

FOOTBALL SPAIN

Mediapro close to rights monopoly as Telefónica plays a waiting game

By Richard Welbirg

The Mediapro agency has acquired the domestic and international media rights to 39 of the 42 clubs from the Primera Liga and Segunda Liga, the top two divisions of Spanish club football, in one season-deals for the 2015-16 season.

The agency is expected to complete its monopoly by concluding deals with the three other clubs: Barcelona, Real Sociedad and Espanyol.

Its total investment in the rights, assuming it signs all 42 clubs, is likely to be about €760m (\$1.03bn). This would be an increase of around five per cent on the total €722m paid to clubs by Mediapro and media company Prisa in the 2014-15 season, when the rights are shared between the two companies. The majority of those deals are for three years.

The deals are thought unlikely to throw up regulatory problems for two reasons. First, Mediapro will not be broadcasting

the matches exclusively on its Gol T pay-television service. For both antitrust and commercial reasons it will share coverage of the league with rival pay-television operator Canal Plus, which was previously majority-owned by Prisa and is now wholly-owned by telco Telefónica.

Second, the deals are merely a stop-gap to cover the last season before collective selling of Liga rights is expected to come into force.

It is thought that Mediapro was able to close the deals – a combination of renewals plus new deals with former Prisa clubs – with virtually no competition. Most importantly, it did not have to go head to head with Telefónica.

In the 2014-15 season, Mediapro is paying €561m per season for rights to 14 clubs in the Primera Liga, including Real Madrid and Barcelona. Canal Plus

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WORLD CUP PRODUCTION

Fifa: We delivered more and better

By Frank Dunne

Fifa, football's world governing body, said that Host Broadcast Services, the World Cup host broadcaster, had provided its media partners for the 2014 competition in Brazil with "more and better" coverage compared to the 2010 and 2006 tournaments.

World Cup broadcasters who spoke to *TV Sports Markets* this week largely agreed – with one head of sport saying

that it was "up there with the best" sports television production.

There were also criticisms, the biggest of which concerned the audio for the opening ceremony and the presentation of the new goal-line technology.

Speaking exclusively to *TV Sports Markets*, Niclas Ericson, Fifa's director

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FASTRACK 1

NEWS IN BRIEF

Skating fans still a vital, if ageing, target for NOS

Public-service broadcaster NOS earlier this month renewed its Dutch ice skating rights with the national federation in a deal thought to be worth close to €1m (\$1.4m) per year.

The deal is for four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, and was agreed directly with the Royal Netherlands Skating Federation (KNSB), the governing body of ice skating in the Netherlands. NOS will also cover production costs, thought to be close to €1m per year.

The previous deal was also for four years, from 2010-11 to 2013-14. NOS is thought to have paid only a marginal increase for the rights in the new deal.

The new deal covers short track, long track, figure and inline skating as well as marathon events. The emphasis will be on long track but the coverage of short track events has been expanded. This reflects the growing interest in the discipline following strong performances from Dutch short track skaters in recent years, Mascha van Werven, manager of communications at the KNSB, told *TV Sports Markets*.

NOS was keen to renew its rights. Ice skating provides it with strong ratings, and the sport is the country's second most popular, behind football.

At the winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, Dutch ice skaters claimed 23 of the 36 medals on offer. These strong performances provided the broadcaster with an average audience of 1.3m, an audience share of 46.6 per cent.

However, a big challenge for both the broadcaster and the federation is that the skating audience is ageing. "Our live content is mainly watched by older people, who are 50-plus, and the younger population is mainly watching highlights," van Werven said. To try to attract a younger audience to the sport, the federation has developed a news app for second-screen devices and is interacting with fans on social media

sites Facebook and Twitter.

NOS only shows live coverage and van Werven said that it may seek a deal with another broadcaster to show human interest programming about the athletes.

NOS is not thought to have faced any competition for the rights. It is thought that the KNSB spoke to commercial broadcasters RTL and SBS, as well as Fox International Channels, but none made an offer. Rivals saw little value in having the national skating rights when NOS can show all International Skating Union events. ■

Friendlies 'very important' for SRG

The Swiss football federation last week renewed its deal with long-term broadcast partner, public-service broadcaster SRG SSR.

The broadcaster agreed a four-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18 with the federation, the Schweizerische Fussballverband. The deal covers national team friendly matches, women's and youth national team games and the domestic Swiss Cup.

One local expert estimated that the broadcaster would be paying close to €150,000 (\$205,000) per national team friendly. SRG will also cover the production costs of friendly matches in Switzerland of about €50,000 per game.

It replaces the previous two-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2013-14, which covered all matches of the Swiss national team, including qualifying matches, as well as the Swiss Cup.

Adrian Boss, SRG's attorney responsible for sports rights, told *TV Sports Markets*: "The rights of the national football team are very important – it is one of the most valuable properties, and it completes SRG's portfolio of all important football rights for this season."

During the recent Fifa World Cup, SRG recorded about 1.5m viewers for Switzerland matches, a market share of between 80 and 85 per cent.

In recent years, SRG has shown

between five and seven Swiss Cup matches per season on television and 20 to 25 matches online, but it is not committed to showing a certain number of matches. Coverage in the new deal is expected to be the same.

Matches of the men's national team and the final of the cup are covered by listed-events legislation and must be shown free-to-air. ■

Sony faced little competition for CPL

Indian pay-television channel Sony Six is thought to have faced no competition when agreeing a one-year extension to its rights deal for the Caribbean Premier League Twenty20 cricket competition.

The broadcaster paid about \$150,000 (€110,000) for the rights, up from \$100,000 last season. Rival pay-television operator Star was not interested because it will be covering the England-India Test series in July and August.

Sony Six broadcast the inaugural season of the CPL last year and will again show live coverage and highlights of all 30 CPL matches. The 2014 edition runs from July 11 to August 17.

The deal was agreed with agency MP & Silva, which signed a one-year deal with the CPL to distribute its rights in the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East. The league is selling its rights directly in other territories, advised by the Future Media Services consultancy.

Rights to the inaugural 2013 tournament were distributed globally by the IMG Events & Media agency, which signed a commission-based deal with the CPL. The agency secured global rights fees of about \$600,000.

The increased Sony fee reflects the fact that some matches have been moved into daylight hours this year, a more favourable time for Indian audiences. Sony also values the production quality of the tournament, including high definition feeds. The coverage is produced by IMG.

Acquiring the CPL also ensures Sony continued carriage on India's local cable operators during the summer. ■

FOOTBALL SPAIN

Mediapro closes in on monopoly as Telefónica waits

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is paying €161m for the rights to the other six.

