season in the new cycle to get the rights to Denmark’s most important

sports property for longer. The Superliga rights have previously only ever been sold in three-year cycles.

The longer deal may have been the only way for the league to bring in a per-annum increase for the next cycle, as competition for the rights is thought to have been limited. TV2 is thought to have been interested in the rights for a new TV2 Sport channel, which is expected to launch in January, but it is not clear whether it bid. The league and the broadcaster declined to comment.

Media company Bonnier, which owns pan-Nordic pay-television broadcaster C More, did not bid. It is in financial difficulty and is expected to end its sport broadcasting operations in Denmark and Norway (see box, page 6).

The new deal represents the third consecutive rights-fee increase for the league. The current deal was a four-per-cent increase on the deal covering 2009-10 to 2011-12. Those rights were sold in a moment of unusually strong competition at the end of 2007, resulting in a 254-per-cent increase (*TV Sports Markets* 12:1).

League wanted longer deals

The league rights were sold by the Divisionsforeningen, the body which acts on behalf of clubs and the Danish football federation, the Dansk Boldspil-Union. The body was advised by law firm Gorrissen Federspiel.

The Divisionsforeningen’s chief executive, Claus Thomsen, told *TV Sports*

No-single-buyer rule opens way to six-year deals for premium rights in Denmark

Media companies Modern Times Group and SBS Discovery Media were able to acquire the rights for the country's top football league, the Superliga, for six years, after the league received clearance from the country's competition authority to sell the rights for a longer period than usual.

The maximum period usually considered acceptable for premium sports properties in Europe is three years, following the template laid down by the European Commission in its investigations over a decade ago into the sale of exclusive sports rights to the Uefa Champions League, the English Premier League and the German Bundesliga.

It was also the norm in Denmark. In early 2007, MTG agreed to extend its existing deal, from 2006-07 to 2008-09, for four years. The competition authority, the Konkurrencestyrelsen, struck down the deal due to its length, among other reasons (*TV Sports Markets* 11:20).

This time the authority, after strong persuasion by the league, allowed the six-year deals on the condition that one broadcaster could acquire exclusive live rights to a maximum of four out of the six games per week, and no broadcaster

could acquire both the first- and second-pick games.

Søren Bo Rasmussen, the authority's head of media division, told *TV Sports Markets* there were two main reasons why it sanctioned a six-year term.

"One of the most important reasons is that the Danish market has seen an increased concentration in broadcasting in recent years – there have been some mergers, there are not that many buyers left in the market," he said.

In October 2012, MTG took full control of pay-television broadcaster TV2 Sport. The channel had been set up as a joint venture between MTG and Danish commercial broadcaster TV2.

In December 2012, US media company Discovery acquired SBS Nordic for \$1.7bn (€1.24bn). Last month, Discovery also completed its acquisition of a controlling interest in pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport, further strengthening its sport operations.

"There was a real danger that one broadcaster could have gone away with all the rights," Rasmussen said. "We paid more attention to the no-single-buyer clause, which says there must be at least two broadcasters. There are extra years in the contract but we

wanted to be sure that there was more than one buyer."

If competition is deemed to have "deteriorated significantly" because of the six-year term, then the league will revert to selling its rights in three-year cycles, Rasmussen said.

MTG has held exclusive Champions League rights across the region for many years, and also has Premier League rights in Denmark and Norway. The authority felt that if there had not been a no-single-buyer clause MTG could have acquired exclusive Superliga rights, and would then have held all premium football rights in Denmark, and this could have limited competition.

An exception would have been made to the no-single-buyer rule if there had only been two bidders and one had been prepared to pay 40 per cent more than the highest offer from the other.

However, had this happened, the broadcaster would not have been able to acquire all matches for six years. At least two of the six matches each week could have only been sold for a maximum of three years. ■

[www.](#) For the full statement from the Danish competition authority visit our website.

Markets that there were two main reasons why the league wanted long-term deals.

"First, to secure the income for the clubs from the media agreements in the long term," he said. "Second, to have a greater opportunity to build strategic partnerships with broadcasters which will help develop the Superliga as a product." Broadcasters are more likely to invest in high quality production when there is less risk that they will lose the rights again very quickly.

"A six-year period is much better grounds than the three-year deals we have at the moment. Normally, as soon as we have done a deal, two years later it is all about competition for the rights again."

MTG confirms position

MTG's renewal of the Superliga rights

confirms its position as the leading sports broadcaster in the Nordics.

"It is very much our core property in Denmark," Peter Nørrelund, MTG's head of sport, told *TV Sports Markets*. "The Premier League and the Champions League complement our broadcast of the Danish Superliga.

