

## FOOTBALL

### Bundesliga on course to smash fee target after big beIN Sports deal

By Robin Jellis

Qatari pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports is in advanced negotiations to secure the rights to the German Bundesliga in the Middle East and North Africa, taking the league close to its target of €140m (\$185m) per year for its international rights, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

With the rights in several valuable territories still to sell, the league could smash that target, hitting between €150m and €160m per year, rights experts predict.

The deal under discussion with Al Jazeera-owned beIN Sports would be for five years, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, and is understood to be worth slightly more than \$40m per year.

This is an increase of close to 170 per cent on the \$15m per year paid by state-owned broadcaster Dubai Sports in the three years from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

The current deal was negotiated on behalf of the league by the Sportsman Media Group agency. The new deal is between beIN Sports and the Bundesliga's commercial arm, DFL Sports Enterprises. The five-year deal will enable the league to align its domestic and international rights cycles.

The deal will be a blow to Dubai Sports. The Bundesliga was its only top sports property. BeIN Sports wanted the rights to complement its European football offering. The Bundesliga was the only one of the top five European leagues it didn't have. BeIN Sports is expected to commit to showing at least four live matches per week across its channels.

The broadcaster is paying a large increase on the current fee for several reasons. First, it wants to acquire the rights to the one top European league

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## AGENCIES

### Infront gives CAA a second chance

By Frank Dunne

Private equity company Bridgepoint Capital could exploit the global expansion ambitions of the two major US sports marketing companies – WME/IMG and CAA – to secure a price in excess of €1bn (\$1.32bn) for the Infront Sports & Media agency, experts say.

In the coming months, Lazard, the financial adviser for Bridgepoint on the sale will talk to many private equity firms,

industry players and sovereign funds. Of those already in talks, the names sparking the greatest market speculation are Silver Lake, which owns 50 per cent of WME/IMG, and TPG, which has a 35-per-cent stake in CAA.

When WME acquired IMG in December for \$2.4bn it created a new sports and entertainment giant which leapfrogged CAA. The Californian company, like WME,

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## Eurosport renews Tour as French pay-TV operators pass

Eurosport France, the French arm of the pan-regional broadcaster, is thought to have paid about €3m (\$4m) per year to renew its non-exclusive domestic rights to cycling's Tour de France.

The deal is for five years, from 2016 to 2020, and was agreed with the race organiser and commercial rights-holder, Amaury Sport Organisation. It also includes rights to eight other cycle races, the Dakar Rally motor race and the Paris Marathon. All are organised by ASO.

The deal marks the first time that the pay-television rights to these events have been sold by ASO. They have traditionally been sublicensed by public-service broadcaster France Télévisions, which holds free-to-air rights.

In its new deal, from 2016 to 2020, France Télévisions will pay about €30m per year for the free-to-air rights to the same ASO events (*TV Sports Markets* 17:8). The pay-television rights were carved out of the deal, as ASO wanted to have greater control over its properties.

ASO is thought to have approached pay-television broadcasters beIN Sports and Canal Plus about a deal, but no offer was forthcoming from either.

The rights are non-exclusive but the Tour provides Eurosport with good audience figures. It will also complement the Tour rights it holds across Europe as part of last September's European Broadcasting Union deal, from 2016 to 2019, worth about €32.5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 17:17). Eurosport is one of the guarantors of the deal.

Along with the French Open tennis tournament, the Tour is Eurosport France's most important property. The broadcaster is thought to have paid a slight increase on what it paid France Télévisions in 2014 and 2015.

The other cycle races in the deal are: Paris-Roubaix, Paris-Nice, Paris-Tours, the Critérium International, the Critérium du Dauphiné, Liège-Bastogne-Liège and the Flèche Wallonne. ■

## Ufa's IPTL target 'achievable'

The Indian Premier Tennis League is thought to have set the Ufa Sports agency a target of \$4m (€3m) for global media rights sales for this year's inaugural event in order to trigger a two-year extension, for 2015 and 2016.

The IPTL signed a deal with Ufa for the tournament last month. The agency is working on a commission basis. The event was created by Indian tennis legend Mahesh Bhupathi. It will run from November 28 until December 13, with franchise teams in Manila, Singapore, New Delhi and Dubai.