Mediapro sells the international rights for the whole league. It currently brings in €177.5m per season. Most of its deals around the world are for three years, expiring at the end of 2014-15. It is unclear how the rights to the 2015-16 season will be sold. Experts expect Mediapro to first seek to extend existing deals for one year on similar terms and only to go back to the market where such talks fail to produce a deal.

Telco no show

The surprising aspect of the Mediapro deals, given Telefónica's aggressive re-entry into the sports rights market this year with deals for Formula One motor racing and motorcycling's MotoGP, is that the telco did not bid against the agency, even for the clubs whose rights it currently owns.

Telefónica inherited the rights to 10 clubs in the two divisions when it became sole owner of Canal Plus this month. The telco had held a 22-per-cent stake in the platform before paying €750m to acquire Prisa's 56-per-cent and €295m for Mediaset España's 22-per-cent holding.

Local experts say the telco would prefer a sublicensing agreement with Mediapro in 2015-16. It will be aware – as will Mediapro – that Canal Plus's aggressive move on club rights in the last cycle forced up the price of the rights by 23 per cent (*TV Sports Markets* 16:15).

Between 2012-13 and 2014-15, Prisa and Mediapro have a rights-sharing agreement in which Prisa paid Mediapro €251m per season over the period for the rights to its 32 first and second division clubs.

The deal meant that both could continue to share live coverage of all first division teams on their respective broadcast outlets.

The real battle for the rights will take place if they are centralised in 2016-17.

As well as Mediapro and Telefónica, Qatari broadcaster beIN Sports is expected to target the rights ahead of a launch in Spain.

Clubs are expecting fierce competition for the centralised rights packages, which could force the value of the rights up significantly. One insider said the league was harbouring hopes of a UK-style situation, where the entry of telco BT Sport into the pay-television market led to a massive increase in domestic rights fees for the Premier League.

Fees up

Mediapro is understood to have paid small increases on the value of the clubs' existing deals (see table). Atlético Madrid achieved the highest increase, of about 10 per cent. The club's profile has grown significantly in recent years. In 2013-14 it won the Primera Liga title and reached the final of the Uefa Champions League.

Clubs' fees are dependent on promotion and relegation. The deals also include Copa del Rey rights, excluding the final.

Barcelona's failure to sign a deal is blamed on turmoil at the club following the resignation of president Sandro Rosell in January. Rosell stepped down after a hearing was announced into his alleged misappropriation of funds in the transfer of Brazilian forward Neymar to the club. Any deal would have to be agreed by Josep Maria Bartomeu, the former vice-president, who replaced Rosell.

The impasse with Sociedad is thought to be purely about price. The club wants the same rights fee as Basque rival Athletic Bilbao, which currently earns €30m per season compared to Sociedad's €22m per season.

Real deal

Most Liga clubs are coming into the final season of three-year deals. The exceptions are Barcelona, Real Madrid, Sevilla and Racing Santander, who are approaching the final season of four-season deals signed with Mediapro from 2011-12.

These deals were adjudged to breach a 2010 resolution of the Comisión Nacional de la Competencia, Spain's competition regulator, because of their length. In 2013, the CNC issued fines linked to the value of the contracts.

Rights fees paid to Primera Liga clubs, 2014-15		
Club	Rights-holder	Fee (€m)
Barcelona	Mediapro	140
Real Madrid	Mediapro	140
Atlético Madrid	Canal Plus	44
Valencia	Mediapro	44
Sevilla	Mediapro	32
Athletic Bilbao	Canal Plus	30
Villarreal	Mediapro	30
Espanyol	Canal Plus	24
Deportivo La Coruña	Mediapro	23
Celta Vigo	Canal Plus	22
Real Sociedad	Canal Plus	22
Almería	Mediapro	19
Córdoba	Mediapro	19
Eibar	Mediapro	19
Elche	Mediapro	19
Getafe	Canal Plus	19
Granada	Mediapro	19
Levante	Mediapro	19
Málaga	Mediapro	19
Rayo Vallecano	Mediapro	19
Total		722

Source: *TV Sports Markets*

Mediapro was fined €6.5m, Real Madrid €3.9m, Barcelona €3.6m, Sevilla €900,000 and Racing Santander €30,000. All but Santander appealed and the cases remain active. However, the final year of the clubs' four-year contracts was allowed to stand.

The sport law

Mediapro and the clubs have limited their agreements to just one season because of the proposed implementation of collective rights selling from the 2016-17 season. Spain's secretary of state for sport, Miguel Cardenal, has announced plans to introduce a 'professional sports law' before the end of 2014.

Cardenal's Sports Council, the Consejo Superior de Deportes, has yet to produce a draft bill, but indications are that it will cap the extent of income differences between clubs as well as introduce collective selling provisions. Barcelona and Real Madrid currently earn roughly seven times the media-rights revenue of the smallest clubs in La Liga. The new law would cap the difference at 4.5:1.

There is still some doubt, however, about whether the government has the political will to push the law through parliament at a time when Spain has far bigger economic problems to deal with. ■

WORLD CUP PRODUCTION

HBS bounces back after opening ceremony problems

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of TV, said: “The general feeling was that we delivered more and better this time. This was clearly reflected in the feedback we have received [from broadcasters]. In general, there is always room for improvement and we will always listen to broadcasters on how we can improve, but we are very satisfied with the quality and service we managed to provide in Brazil.”

There had been concerns among European broadcasters about whether HBS would be able to meet its technical commitments in a country the size of Brazil and one with so many infrastructural problems. But, as one television executive put it, “everything worked – you can’t underestimate the importance of that.”

One independent football production expert added: “Compared to the images that normally come out of South America, the feed was incredibly sharp and pure. Perfect, really.”

Ericson said that since 2010 Fifa and HBS, which is wholly owned by the Infront Sports & Media agency, had provided broadcasters with a lot more content, with more match feeds and new content for second screen applications. The key to making a success of this was agreeing rights deals early.

“It is Fifa strategy to put in place these agreements a reasonable time before the event to enable broadcasters to plan what they are going to present to their audiences.”

He added: “In 2010, the broadcasters said to us: ‘We need a system to find the materials Fifa produced.’ We worked a lot on the information platforms. Then there is the general evolution of adding a few more cameras and on the multimedia side of enabling faster use of content, whether it is for first or second screen applications.”

The total production budget for 2014

was about \$210m (€154m), about 40 per cent up on 2010. Half of this increase was due to the fact that there were 12 match venues this time compared to 10 in South Africa. The other half was down to the higher costs generally in Brazil.