"The Superliga is local, it is closer to the people and we have more access to the players."

He added: "We see globalisation of football, with strong competitions like the Premier League and the Champions League getting stronger and stronger, and we have seen that the local league can suffer. This six-year agreement means that we can work with the clubs in order to improve the product."

MTG is understood to have paid only a slight increase on its current rights fee, which it is happy with. The Superliga is a vital property for it to secure distribution revenue from cable operators. The longer term deal means that it will be able to agree more lucrative and longer distribution deals.

The broadcaster has the rights to match picks one, three, four and six each week. It will show the first-pick match on TV3 Plus, its main free-to-air channel which shows sport. It will show the remaining matches on pay-television channel TV3 Sport 1. This is the same as in the current cycle.

MTG has also acquired exclusive rights to the Danish Cup, the DBU Pokalen, and the second-tier league.

Aggressive SBS

The Superliga deal is another signal from SBS that it intends to bid aggressively for the rights to premium sport following its takeover by Discovery, experts say.

Last July, SBS acquired Uefa European Qualifiers rights across Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The deal covers the qualifying matches of all nations, including the Scandinavian countries, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, and is worth between €70m and €75m (*TV Sports Markets* 17:14).

SBS-owned male-oriented commercial broadcaster 6'eren will show matches of the Danish national team in European Qualifiers in Denmark. The channel also shows the Premier League, the FA Cup, La Liga and the Uefa Europa League.

SBS has the rights to match picks two and five from the Superliga. It is expected to show the matches on basic-tier channels Canal 8 or Canal 9, which it is expected to acquire from Bonnier.

Other rights

The league is still in talks to sell highlights, clips and radio rights, with its international rights also up for renewal in the next year.

It is in talks with incumbent highlights rights-holders, public-service broadcaster DR and commercial broadcaster TV2, over a renewal. Both broadcasters pay around DKK5m per year in the current three-year cycle for non-exclusive rights. TV2 is thought to have made a lower offer for the rights in the new cycle.

The league is open to selling its short-form content, highlights and clips, in multiple non-exclusive packages and is thought to have had talks with digital operators, including the newspaper *Ekstra Bladet*.

However, digital operators, be they newspaper groups or internet operators, will have to pay the same fee for the package as broadcasters. Thomsen said that the league would lose credibility with broadcasters if it sold its short-form rights more cheaply to digital companies.

The international rights are currently held by the IMG Media agency in a three-year deal from 2012-13 to 2014-15. Thomsen said the league had not yet begun talks over a new deal, and would not do so until it had finished selling its domestic rights. Negotiations are

C More to withdraw from two sports-rights markets

Pan-Nordic pay-television broadcaster C More is set to withdraw from the sports broadcasting industry in both Denmark and Norway, and is expected to focus on the Swedish market where it has been more successful.

Media group SBS Discovery Media has an option to buy basic-tier channels Canal 8 and Canal 9 from Bonnier-owned C More in 2015. SBS is expected to take up this option, and to use the channels to show its coverage of the Danish football league, the Superliga (see main story).

In August 2012, C More, then called Canal Plus, launched Canal 8 and scrapped its flagship premium sports channel, Canal Plus Sport 1. This was a move to adapt to the peculiarities of the Danish market in which basic-tier channels carry unusually strong sports content, with the result that the premium Canal Plus channels had struggled to attract subscribers (*TV Sports Markets* 16:13).

Danish basic-tier broadcasters can compete with premium pay-television

broadcasters for sports rights because carriage fees from cable operators for basic-tier channels are high.

TV Sports Markets understands that C More is also studying an exit from sports broadcasting in Norway. It is understood to be planning to either sell or consolidate its operations.

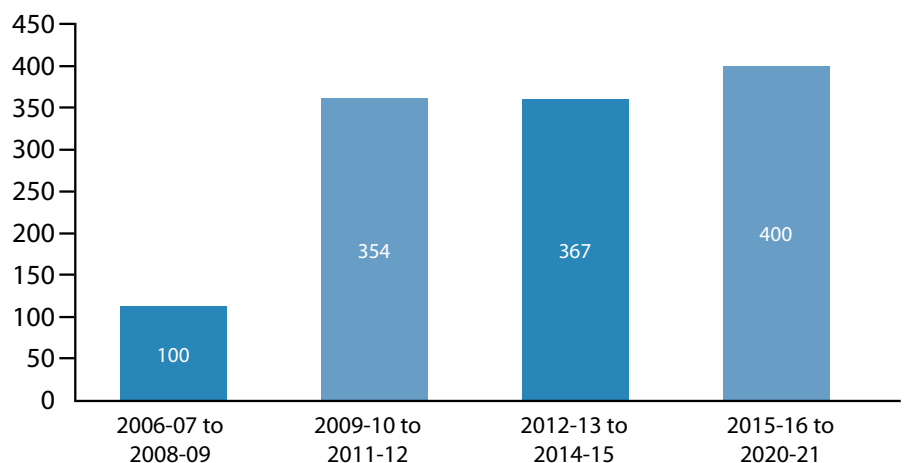
C More has been losing money in both Denmark and Norway for several years. It has struggled in these markets since 2010 when it failed to renew its pan-Nordic Premier League rights.