One tennis rights expert said that the target figure was achievable. "The events have a lot of potential and Mahesh is a good operator," he said.

The organisers felt Ufa, of three agencies which bid for the rights following direct talks, would be the most attentive to a new property. They were keen the IPTL rights were not bundled with other properties.

The MP & Silva agency was originally awarded the contract in January, but pulled out in late March. It is thought that the agency and the organisers identified some conflicts of interest with the agency's other tennis properties, such as the French Open and various ATP events.

Ufa has already agreed deals covering 60 territories; the league's organisers have a target of 100 by its launch. The host nations are likely to provide the highest rights values – broadcast partners include Abu Dhabi Media in the Middle East and Star Sports in India. Each franchise will field a team of up to 10 players in 24 best-of-five round robin matches across the four cities.

Matches between franchises will consist of a set each for men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles. A legends' singles is played if the matches are tied at two-all. Unlike standard tennis matches, a tiebreak will be invoked if the score reaches five-all in any set.

The organisers say the structure makes the tournament attractive to broadcasters, as it is clear exactly which players will play when, and for how long. ■

## MCS kept out of Argentinian deal

French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports picked up the rights to the Argentinian Primera División this week in a deal with the Pitch International agency.

The deal is for five seasons, from 2014-15 to 2018-19. It is understood that the incumbent rights-holder, basic-tier sports broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport, was told it could not make a rival offer to that of beIN Sports.

MCS held the rights in a two-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2013-14, worth just under €100,000 (\$130,000) per season. That deal was agreed with the IMG Events & Media agency.

IMG sold global Primera División rights outside Latin America in the four years from 2010-11 to 2013-14 in a deal with the Full Play agency worth \$18m, or \$4.5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 14:13).

It is thought that Full Play has acquired the rights for the next five seasons, from 2014-15 to 2018-19, in a deal with the Argentinian football association, the Asociación del Fútbol Argentino (*TV Sports Markets* 18:14).

One Latin American rights expert said he did not expect the value of the rights in the new cycle to have increased much from the present \$4.5m per year.

Full Play is understood to have passed rights on to Pitch, with which Full Play works on sales in Europe. Both have a close relationship with beIN Sports.

In France, the rights are of some value as the football is of a decent standard, with several young players going on to play in Europe's top leagues. However, the time difference means games are shown late in the evenings.

The deal marks the second football league MCS has lost rights to in recent months. Canal Plus has taken rights to the Dutch Eredivisie in the four years from 2014-15 to 2017-18 for around €250,000 per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:14).

MCS is thought to be close to agreeing several new deals for football rights to replace the content it has lost. ■

## FOOTBALL

## Bundesliga deal gives beIN Sports the top 5 European leagues

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missing from its portfolio. Second, the Bundesliga's profile has grown in recent years, with German teams performing well in the Uefa Champions League. Third, DFL Sports Enterprises was pushing hard for an increase, with its target to double revenues from the current international cycle, 2012-13 to 2014-15, from €71m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 17:10).

Most importantly perhaps, beIN Sports was determined not to let rivals Dubai Sports or Abu Dhabi Media snatch the rights, and was prepared to pay a premium for a long-term deal.

The league is also understood to have favoured a deal with beIN Sports rather than renewing with Dubai Sports. The league has concerns with overspill, with the Dubai Sports channel available outside the Mena region. BeIN Sports has made attempts to shore up the encryption of its channels in recent months and has introduced a new set-top box to tackle piracy concerns.

Bundesliga international rights deals, 2015-16 onwards			
Broadcaster	Territory/Territories	Duration	Annual value (€m)
Fox International Channels	80 territories	From 2015-16, varies <sup>1</sup>	80
beIN Sports	Middle East and North Africa	2015-16 to 2019-20	30
Eurosport	Central/Eastern Europe and Nordics	2015-16 to 2016-17	20
BT Sport	UK	2015-16 to 2016-17	3

Source: *TV Sports Markets*  
Footnote: <sup>1</sup>In Europe, the deals cover 2015-16 and 2016-17. In Asia and the Americas the deal is from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

BeIN Sports also has an existing relationship with the league. In the current cycle it holds rights in France, Indonesia and the Philippines.