For the 2014 competition, Fifa had about 165 primary rights-holders, a further 350 media companies who had acquired rights in sublicensing deals, plus another 180 or so partners with radio and other rights.

Poor audio

The most common complaint of broadcasters was the poor audio during the opening ceremony, which featured pop artists Pitbull, Jennifer Lopez and Claudia Leitte at the Arena de São Paulo. Several broadcasters said that they had received numerous complaints from viewers, with one head of sport calling it “a disaster.”

Ericson declined to comment on the problem beyond saying that Fifa was “currently reviewing all aspects” of the tournament production.

One of the broadcasters unhappy with the audio said that it was better to have technical problems during the opening ceremony than during a match.

Goal-line dispute

Several broadcasters said that HBS had overused goal-line technology at the outset of the tournament, often using it in situations where it was completely unnecessary. Ericson said that this had been planned.

“It was vital for Fifa to give all football audiences in different territories across the world enough time and opportunity to get acquainted with how GLT replays worked and what to expect on screen,” he said. “Once we felt audiences knew what to expect, we gradually scaled back the use of GLT replays to only relevant incidents.”

Direction issues

Several broadcasters said that they didn’t like the way in which cut-away shots were handled, including action replays, super slow-motion close-ups on players and crowd scenes.

As one executive asked, “what is the

point of going to a close-up of a player or a mid-shot when the ball is still in play and anything can be happening? It’s nonsense. What’s it telling us? If the ball is in play, you don’t want to go away from it.”

Another broadcaster said that close-ups and crowd shots had frequently been used where traditionally fans would expect to see action replays.

Ericson said that views on match direction were subjective but that the overall feedback from its licensees on this had been “very, very positive.”

He said: “You will always have licensees who have different views on things. With action replays, for example, you can miss some action on the pitch. It is sometimes quicker to cut from something else back to the action rather than trying to fit in a full replay. The games were extremely fast, with very fast transitions. When the games are that fast it can be tricky to insert a lot of replays.”

For the 2006 competition, HBS was criticised for being too safe and old-fashioned in its coverage (*TV Sports Markets* 10:11). In 2010, broadcaster reaction was very positive but some argued that HBS had gone too far the other way (*TV Sports Markets* 14:12).

Even those broadcasters who questioned the match direction in 2014, accepted that it was a question of taste and broadcasting cultures, rather than any technical failure by HBS.

Ratings uplift

Fifa is expecting an increase in average live audiences for the World Cup compared to 2010 but Ericson said that full figures were not yet available. “We are optimistic in view of the individual figures we have seen,” he said. “We feel that we are ahead in the Americas and Europe and expect to be ahead also in Africa and the Middle East. The question is Asia. We are confident we have done OK there. So overall, we expect an uplift compared to 2010.”

[An in-depth analysis of ratings in Europe’s major television markets is featured in the latest edition of *TV Sports Markets*’ sister publication *Watching Brief*. ■](#)

PAY-TV FRANCE

Canal Plus snaps up Euro Qualifiers to boost Sport Plus

By Robin Jellis

Pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus beat competition from main rival beIN Sports to pick up third-party European Qualifier football rights in France earlier this month.

The deal is for four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, and is worth about €16m (\$22m), or €4m per year.

The deal covers the matches of all European national teams, apart from France, in qualification for Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup. It was agreed by the CAA Eleven agency on behalf of Uefa, European football's governing body.

The rights to France matches are held by commercial broadcaster TF1 in a deal worth €135m over the same four-year period (*TV Sports Markets* 18:1). France matches must be shown free-to-air in accordance with listed-events legislation.

Uefa tendered the third-party rights at the end of last year, with both beIN Sports and Canal Plus bidding. beIN Sports is thought to have offered close to €15m, while Canal Plus initially offered €12m. Eurosport France, the French arm of the pan-European basic-tier sports broadcaster, responded to the tender, but did not bid.

Canal Plus is understood to have increased its offer in direct talks with Uefa and CAA Eleven.

One theory is that beIN Sports was not willing to increase its fee because it was disgruntled by the award of European Qualifier rights in the Middle East and North Africa to its main rival, Abu Dhabi Media. ADM's deal is worth about \$85m over the same four-year period, and covers all matches.

Sport Plus boost

Canal Plus is expected to show European Qualifier matches on the Sport Plus channel. Canal Plus shows sport on

Canal Plus channel packages in France		
Package ¹	Canal Plus sports channels included	Monthly cost (€) ²
La chaîne	Canal Plus	19.90, then 24.90
Les chaînes	Canal Plus, Canal Plus Sport	24.90, then 39.90
Panorama	Sport Plus, Infosport Plus	15.90, then 24.90
Les chaînes plus Panorama	Canal Plus, Canal Plus Sport, Sport Plus, Infosport Plus	29.90, then 64.90

Source: *TV Sports Markets* Footnote: ¹ All packages also include Foot Plus and Rugby Plus free for three months, then an additional €8 per month for both channels.
² Each package has an initial monthly cost for the first year, and then a higher monthly cost thereafter.

Canal Plus subscriber numbers	
Section of Canal Plus	Number of subscribers (m)
Canal Plus Group	14
Canal Plus France	11.3
Canal Plus, Poland and Vietnam	2.7
Canal Plus, metropolitan France	8.5
Canal Plus, Africa and overseas French territories	2.8
Households with at least one Canal Plus bundle (metropolitan France)	6.0
Households with either Canal Plus or CanalSat	3.6
Households with both Canal Plus and CanalSat	2.4
Households with Canal Plus	4.6
Households with CanalSat	3.9

Source: *Bernstein estimates*

Content on Canal Plus's main sports channels	
Channel	Main sports properties
Canal Plus	Ligue 1, Champions League, Top 14 rugby union
Canal Plus Sport	Premier League, Formula One, Super Rugby, Fiba events, PGA golf, Pro A basketball
Sport Plus ¹	Serie A, Bundesliga, Pro D2 rugby union, Major League Soccer, GP2 series, sailing

Source: *TV Sports Markets* Footnote: ¹ From 2014-15 it will show European Qualifiers and the Eredivisie. From 2016-17 it will show Ligue 2.

three main channels. Canal Plus, its flagship channel, shows sport as well as films, entertainment shows and news. Canal Plus Sport and Sport Plus are the broadcaster's main premium channels dedicated entirely to sport.

Showing the qualifiers on Sport Plus is being seen as an attempt to prop up a channel which has been losing content to protect a valuable income stream and increase its average revenue per user.