It is considered to have overpaid for football properties after losing out on the Premier League.

C More pays €18m per year for La Liga rights, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, and about €12m per year for Serie A, also from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

At the end of last month, Bonnier took full ownership of C More, acquiring the 35-per-cent stake held by telco Telenor. Bonnier already held a 65-per-cent stake. Bonnier had been trying to sell its stake in C More for more than a year. ■

Annual Danish Superliga domestic rights fees over four cycles (DKKm)



Source: *TV Sports Markets*

expected to begin in the autumn. There is limited interest in the rights outside the Nordic countries. ■

[www.](#) For the full interviews with Claus Thomsen and Peter Nørrelund visit our website.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Ten pays double to keep hold of strategic content

By Richard Welbirg

Uefa achieved another big increase in the value of its Champions and Europa League rights in the Indian subcontinent in its renewal earlier this month with incumbent rights-holder Ten Sports.

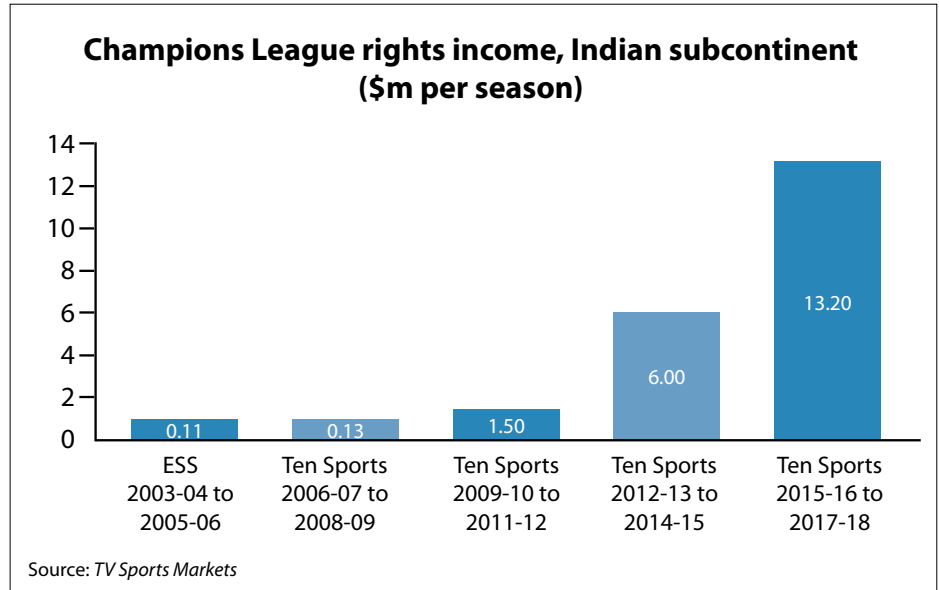
The increase underlines the strategic importance of the property to Ten and the continuing growth in the popularity of European club football in the region.

The pan-regional pay-television broadcaster won the rights for the period from 2015-16 to 2017-18, paying about \$13.2m (€9.6m) per season. The deal was brokered by Team Marketing, Uefa's marketing partner for club competitions.

The fee is more than double the \$6m per season that Ten pays in its current three-year deal, which expires next season. The value of that deal was a 300-per-cent increase on the previous one. Ten has broadcast the two competitions in the region since the 2006-07 season (see bar chart).

Several parties were involved in the bidding but local sources this week claimed that at least two of those widely expected to bid, pay-television operators Sony Six and Rupert Murdoch's Star, did not do so.

Ten has created the successful Ten



Action channel around the Uefa competitions. The channel also carries the French Ligue 1, Brazilian Série A, the German domestic cup, the DFB Pokal, and the English League Cup.

The broadcaster has paid big increases to keep control of the Champions League rights since it pan-regional operator ESPN Star Sports as rights-holder in 2006, despite the problems created by the difference in time zone. The standard Champions League kick-off time of 8.45pm CET means matches are shown after 1am in India.

In the current cycle, Ten, which has been owned by media group Zee since 2010, beat off competition from Sony, ESS and the Nimbus Communications agency.