It is the channel which has been hardest hit by the arrival of beIN Sports in the French pay-television market in 2012. One senior French pay-television executive said that had the loss of top content on Sport Plus continued to weaken the channel, it would eventually not have enough customers to continue.

The channel is available in two package bundles via the CanalSat satellite platform. The first, the Panorama package, includes Sport Plus and some basic-tier sport channels. The second includes each of the main Canal Plus sport channels (see table).

Canal Plus moves content between its channels according to its overall commercial imperatives. It tends to show its best sports content, such as Ligue 1 and the Champions League, on its flagship channel, but is engaged in a balancing act to decide which content should be shown on which channels to generate the maximum amount of money.

More content

Canal Plus is now actively seeking sports rights for Sport Plus as it looks to make the channel a more attractive proposition.

Since beIN Sports' arrival, Canal Plus has moved sports rights on to its flagship Canal Plus channel, and also on to Canal Plus Sport. As a result, the content shown on Sport Plus has been weaker.

Cyril Linette, Canal Plus's director of sports and acquisitions, told French media that the European Qualifiers deal was the "second stone" in improving the content on Sport Plus following the

broadcaster's deal for Ligue 2 football, which will also be shown on Sport Plus.

The Ligue 2 deal, agreed in April, will run for four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, and is worth €10m per year. It will show the second-pick match on Monday evenings, plus highlights (*TV Sports Markets* 18:7).

The European Qualifiers provide the channel with volume – 526 matches across four years. The quality, however, will be variable. There will be some big matches between strong European nations, but because 24 teams rather than the usual 16 will qualify for Euro 2016, there will be more dead-rubber matches.

The content provides Canal Plus the benefit of being the only broadcaster which can show live football on international football weekends, other than TF1 which will show France matches.

Canal Plus will also be able to show delayed coverage of France matches and a magazine programme dedicated to the French team after matches. This coverage is expected to be shown on Canal Plus Sport.

Eredivisie deal

Canal Plus has also picked up rights to the Eredivisie, the top Dutch football league, *TV Sports Markets* understands. Matches are also expected to be shown on Sport Plus.

The deal is for four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, and is worth about

€250,000 per year. This is up about 67 per cent on the €150,000 per year paid by basic-tier sports broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport in the previous two-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2013-14.

MCS is thought to have offered close to €200,000 per year to renew its rights, but was not willing to match the offer from Canal Plus.

The deal was agreed with the IMG Events & Media agency, which sells the Eredivisie's international rights in the four years from 2014-15 to 2017-18 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:6).

Price justification

Not all experts believe that Sport Plus has been so gravely weakened over the last two years. Claudio Aspesi, senior research analyst at Bernstein, told *TV Sports Markets* that even if Canal Plus had continued to lose rights to beIN Sports, it was "far fetched" to say it would be forced to close its Sport Plus channel. It still plays a vital role in maintaining and increasing the broadcaster's arpu, he said.

He added that the acquisition of European Qualifiers would help the broadcaster justify its overall pricing strategy. "This deal would suggest that ultimately sport is a big driver of the overall value of Canal Plus, and at the minimum level it helps them to justify their price positioning," he said.

The challenge for Canal Plus is to

have strong enough content on the flagship Canal Plus channel to make it attractive to viewers who do not have the CanalSat platform but to still have attractive rights on its other premium sports channels to get customers to pay additional fees for these channels.

Pay-TV competition

Since Al Jazeera's launch of beIN Sports, Canal Plus has come under increasing pressure to hold on to its top sports rights, but in recent months has maintained a grip on its Ligue 1 and Uefa Champions League rights.

beIN Sports, which has established itself as a serious rival to Canal Plus, is thought to have increased its subscriber base to close to 2.5m following its coverage of this year's Fifa World Cup. beIN Sports sublicensed the rights to all 64 matches from TF1 for about €50m.

Some local experts believe that Eurosport France, which will soon be majority-owned by US media group Discovery, will start to bid more aggressively for sports rights than it has in the past. The channel's current owner, TF1, will retain an 80-per-cent stake in Eurosport France until at least January 1, 2015.

Aspesi questioned, however, whether the French market could sustain three premium sports broadcasters.

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

PAY-TV ITALY

Sky and Fox snap up football as beIN Sports hovers

By Frank Dunne

Rupert Murdoch's two Italian pay-television businesses – the Sky Italia satellite platform and the Fox Sports premium channel – reinforced their football portfolios this week as rival operator Mediaset inched closer to a deal to sell a stake in its Mediaset Premium platform to Qatari broadcaster beIN Sports.

Sky acquired the European Qualifiers package, covering the 2014-15 to 2017-18 seasons, for about €15m (\$20.4m), from Uefa, in a deal brokered by the CAA Eleven agency.

Fox acquired rights to the Brazilian football league, the Campeonato Brasileiro, and the Dutch Eredivisie for three seasons, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. The two deals combined are estimated to be costing Fox in the low hundreds of thousands of euros per season.

The Brazilian rights were acquired from Brazilian broadcaster Globo. Last season, Globo sold the rights in a one-season deal to state broadcaster Rai for a nominal sum in a deal brokered by Marco Bianchi's B4

Capital agency. The matches were shown on the broadcaster's digital sports channels.

Fox acquired the Dutch rights from the IMG Events & Media agency, renewing a one-season deal worth about €50,000 signed just ahead of Fox Sports's launch in the country last year.

The broadcaster also picked up rights to this season's International Champions Cup, the pre-season friendly competition in July, which this summer features Serie A clubs Milan, Inter and Roma. Fox acquired the rights from the Catalyst Media agency. Local experts say the deal would be worth a maximum of €50,000.

The deals came a week after Sky

emerged from the negotiations for the live rights to Serie A for the three seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18 with what looked to be a better-value deal than Mediaset's (*TV Sports Markets* 18:13).

A sublicensing deal between the two broadcasters, which broke an impasse thrown up by their tactical bidding and confusion over the rules of the ITT, was this week approved by the country's communications regulator, the *Autorità per le Garanzie nelle Comunicazioni*.

With both Serie A and the Uefa Champions League now tied up for the next four years, the focus has shifted to other football properties.

Protracted talks

Talks between CAA Eleven and Sky over the European Qualifiers package were protracted but it is understood that Sky raised its bid only marginally during the negotiations.

The broadcaster had originally pushed hard to be able to show Italy's matches live at the same time as state broadcaster Rai, and would have paid a much higher fee if had been able to achieve its goal. It has done this with great success during the last three Fifa World Cups.

However, Rai's €70m contract for exclusive live rights allowed CAA Eleven no room for manoeuvre and it was only able to include the rights to show Italy matches in full on a delayed basis. Delayed matches of the home nation have been included in some, but not all, of the agency's third-party rights deals, according to the level of exclusivity demanded by the primary broadcaster.

Showing Italy matches after midnight on a matchday is not expected to provide a major boost to audiences but there are two advantages for Sky. First, it can market itself as the broadcaster which can show the qualification processes for Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup in their entirety. Second, it enables Sky to put together much richer highlights and analysis programmes on the day after matches.

Mediaset bid for the package but was well below Sky in its valuation and there

were no substantive negotiations between the broadcaster and CAA Eleven. There were no other bidders.

Mediaset stakes

Local industry experts believe that the relatively high price Sky paid for the European Qualifiers is down to Sky's concerns about the likely arrival of beIN Sports in Italy. Qatari satellite broadcaster Al Jazeera has beIN Sports channels in neighbouring France as well as the US, Canada and Southeast Asia. Italy and Spain are thought to be its next targets in Europe.

Informed sources say that talks between Al Jazeera and Mediaset over the Qatari broadcaster's stake in the platform will take many more months and that there is no certainty a deal will be done. Such a deal would represent a change of strategy for the Qataris for two reasons. First, outside of the Middle East and North Africa, they operate premium sports channels rather than pay-television platforms. Second, they are not in the habit of providing funding without having control.

Al Jazeera had not, at the time of going to press, completed its due diligence on Mediaset Premium, unlike French conglomerate Vivendi, which has also been in talks to take a stake. Al Jazeera's due diligence process is being handled by Barclays bank.

The two companies are thought to be still a long way apart on the size of any Al Jazeera stake and its price. The recent €100m acquisition by Telefónica of an 11.11-per-cent stake in the platform values it at €900m, a figure which analysts believe to be excessively high, given the platform's losses.

Mediaset's preference would be to sell a small stake, of up to 20 per cent, to raise additional capital. "Al Jazeera wants a majority stake," one insider said. "And Mediaset would sell it, but only for a really good price."

If beIN Sports took a minority stake in Mediaset Premium, it would strengthen Mediaset in future rights negotiations due to the financial backing it would receive from Al Jazeera. If it took a controlling stake, Sky would be facing the same kind of

threat that Canal Plus has faced in France (see separate story, page 5).

Argentina puzzle

Some industry insiders believe that beIN Sports has already 'landed' in Italy, by acquiring the rights to the Argentinian *Primera División*, the country's top football league, as part of a wider deal also covering the Middle East and North Africa, the US and France.

Even if such a deal were to be confirmed, however, it would be of limited significance. The league represents a low-cost, low-risk opportunity to pick up some available content for an eventual entry into Italy. As one expert put it, "the rights would not be worth much more than \$100,000 per season and don't commit the broadcaster to having an Italian platform next season."

He pointed out that last year Fox International Channels acquired the rights to the German Bundesliga in 80 territories, including a number of markets where it currently does not operate a channel.

Sources close to Full Play, the Buenos Aires-based agency which sells the international right to the league, said this week that no deal had been closed with beIN Sports.

Threat to IMG

A beIN Sports deal for the Argentinian league – if confirmed – would be a far bigger problem for the IMG Events & Media agency than for Sky or Fox.

IMG held the worldwide rights outside the Americas for the last four seasons, from 2010-11 to 2013-14, in a deal worth about \$4.5m per season. That deal was agreed with Full Play and brokered by *Muy Manero*, the company set up by IMG's former head of football, *Fulco van Kooperen*.

Full Play had acquired the rights from the *Torneos y Competencias* agency, which had paid the football association, the *Asociación del Fútbol Argentino*, \$4m per season for the rights outside the Americas. It is thought that Full Play has acquired the rights for the next five seasons, from 2014-15 to 2018-19, directly from the association. ■

FASTRACK 2

NEWS IN BRIEF

Baseball dispute shows limits of adviser role

The breakdown of the agreement between the MP & Silva agency and the Chinese Professional Baseball League shows one of the main limitations of advisory deals compared to traditional buy-out deals, insiders say.

The agency walked away from the contract due to a long-running dispute with one of the league's main domestic broadcasters, pay-television operator Sportcast.

MP & Silva brokered the deal with Sportcast but the broadcaster had signed its contract with the league, which was required to enforce all the terms and conditions of the deal.

The agency was unhappy that the broadcaster was not meeting some of its commitments but as an adviser was powerless to intervene beyond issuing warnings to the broadcaster, which it did on several occasions.

In January, MP & Silva signed a six-year advisory deal with the league, which operates in Chinese Taipei, covering the seasons 2014 to 2019. It is thought to have guaranteed to bring in about \$68m (€50m) over the term, or \$11.3m per season.

The agency had targeted it because the potential advertising income around it is huge. MP & Silva also sells the World Baseball Challenge in the territory.

The agency agreed two deals this season, one with digital operator Elta worth about \$660,000 and another with Sportcast for what is thought to be a higher fee. Some local sources claim that Sportcast quickly came to the conclusion that it had overpaid for the rights.

Coverage of the league is also carried on the league's own television channel, CPBL TV. The league this week told local media that it had not done anything to violate the contract with MP & Silva and that its broadcast deals would remain in place. ■

Pro League finds German home

German pay-television broadcaster Sportdigital last week picked up the rights to the Belgian Pro League in a deal thought to be worth about €20,000 (\$27,000).

The deal is understood to cover just the 2014-15 season. *TV Sports Markets* understands that Sportdigital wants to see how the property performs on its channels before agreeing a longer-term contract.

There is not thought to have been any competition for the rights. The Pro League rights in Germany were unsold last season. The deal was agreed with the MP & Silva agency, which is advising the Pro League in the six seasons from 2014-15 to 2019-20 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:4). ■

SBS deal covers Fox's costs

Dutch commercial broadcaster SBS this week bought rights to friendly matches of the Dutch national football team from Fox International Channels, in a sublicensing deal which is thought to cover the cost of Fox's initial deal for the rights.

SBS is thought to be paying Fox between €800,000 (\$1.1m) and €850,000 per match for coverage of Dutch friendly matches over the next two seasons, 2014-15 and 2015-16.

In November last year, Fox agreed to pay the Dutch football federation, the KNVB, about €800,000 per match in the four years from 2014-15 to 2017-18 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:23).

Fox agreed the deal because it no longer plans to show sport on its free-to-air general entertainment channel, Fox, as it is looking to cut costs. It is guaranteeing an average of €80m per year for its rights to the Eredivisie, the top Dutch league.