Ten paid just \$400,000 for the three-year cycle from 2006-07 to 2008-09. Ten was outbid at the time by a \$650,000 offer from the Nimbus Sport agency – ESS and

Zee also bid – but Uefa felt the higher ratings of Ten against India's other sports channels would be beneficial for sponsors. In the 2009-12 cycle, Ten paid \$1.5m per season.

Under the new deal, Ten Sports will broadcast 145 Champions League and 205 Europa League matches each season, a significant increase from the 55- and 60-game minimum respectively for each competition under the current deal. Matches will be shown across the Ten Sports, Ten Action and Ten HD channels, with live streaming of matches on the tensports.com website.

The agreement covers exclusive broadcast rights for the Indian subcontinent which includes India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives and Afghanistan.

The deal also includes the rights to the annual Uefa Super Cup. ■

OLYMPIC GAMES

Seven sees benefits in long-term deal where rivals don't

By Richard Welbirg

Australian commercial broadcaster Seven is paying a high price in its deal for the Olympic Games of 2016, 2018 and 2020, local media-rights experts say, but the

broadcaster will view the deal as a good investment for a number of reasons.

These include:

- the boost to advertising revenues across the year, not just during the Games
- the favourable time zone of the 2018 and 2020 Games
- the attractive audience demographic for some winter Olympic events.

The A\$190m (\$179m/€131m) deal is considered a reasonable one for the International Olympic Committee given Seven was facing no competition from

rival commercial networks Nine and Ten. Some local media reports claim the IOC had been looking for A\$230m-A\$250m. The deal was said to be close to finalisation late this week. The IOC said that it would not comment on "speculative reports."

The IOC created the three-Games package after having earlier failed to attract any offers for the combined 2014 and 2016 Games at an asking price of about A\$126m. Ten bought standalone rights to the 2014 Sochi winter Olympics

unopposed, in a deal worth about A\$7m (*TV Sports Markets* 17:9).

That deal was seen as a strategic purchase to give Ten pole position in this negotiation, but one local source said the network would have been naive to expect any incumbency benefit.

Ten had a successful Sochi. It paid what experts believe to be way below the true market value of the rights and enjoyed good ratings. It drew an average live audience of 1.1m, well above its own expectations.

However, it lacked the financial muscle to make a serious bid for the next three editions of the Games and is facing something of a crisis. In June, Ten said it expected television revenues at year-end on August 31 to have fallen by between 3.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent on the previous period. An analyst at Asia-Pacific investment bank CIMB forecast that Ten would report a loss of A\$47m for the year.

Nine was always unlikely to make a bid

having struggled to turn a profit on Olympic broadcasts in the past. It acquired the rights to the 2010 Vancouver winter Olympics and the 2012 London summer Games in a joint A\$122m bid with pay-television operator Foxtel, but is understood to have made a loss of between A\$25m and A\$30m.

Benefits

Local broadcast executives say that the Games will give Seven leverage with advertisers across the year, not just during the three-week period of the events. As one executive put it, “budget-wise, it would be tough to say the Games are profitable as standalone events, but that is not how the network will look at it.”

The majority of the deal’s value is expected to be in the 2020 Tokyo Games, whose favourable time zone means that the blue-riband events will be broadcast during Australian primetime. Evening events from Rio 2016 correspond to

morning slots in Australia, which are less attractive to advertisers.

Pyeongchang’s 2018 winter Games is in the same advantageous time zone as Tokyo and will be a strong complement to Seven’s Australian Open tennis coverage in January 2018.

The winter Olympics also add variety to the broadcaster’s advertising reach: they appeal to a slightly younger audience demographic than the summer editions, while certain events – ski jumping, snowboarding, figure skating, freestyle skiing and alpine skiing – attract a larger female audience share than other sports.

Beijing 2008 was Seven’s last Olympics as official Australian broadcaster and the network – Australia’s most-watched – was said to have been determined to regain the rights. As one well-placed insider put it, “it’s better to have the Games than not have them, if you can afford it – which they can.” ■

SERIE A

Reluctant sharing deal does not presage wider truce

By Frank Dunne

Last week’s Serie A rights-sharing deal between Italian pay-television operators Mediaset Premium and Sky Italia does not appear to presage a wider truce between the two companies, including a sharing of Uefa Champions League rights.

However, until Mediaset has completed the restructuring of its pay-television business such a deal cannot be ruled out.