SBS will show matches on its free-to-air SBS 6 channel. Fox will also show the matches on its pay-television channel Fox Sports. Listed events legislation requires matches of the Dutch national football team to be

shown live on free-to-air television.

One local expert said that a free-to-air broadcaster would only be able to recoup about €300,000 per match from advertising revenue. SBS, however, was keen to get the rights. It lost out to public-service broadcaster NOS for matches of the Dutch team in qualifying for Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup last December.

SBS also picked up highlights to the Dutch second tier, the Eerste Divisie. It is not thought to be paying a fee for the rights, but is expected to make a contribution to the production of matches. The deal is also for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 seasons. ■

Delay request is not down to clash

Pay-television broadcaster Star India asked for a delay to the start of the Indian Super League because of internal issues with the franchise football tournament, not, as widely reported, to avoid a clash with the Champions League Twenty20 cricket tournament, a senior executive at the broadcaster told *TV Sports Markets* this week.

The Champions League runs from September 13 to October 4. The All India Football Federation has given IMG-Reliance a window of September 18 to December 7 for the ISL. Star has requested the ISL be pushed back "a matter of days" due to factors including player availability, stadium readiness and timing of international matches.

Star acquired rights to the ISL in 2013, paying Rs15bn (€177m/\$244m) for a 33.3-per-cent stake in the competition and media rights for 10 years, from 2014 to 2023.

In 2008, Star – then ESPN Star Sports – paid \$850m for the Champions League plus a \$75m promotional commitment for a 10-year contract covering global media rights, sponsorship, stadium advertising, hospitality and licensing. It is known to have lost heavily on the competition and an overlap with the ISL would hit advertising income, some experts say. ■

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:

Australia	Brazil
China	France
Germany	Great Britain
India	Indonesia
Italy	Japan
Russia	Spain
South Africa*	Turkey
UAE*	USA

* new for 2014 report

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Register your interest today and we will keep you up-to-date with the release of the full report.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 10 to July 23**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: European Qualifiers, Belgian Pro League, friendlies and more**

- **Football:** Italian pay-television operator Sky Italia acquired rights for European qualifying matches ahead of the Uefa Euro 2016 and 2018 Fifa World Cup tournaments (page 6).
- **Football:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus acquired rights for international qualifiers ahead of Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup (page 5).
- **Football:** Dutch commercial broadcaster SBS acquired rights for friendly matches featuring the Netherlands national team, along with highlights of the domestic second-tier Eerste Divisie for two seasons, from 2014-15 to 2015-16 (page 8).
- **Football:** Swiss public-service broadcaster SRG SSR extended a rights deal with the SFV, the sport's governing body in the country, for Switzerland national team games and domestic club competition the Swiss Cup, for four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18 (page 2).
- **Football:** German pay-television broadcaster Sportdigital acquired rights for the Pro League, the top division in Belgium (page 8).
- **Football:** Sportdigital agreed a one-year rights deal for the Scottish Premiership top division, covering the 2014-15 season, to replace the Polish top-tier Ekstraklasa in the channel's schedule.
- **Football:** Pay-television channel Fox Sports acquired rights in Italy for Brazil's top-tier Campeonato Brasileiro and the Eredivisie, the top division in the Netherlands. Fox also acquired rights for the International Champions Cup pre-season tournament (page 6).
- **Football:** Spanish commercial broadcaster Telecinco acquired rights for the International Champions Cup. Telecinco will show all games featuring Spanish Liga club Real Madrid between July 24 and August 4. Telecinco's digital-terrestrial channel Energy will show all games not featuring Real.
- **Football:** Spanish commercial broadcaster Atresmedia acquired rights for pre-season friendly matches featuring Barcelona against fellow Spanish club Recreativo Huelva on July 19, French Ligue 1 team Nice on August 2, Italian Serie A club Napoli on August 6, HJK Helsinki on August 9 and Mexican club León on August 18.
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired rights for four of English Premier League club Liverpool's pre-season friendlies. The rights included Liverpool's games against Danish Superliga club Brøndby on July 16, English League One team Preston on July 19, Roma on July 23 and German Bundesliga team Borussia Dortmund on August 10.
- **Football:** French digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 acquired rights for three pre-season matches featuring English Premier League teams Chelsea and Arsenal. The rights include live coverage of Chelsea's games against Austrian Bundesliga club Wolfsberger on July 23 and Slovenia PrvaLiga team Olimpija Ljubljana on July 27, plus delayed coverage of Arsenal's game against North American Major League Soccer team New York Red Bulls on July 26.
- **Football:** The CCTV 5 sports channel, which is operated by state broadcaster CCTV, acquired live rights for the Trophée des Champions, the annual match between the winners of the French Ligue 1 and Coupe de France competitions. The game, between Ligue 1 winner Paris Saint-Germain and Coupe de France winner Guingamp will take place on August 2 in Beijing, China.
- **Football:** The MP & Silva agency extended its programming distribution and media advisory partnership with Arsenal Broadband Limited, the digital arm of Arsenal. The extension will run for two years, from 2017-18 to 2018-19. The agency will continue to distribute the club's international programming block, the Arsenal Media Channel, which comprises delayed match coverage from all domestic competitions plus news, interviews and behind-the-scenes footage. The deal covers all platforms, excluding mobile, on a worldwide basis.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Time Warner's board approved a temporary measure to block some of its shareholders from forcing a vote on a takeover bid from rival media company 21st Century Fox, which operates the Fox Sports channels. Time Warner rejected an offer of \$80bn (€59bn) from Fox, but another bid is anticipated. The measure adopted by Time Warner will prevent about 15 per cent of the company's shareholders from forcing a vote. Fox is in talks to sell its shareholdings in pay-television broadcasters Sky Italia and Sky Deutschland in Italy and Germany, respectively, to UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB.
- International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach won further support for his plan to establish an Olympic television channel from Olympic movement stakeholders who met in Lausanne, Switzerland, to discuss Bach's Olympic Agenda 2020 blueprint. The IOC will develop the concept in the coming months.
- The Fox International Channels broadcast subsidiary of media company 21st Century Fox rebranded the Setanta Africa channels as Fox Sports channels following last year's deal to acquire the pay-television sports broadcaster, which operates in sub-Saharan Africa. Two new channels, Fox Sports and Fox Sports 2, will replace Setanta Sports and Setanta Action in August.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- US cable-television operators Comcast, LUS Fiber, Wilkes Telephone and PTC Communications, the National Telco Television Consortium and telecommunications company Cox Communications struck carriage deals with sports broadcaster ESPN for the new SEC Network. The pay-television sports

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 10 to July 23**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****American football, World Athletics Series, baseball and basketball**

- **American Football:** Regional cable-television broadcaster Time Warner Cable SportsChannel agreed a rights deal with the NFL's Carolina Panthers. TWC SportsChannel will be the exclusive local cable-television partner of the Panthers, which will produce more than 250 hours of programming per year for the broadcaster. The length of the multi-year deal was not disclosed. In addition to live coverage and re-runs of Panthers pre-season games, the channel will show nightly programmes dedicated to the team.
 - **Athletics:** US sports broadcaster Universal Sports Network, a subsidiary of media company NBCUniversal, extended a rights deal with the International Association of Athletics Federations for four years, from 2016 to 2019. The agreement covers all World Athletics Series events, including the 2016 World Indoor Championships in Portland, US, and the 2017 and 2019 World Championships. The deal was brokered by the Dentsu agency, the IAAF's rights distribution partner outside Europe and Africa.
 - **Athletics:** The NBC Sports Ventures division of US media company NBCUniversal acquired exclusive broadcast and digital rights for the Spartan Race obstacle racing series. The multi-year deal was agreed with sportswear company Reebok, the series' title sponsor.
 - **Baseball:** Digital sports video agency SendtoNews struck a global rights distribution deal with Major League Baseball's MLB Advanced Media division. SendtoNews will distribute game highlights, interviews and other MLB-related video content to local news websites throughout the US and Canada plus other territories worldwide where MLB Advanced Media has partnerships. The deal includes archived content, long-form original programming and global rights for the distribution of Minor League Baseball short-form digital video content.
 - **Basketball:** Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE acquired rights for the Spain national team's warm-up games ahead of the 2014 Fiba Basketball World Cup in the country. Under the deal with the FEB, the sport's governing body in Spain, TVE will show games featuring the men's team against Canada, Angola, Turkey, Senegal, Croatia and Argentina between August 6 and 25. The rights will be exploited on sports channel Teledeporte.
 - **Basketball:** German public-service broadcaster ARD struck a rights deal with the DBB, the sport's governing body in the country, to show games featuring the Germany men's national team this summer. Live game broadcasts and magazine programmes will be shown on free-to-air television and the internet. ARD acquired rights for Germany v Finland on July 27, the team's games in the Supercup against Israel on August 1, Latvia on August 2 and Russia on August 3, and European Championship qualifiers away against Poland on August 10 and Austria on August 13 before home games against the same teams on August 20 and 24. Live coverage of the qualifier against Luxembourg on August 17 will be shown on the Basketball-bund.de website.
- channel, which will be dedicated to college sport's Southeastern Conference, will launch on August 14.
- US media company Sinclair Broadcast Group plans to launch a new college sports channel that will be available on its television platforms. American Sports Network will show live American football, basketball, football and other sports from more than 50 colleges and universities. The channel will launch ahead of the start of the 2014-15 academic year. The television coverage will be complemented by digital coverage.
 - US digital video technology company Volar Video linked up with sports media company Sporting News Media to launch a new user-generated digital platform for amateur sports, Team 1 Sports Network.
 - UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB extended its wholesale agreement for its Sky Sports channels with telecommunications company TalkTalk in a multi-year agreement. TalkTalk's Sky Sports package will also now include catch-up and on-demand content, Sky Sports Box Office for pay-per-view boxing and wrestling events and the new dedicated European football channel Sky Sports 5.
 - UK pay-television operator Virgin Media launched a Season Ticket offer that will allow customers to access five Sky Sports channels from August until May. For a one-off fee of £150 (€186/\$254), Season Ticket subscribers will be able to access the Sky Sports 1, Sky Sports 2, Sky Sports 3, Sky Sports 4 and Sky Sports News channels. New and existing customers have until September 1 to take up the offer.
 - Sky will rebrand one of its Sky Sports channels for coverage of the 2014 Ryder Cup golf tournament. The broadcaster's Sky Sports 4 channel will be renamed Sky Sports Ryder Cup from September 18 until October 2. The channel will broadcast 330 hours of golf, including 36 hours of live coverage from the 2014 Ryder Cup from September 26-28.
 - The ABC International division of Australian public-service broadcaster ABC increased the number of Australian Football League Aussie rules matches shown overseas from five to six games per week for the remainder of the 2014 season. The coverage is available across the Asia-Pacific region and in China.
 - Australian public-service broadcaster SBS is investigating whether its exclusive rights for the Tour de France are being undermined by UK commercial broadcaster ITV's live streaming coverage of the cycling event being available in Australia. The Fairfax Media news agency said that rogue operators are transmitting ITV's online coverage into Australia.
 - Digital-terrestrial operator StarTimes launched a new sports channel, StarTimes Sport 2, in South Africa. The channel launched on StarSat, the satellite-television platform operated by pay-

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 10 to July 23**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****Boxing, Commonwealth Games, cricket, golf, horseracing and more**

- **Boxing:** The CSI Sports media company signed a multi-year rights deal for its Fight Sports Network to show exclusive coverage of fights featuring Chinese star Zhang Zhilei across Asia. The deal was struck with Dynasty Boxing, Zhilei's management company, and includes all multimedia rights.
- **Commonwealth Games:** US cable-television channels CBS Sports Network and TV Asia acquired rights for highlights of the Glasgow 2014 event. Television Jamaica, a subsidiary of media company RJR Communications Group, acquired live and highlights rights in the Caribbean.
- **Commonwealth Games:** Video-sharing website YouTube agreed a deal to carry live coverage of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. The dedicated channel will be available across Europe, the US, Latin America and parts of Asia, excluding territories where online rights have been awarded. The footage will include live coverage of the major competitions plus short highlights during the day and a two-hour highlights show every evening.
- **Cricket:** Indian sports and entertainment pay-television channel Sony Six extended a rights deal for the Caribbean Premier League Twenty20 tournament to cover the 2014 edition. The channel will show live coverage and highlights of all 30 matches (page 2).
- **Golf:** Fijian commercial broadcaster Fiji TV acquired non-exclusive free-to-air and exclusive pay-television rights for the Fiji International tournament. Fiji TV will broadcast live coverage and highlights of the four-day event, from August 14-17, via its free-to-air channel Fiji One and pay-television platform Sky Pacific in Fiji as well as American Samoa, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and Cook Islands.
- **Horse Racing:** US horse racing pay-television broadcaster TVG struck a multi-year extension to its rights agreement with the New York Racing Association. TVG will continue to broadcast and stream live coverage from the NYRA's Aqueduct Racetrack, Belmont Park and Saratoga Racecourse.
- **Ice Skating:** The KNSB, the sport's governing body in the Netherlands, awarded rights for its national championships to public-service broadcaster NOS. The deal will run for four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18. NOS will provide coverage of the short-track and marathon events, as well as figure skating and inline skating. The rights cover television and internet platforms (page 2).
- **Kabaddi:** Organisers of the new World Kabaddi League secured rights deals with Indian sports and entertainment pay-television channel Sony Six, Pakistani pay-television broadcaster Geo TV and media company ARY TV in the UAE. The league will launch on August 9.
- **Motorcycling:** UK commercial broadcaster Channel 4 acquired rights for the 2014 Armoy Road Races event in Northern Ireland. Channel 4 will broadcast a one-hour highlights programme two weeks after the two-day event has taken place on July 25-26. Viewers can also access highlights via the broadcaster's video-on-demand service 4oD. Channel 4 struck the deal with the event's organiser, the Armoy Motorcycle Racing Club.