The Serie A agreement between the two broadcasters allowed the league to come out with an increase of almost 14 per cent in the value of its live rights, which increased from the €829m (\$1.14bn) per season in the current three-year deal, 2012-13 to 2014-15, to €943m per season in the seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

Under the new agreements, Sky will have live rights to all 20 Serie A teams, paying fractionally over €571m per

season. Its rights to the top eight teams are for satellite only. The rights to the remaining 12 teams are platform-neutral. Mediaset will pay just over €372m per season for the digital-terrestrial rights to the same eight-team package held by Sky.

The outcome is similar to the current split, in which Mediaset has the digital-terrestrial rights to 12 teams and Sky satellite rights to all 20. However, the route to arriving at the status quo was a tortuous one due to the tactical bidding of the broadcasters in the first round of the tender (*TV Sports Markets* 18:11).

The league initially awarded the digital-terrestrial rights to eight teams to Sky for €357m per season, the satellite rights to the same teams to Mediaset for €280m per season and the platform-neutral rights to 12 teams for Mediaset for a further €306m per season, a total of €943m per season.

The awards were made on the understanding that the broadcasters would exchange digital-terrestrial rights for satellite and that Mediaset would give Sky the 12-team package.

The new deal looks a bad one for Mediaset – Bernsteins called it “close to

disastrous” for the broadcaster – as it is paying almost €100m more per season for fewer matches. But its true significance will not become clear until the company has finalised the restructuring of pay-television businesses in Italy and Spain.

This week Mediaset sold an 11.11-per-cent stake in Mediaset Premium, its Italian pay-television platform, to Spanish telco Telefónica for €100m, valuing the platform at €900m. Simultaneously, it exited the Spanish pay-television platform Canal Plus, selling its 22-per-cent stake to Telefónica for €365m.

The company said that it was in talks with Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera and French conglomerate Vivendi about further stakes in Mediaset Premium. Accepting a poorer share of Serie A rights – its original winning bids totalled €586m per season – could make the stake more attractive by keeping costs down.

The broadcaster is also paying Uefa €230m per season for exclusive Champions League rights for three seasons from 2015-16. It refused to include these rights in the talks with Sky. But if it fails to bring in fresh investment, it may yet be forced to do so. ■ [www.ww](#)

OUT THIS
MONTH



KNOWTHEFAN

The Global Sports Media Consumption Report 2014

The Global Sports Media Consumption Report 2014 is the definitive insight into sports fans use of digital media around the world. Leveraging four years' of research data and surveying one billion fans across 16 international markets, the report is a must-have reference tool for any business which needs to understand how sports fan consume sport.

Reflecting an increasingly diverse media landscape, the report explores how use of broadcast, print, online and social media is interwoven and identifies key trends around how each platform is used by fans of different sports, and how the usage habits have evolved over the four years the research has been conducted.

Markets researched in the 2014 report include:

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India	Indonesia
Italy	Japan
Russia	Spain
South Africa*	Turkey
UAE*	USA

* new for 2014 report

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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from June 26 to July 9

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: Champions League, Serie A, Belgian Pro League and more

- **Football:** Commercial and pay-television broadcaster BTV extended a rights deal in Bulgaria for the Uefa Champions League for three years, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The agreement also comprises magazine programming plus four editions of the annual Uefa Super Cup game, from 2015 to 2018. The deal, which includes online and mobile rights, was agreed with the Team Marketing agency on behalf of Uefa, the sport's European governing body.
- **Football:** Italian Serie A clubs approved the next three-year cycle of live rights, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, with pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia and Mediaset Premium's parent company RTI securing the main packages (page 8).
- **Football:** The Belgian Pro League and its adviser MP & Silva agreed deals for highlights and clips rights. Commercial broadcaster VTM and public-service broadcaster VRT acquired highlights in Flemish. The league and agency agreed clips deals with pay-television broadcasters Belgacom and Telenet, media companies Mediahuis and De Persgroep, as well as public-service broadcasters RTBF and VRT. All deals will run for three seasons, from 2014-15 to 2016-17 (page 2).
- **Football:** The Pragosport agency awarded rights for the Synot Liga, the Czech Republic top tier, to public-service broadcaster Česká Televize and pay-television broadcaster Slovak Sport. The deals cover just the 2014-15 season. Česká Televize acquired rights for the first-, second- and fourth-pick match each week. Slovak Sport acquired rights for the third-choice match each week (page 2).
- **Football:** The Superliga, the top Danish football league, agreed domestic rights deals with commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group and basic-tier broadcaster SBS Discovery Media. The deals are for six years, from 2015-16 to 2020-21, and cover all media platforms (page 1).
- **Football:** The Scottish Professional Football League restructured its rights deals for the 2014-15 season, taking into account the presence of three of the country's biggest clubs – Hearts, Hibernian and Rangers – in the second-tier Championship. UK pay-television broadcasters BskyB and BT Sport will now broadcast 70 live matches from the league during the 2014-15 season, including at least 15 Rangers games and the four derby games between Edinburgh clubs Hearts and Hibernian. BBC Alba, the Gaelic-language channel operated by UK public-service broadcaster the BBC, will show an additional 16 games live from the league's three divisions during the 2014-15 season.
- **Football:** Japanese satellite-television broadcaster Sky PerfecTV acquired rights for the 2014-15 season of the Swiss Super League top tier. As part of the deal, Sky PerfecTV will show live coverage of all games featuring Basel, which recently signed popular Japan international Yoichiro Kakitani.
- **Football:** Turkish Süper Lig top-tier club Beşiktaş extended a rights deal with the Saran Media agency. The worldwide agreement, excluding Turkey, covers audiovisual rights for the club's qualifying matches for the Uefa Champions League and Europa League competitions plus friendly games. The extended deal is worth a total of \$5m (€3.7m) and will run until the end of the 2017-18 season. The contract has been back-dated to include the 2013-14 season when Saran also worked with Beşiktaş, so is worth \$1m per year from 2013-14 to 2017-18.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Online streaming service Aereo suspended its operations following a ruling by the US Supreme Court that it breaches the copyright of major sports leagues and their media partners. Aereo chief executive and founder Chet Kanojia said that the company had opted to “pause” the service as it considers its next move, but said that its “journey is far from done.”
- Dutch government minister Sander Dekker said that public-service broadcaster NOS should disclose how much it spends on sports rights. Dekker, the minister of education, culture and science, said in parliament that he would ask NOS to be more transparent after the broadcaster failed to reveal the value of its rights deal for highlights of the Eredivisie, the country's top football division, for three seasons, from 2014-15 to 2016-17.
- Lagardère Unlimited, the sports marketing division of media conglomerate Lagardère, co-produced the first in-event, real-time television advertisement on June 28 with the USA Triathlon governing body. The advertising spot, which was shown during US pay-television broadcaster Universal Sports Network's coverage of the World Triathlon Series event in Chicago, was the first advertisement to be shot, produced and broadcast in-event using real-time content captured on location and via social media. The 15-second spot, advertising sports equipment brand Asics, featured real-time weather data, event footage, video highlights and posts on social networking website Twitter.
- Champions League winner Real Madrid secured the largest revenue payment from European football's governing body Uefa for competing in the tournament's 2013-14 edition, ahead of French Ligue 1 club Paris Saint-Germain. The 32 competing teams shared €904m (\$1.24bn) in payments from Uefa. Spanish Liga club Real received €57.4m, including the standard €8.6m participation bonus, more than €20.5m from the market pool and over €28m in performance payments. In the Europa League, €209m was shared by Uefa between the 56 clubs. Spanish club Sevilla, which won the tournament, received the highest total of €14.6m.
- South African public-service broadcaster the SABC is facing a shortfall of more than R500m (€34m/\$47m) in its budget for sports coverage in the 2014-15 financial year due to spiralling sports-rights fees, according to acting chief executive Tian Olivier.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from June 26 to July 9**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****Basketball, Commonwealth Games, cricket, mixed martial arts and more**

- **Basketball:** North American pay-television broadcaster One World Sports extended a rights deal for games operated by the Chinese Basketball Association. One World Sports will continue to show games across all platforms in the US and Canada for three years, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. The broadcaster struck the deal with the Infront Sports & Media agency, the CBA's exclusive global marketing partner. One World Sports will show two games per week during the regular-season plus the CBA All-Star game and all post-season games, including the CBA Championship Finals. All games will be shown live and produced by One World Sports.
- **Commonwealth Games:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC amended an exclusive rights deal for the Glasgow 2014 Games to allow other news organisations in the UK to access coverage of the multi-sport event. The BBC will allow non-rights holders to show up to 90 seconds of footage per day across a maximum of six extracts via online and mobile platforms during the Games.
- **Cricket:** Australian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights for this summer's England v India series. Fox Sports struck the deal with the England and Wales Cricket Board, which is hosting the series. The coverage will include five Test matches, five One-Day Internationals and one Twenty20 contest. The deal included the MCC v Rest of the World match on July 5.
- **Gridiron:** US sports broadcaster ESPN acquired exclusive rights for the Canadian Football League in a multi-year deal. ESPN will broadcast at least 86 games in 2014 with 17 or more contests to be shown on the ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPNNews channels, including the season-ending Grey Cup. An additional 69 games will be shown on ESPN's live video-on-demand channel, ESPN3. The channels will also be available in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific Rim.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** The Kombat Sport pay-television channel struck a rights deal with the International Mixed Martial Arts Federation to broadcast highlights of the sport's 2014 World Championships. The deal covers Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Motorsport:** The Saran Media agency extended a rights deal for the Formula One world championship in Turkey for three years, from 2015 to 2017, in an agreement with Formula One Management.
- **Olympic Games:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven acquired rights for the next three editions of the Games. The deal covers the 2016 summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the 2018 winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea, and the 2020 summer Games in Tokyo, Japan (page 7).