television broadcaster On Digital Media. The channel will show coverage of football, tennis, rugby union, golf, motor racing and cricket from around the world.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The National Basketball Association wants to double the value of its domestic media rights deals in the next cycle, according to *The Wall Street Journal*, which said that the league had entered preliminary discussions with media company Walt Disney and Time Warner's Turner Broadcasting about extending their eight-year deals beyond the 2015-16 season. Disney's deal is worth about \$485m (€357m) per year, while Turner's agreement is worth \$445m per year. The NBA Finals are currently only shown on Disney's ABC network, but the league may share coverage of the Finals on a non-exclusive basis in the next cycle.
- Lega Serie A, Italy's top football league, will enter into private negotiations with companies seeking to secure the two domestic media rights packages that failed to sell in two formal tenders. Package C includes ancillary rights such as access to changing rooms, the tunnel and the pitch-side area for interviews. Package E includes online, mobile and IPTV rights to three matches per week.

The rights are for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Companies were asked to confirm their interest by July 24.

- Peter Dawson, the chief executive of the R&A, which operates the Open championship, described reports that BSkyB could replace UK public-service broadcaster the BBC as the golf event's exclusive domestic rights-holder from 2017 as "massively premature."
- The Pakistan Cricket Board formed two bid committees to oversee the sale of media rights for two forthcoming series and the Pakistan Super League, the governing body's new Twenty20 competition. The PCB is seeking bids from companies of "international repute" for the rights to the series against Australia and New Zealand, which will take place between October and December in the United Arab Emirates. The bid committee for the series will be chaired by former International Cricket Council president Ehsan Mani. Former PCB chief executive Chishty Mujahid will lead the bid committee for the Pakistan Super League rights.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The Ladies Professional Golf Association agreed a deal with Blinkx to offer users of the US media company's service access to golf-related video content such as highlights, player interviews and tips.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 10 to July 23**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****Multi-sport, WTA tennis, US college sport and WWE wrestling**

■ **Multi-sport:** US sports broadcaster ESPN signed a multi-year rights extension with fitness company CrossFit for exclusive coverage of the CrossFit Games. The rights will be exploited on television channels, live streaming application WatchESPN and video-on-demand channel ESPN3. ESPN International will show online coverage outside the US.

■ **Tennis:** Singaporean pay-television broadcaster StarHub acquired rights for the Women's Tennis Association Finals.

StarHub will make live coverage of the season-ending tournament available for free on its SuperSports Arena channel. The event, which will run from October 17-26, will take place in Singapore. The deal with the Women's Tennis Association includes other events on the tour and covers television, tablet and mobile platforms.

■ **US College Sport:** US sports broadcaster ESPN expanded its rights agreement with the Sun Belt Conference to include an additional 50 baseball, basketball, men's and women's football,

softball and volleyball events via its live video-on-demand channel ESPN3.

■ **Wrestling:** OSN acquired exclusive pay-television rights in the Middle East and North Africa for events organised by the WWE. The deal will run for six years, from 2014 to 2019, and includes the WWE's Monday Night Raw, SmackDown, NXT, Main Event, WrestleMania and SummerSlam events. The rights will be exploited on the OSN Sports 2 HD channel and online, tablet and mobile platforms.

Blinkx will utilise its AdHoc platform to place relevant advertising alongside the videos, with the revenue shared with the LPGA.

■ The European Athletics continental governing body will stream live coverage of its 2014 European Athletics Championships in Zürich, Switzerland, via its official website, European-Athletics.org. Eurovision, operated by the European Broadcasting Union consortium of free-to-air broadcasters, will produce the coverage. The service will be available worldwide, with the exception of Germany and France, from August 12-17.

■ The 2014 edition of the World Club 7s rugby union tournament will be available in 200m households worldwide. The RDA Television and IEC in Sports agencies distribute the rights.

■ Live coverage of all 15 events in the rifle, pistol and shotgun disciplines during the 2014 International Shooting Sport Federation World Championship will be available for broadcasters, according to the governing body's secretary general, Franz Schreiber. The coverage will be produced and distributed by Eurovision.

■ MUTV, the in-house pay-television channel operated by English Premier League football club Manchester United, started broadcasting in high definition as part of a brand revamp.

■ Hong Kong pay-television provider Now TV asked football clubs participating in the inaugural Hong Kong Premier League to contribute a total of HK\$6m (€570,000/\$775,000) towards production costs. The clubs are against the proposal, leaving television coverage of the league in doubt.

INDUSTRY MOVES

■ Yitz Shmulewitz and Dominic Coles were appointed to senior positions as part of a management reshuffle at pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport following its takeover by US media company Discovery Communications. Shmulewitz was named as Eurosport's new chief operating officer while Coles, the director of operations at UK public-service broadcaster the BBC, will replace Shmulewitz as Discovery's head of finance and operations in Western Europe. • The IMG Media agency promoted Adam Kelly to the role of head of sales for the Europe, Middle East and Africa region. • Lenny Daniels was named as the new president of the Turner Sports division of US cable-television broadcaster Turner Broadcasting System. • New sports marketing agency W Sportsmedia launched in Sweden and will be led by David Nilsson, formerly a senior executive at the IEC in Sports agency.

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 tvsm@tvsportsmarkets.com

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Designer Stewart Henson

SALES & COMMERCIAL

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7954 3483
Email sales@tvsportsmarkets.com
Paul Santos Head of Sales & Commercial
paul.santos@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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