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- US satellite-television provider DirecTV will launch a channel dedicated to fantasy sports as part of its Sunday Ticket package covering the NFL American football league. DirecTV Fantasy Zone will be a live show available exclusive to NFL Sunday Ticket Max subscribers every Sunday afternoon during the 2014-15 season. The channel will provide fantasy league analysis and statistics and feature on-screen tickers offering real-time statistics, highlights, projections and key player updates.
- US entertainment company AMC Networks rebranded its international television networks division Chellomedia to AMC Networks International. AMC Networks concluded a deal to acquire Chellomedia from media company Liberty Global in February 2013 for €750m (\$1.03bn). The new AMC Networks International – Central Europe division will include the Sport 1, Sport 2 and Sport M channels. The AMC Networks International – Latin America division will include the AM Sports channel, while the Extreme Sports Channel will come under the AMC Networks International – Zone (EMEA) umbrella.
- The NFL is in talks to increase the amount of video content provided through its partnership with the Amplify platform available on social networking website Twitter. NFL Digital vice-president Vishal Shah said that the league wants to show more exclusive video material on the platform.
- US media company Comcast struck a carriage deal for pay-television channel the Big Ten Network in New Jersey and Maryland. The channel will launch in August.
- North American media company Anthem Media has agreed a deal with Cablevision for the telecommunications company to carry its Fight Network and FNTSY Sports Network martial arts channels. Cablevision will provide the channels through its Optimum TV service.
- US pay-television broadcaster Tennis Channel reached a multi-year carriage deal with cable-television provider Armstrong.
- Pay-television broadcaster ESPN launched a new channel on its live and on-demand sports streaming service ESPN Player to cover the 2014 World Lacrosse Championships throughout the UK and Europe. The channel will provide 43 games live and on demand, including all pool games for the top six teams, both semi-finals and the final exclusive to ESPN Player.
- Fox Sports Asia, the regional subsidiary of 21st Century Fox's broadcast arm Fox International Channels, is to rebrand its portfolio of channels. The Fox Sports, Fox Sports Plus HD and Star Sports channels will be rebranded as Fox Sports, Fox Sports 2 and Fox Sports 3 on August 15. The rebrand will take effect in all Asian countries where Fox Sports channels are available, with the exception of China and South Korea where the Star Sports brand will remain.

SportBusiness Webinar

Know the Fan – Sports Media Consumption in a Multi-screen World Wednesday July 16th 2pm BST

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Frank Dunne
Editor
TV Sports Markets

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- UK public-service broadcaster the BBC will set up a screening area in the Glasgow Science Centre to show live coverage of the 2014 Commonwealth Games in ultra high definition.
- Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE will take its sports channel Teledporte off digital-terrestrial television as part of cost-cutting plans. Teledporte will only be available as an online channel. TVE confirmed the plan after receiving €130m (\$178m) in funding from the Spanish government to cover a drop in annual revenue. TVE added that some of Teledporte's programming would be transferred to digital-terrestrial sister channel La 2.
- Modern Times Group, the multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster, closed a deal to acquire a 75-per-cent stake in global youth media brand and pay-television channel operator Trace Partners, which includes the Trace Sport Stars channel. Trace co-founder Olivier Laouchez will continue as chairman and chief executive.
- The Fotball Media agency, which distributes rights for the Tippeligaen on behalf of the Norwegian Football Federation, is considering legal action against public-service broadcaster NRK over alleged copyright infringement of rights to the country's top football division. Norwegian broadcasters are permitted to show clips of events of general interest, including sporting events, but Fotball Media is unhappy with the number and length of NRK's clips.
- Lebanon's Court of Urgent Matters said that it had no jurisdiction to consider a lawsuit filed by pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports against state broadcaster Tele Liban over coverage of football's Fifa World Cup. BeIN Sports, which has rights to the tournament in the Middle East and North Africa, complained after Tele Liban began broadcasting matches without authorisation.
- The Communications Authority of Kenya proposed new legislation that would force pay-television broadcasters to share exclusive content. The legislation, which is set to be presented in September for stakeholder consultations, would force pay-television companies to share premium sports programming.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The International Cricket Council, the sport's global governing body, launched a tender for rights covering its major events for the next eight-year cycle, from 2015 to 2023. The cycle comprises two editions of the Cricket World Cup, World Twenty20 and Champions Trophy tournaments, along with qualifying events for the competitions. Two editions of the Women's World Cup and Women's World T20 are included alongside four U-19 World Cups, with the ICC ready to consider global or territory-specific bids. The ICC will begin issuing invitations to tender on July 14 and must receive expressions of interest no later than 9am local time in Dubai on August 1.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from June 26 to July 9

- The Fédération Equestre Internationale, equestrianism's global governing body, invited proposals from media companies to produce, sell and distribute live coverage, news and highlights for its major championships. The events include the World Equestrian Games; European Championships in dressage, eventing and jumping; World Cup jumping, dressage, driving and vaulting events; and the international jumping circuit's Nations Cup.
- Media company Constantin Medien will submit a bid for the next cycle of domestic rights for Bundesliga football, from 2017-18. Constantin supervisory board member and shareholder Dieter Hahn told *Handelsblatt* that the company would seek to acquire rights for live coverage and highlights. The rights would be exploited on pay-television channel Sport 1 Plus.
- Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE said that it would not bid for the next cycle of media rights for football's Uefa Champions League. Uefa, football's European governing body, is expected to announce the launch of the rights sales process in Spain for the three seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18 in the coming days. The Mediapro agency, commercial broadcaster Antena 3 and Catalan public-service broadcaster TV3 are expected to bid.
- The athletics division of Syracuse University in the US curtailed its multimedia rights contract with the IMG agency in a bid to seek a more lucrative deal. The deal with IMG was due to run until the end of the 2020-21 season. In a letter to its sponsors, Syracuse said that it would explore all options, include negotiating a new agreement with IMG, finding a new multimedia partner or taking the rights in-house.
- Production company Plazamedia extended a deal to produce coverage of the 2014 edition of the Mercedes Cup ATP World Tour Masters 250 series men's tennis tournament in Stuttgart, Germany. Plazamedia agreed the deal with Emotion Management, the event's organiser.
- The Infront Sports & Media agency is aiming to raise €155m (\$212m) of loans to pay private equity owner Bridgepoint a dividend, according to the Reuters news agency. Financial services companies Credit Suisse, Goldman Sachs and Nomura are spearheading the deal.
- Online video distribution and marketing company Rightster is set to acquire Base79, the largest YouTube multi-channel service outside North America, and concluded the acquisition of outstanding shares in social video company Viral Spiral. The proposed acquisition of Base79 is worth £50m (€63m/\$86m). The Viral Spiral deal is worth £4.1m.
- Media company Red Bull Media House extended a global distribution partnership with music, film and video distribution firm The Orchard. The Orchard will distribute Red Bull Media House's sports films to digital and cable platforms worldwide.
- Golf's PGA Tour became the latest equity partner of 120 Sports, US media group Time's new digital sports service. The PGA Tour joins Time Inc/Sports Illustrated, Major League Baseball's MLB.com, the National Hockey League and Campus Insiders – a joint venture between the IMG College division of the IMG agency and digital sports media company Silver Chalice – in becoming an equity partner in the service, which will offer sports news and highlights.
- The Ultimate Fighting Championship agreed a partnership with fellow mixed martial arts series Vale Tudo Japan that will lead to a new documentary television series being shown in the country.
- Ender Uslu was appointed to lead Infront Turkey, a new division based in Istanbul that has been established by the Infront Sports & Media agency.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The England and Wales Cricket Board will stream live coverage of this summer's One-Day International women's national team series between England and India on the governing body's official channel on video-sharing platform YouTube. Coverage of the three-match series will be available free of charge around the world, with the games taking place on August 21, 23 and 25.
- The British Cycling governing body streamed live coverage of the National Circuit Race Championships on July 9 on its official website.

EDITORIAL

Editor	Frank Dunne @frankdunneTVSM
Senior Reporter	Richard Welbirg @richardwelbirg
Reporter	Robin Jellis @robinjellis
Telephone	+44 (0) 20 7954 3506
Fax	+44 (0) 20 7954 3511
Email	tvsmtvsm@sportbusiness.com

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Designer	Stewart Henson
----------	----------------

SALES & COMMERCIAL

Telephone	+44 (0) 20 7954 3483
Email	sales@tvsportsmarkets.com
Paul Santos	Head of Sales & Commercial paul.santos@sportbusiness.com
David Hunt	Senior Account Manager david.hunt@sportbusiness.com

TV Sports Markets

Registered Office:
St Mark's House, Shepherdess Walk, London, N1 7BQ
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