In discussions, beIN Sports is understood to have mooted the idea of agreeing a deal which covers other territories in which it operates, but no deals have yet been agreed.

The deal will represent the second consecutive big fee increase the league has earned in the region. In the 2009-10 to 2011-12 cycle, Dubai Sports paid between €5m and €6m per season in a deal agreed with Sportsman.

BeIN Sports has also agreed to sublicense rights from Dubai Sports in the 2014-15 season. It is understood that beIN Sports offered Dubai Sports a sizeable sum – more than Dubai Sports was paying for the rights.

BeIN Sports is thought to have been

keen to have the rights one season earlier, while it made sense for Dubai Sports to cash in on the rights in the knowledge that it won't be showing the league next season.

### Global picture

The deal with beIN Sports will be the third pan-regional deal the Bundesliga has agreed for its next cycle of rights, from 2015-16 onwards (see table).

The league has agreed deals with Fox International Channels, Eurosport and now beIN Sports, worth a total of about €130m per year. It has also agreed a deal with pay-television broadcaster BT Sport in the UK worth just under €3m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:5). This leaves the league needing just €7m per year to reach its target. It is understood that deals are set to be announced in the coming weeks in China, sub-Saharan Africa, Australia and the Indian subcontinent. ■

## FOOTBALL

## Lukewarm Traffic lets in IMG for rights to Concacaf events

By Frank Dunne

The IMG Events & Media agency picked up the media rights for the Concacaf 2015 Gold Cup and the Champions League for a fee said to be in the low millions of dollars.

Several agencies bid but the strong competition expected from the incumbent rights-holder, a joint venture of the Traffic Sports and World Sport Group agencies, did not materialise.

Traffic did bid, this time jointly with

the Full Play agency, but is not thought to have viewed the property as being of major strategic value. It is thought to have lost money on the current deal.

Under the one-year deal, IMG will distribute the global rights for the 2015 Gold Cup and the Champions League, as well as men's and women's U-20 and U-17 national team championships, the Women's Championship 2014 and the 2014 Copa Centroamericana.

Concacaf is the the governing body of football in North America, Central America and the Caribbean.

Competition for the rights is thought to have been fairly limited, with one source close to the talks saying that "IMG will have been able to pick this up without stretching themselves."

Several of the traditional bidders for

football rights, including the MP & Silva agency, did not bid. One agency source said that Concacaf's carving out of the betting rights, as in the current contract, made it less attractive.

The competitions are of limited interest outside the Concacaf markets. Brazil is the single most valuable market covered by the deal. The IMG package also contains one fewer edition of the Champions League.

Traffic marketed the rights to the 2013 Gold Cup in South America and southern Europe and the 2013 and 2014 Champions League rights in southern Europe. WSG marketed the rights in northern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania. The agency previously held the global rights, outside of North America. ■

## AGENCIES

## TPG and Silver Lake could both create giant with Infront

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was born as a Hollywood talent agency but branched into sport in 2006 with the creation of CAA Sports (see panel).

TPG and CAA bid jointly for IMG last year but did not make it to the short-list of three preferred bidders. Their offer was thought to have been below \$2bn. Infront represents an opportunity to redress the balance to some extent. Those familiar with the US agency market say that the degree of competition between CAA and WME cannot be underestimated.

Infront is smaller than IMG in terms of revenue and ebitda. Revenues are about €600m per year and ebitda is expected to be about €90m in 2014. However, it would provide the same kind of complementary businesses that IMG provides WME – global sport media and marketing rights distribution, television production, and consultancy.

A source close to one of the bidders said that Bridgepoint and Lazard were informally pointing to the high multiple of ebitda paid by WME when acquiring IMG. The agency's ebitda was expected to be close to \$200m in 2014, making the \$2.4bn acquisition a multiple of 12.

On Infront's 2014 ebitda of €90m per year, a multiple of over 11 would be required to surpass the €1bn mark. That would represent a margin of over €450m on the €550m that Bridgepoint paid for Infront just three years ago, in September 2011.

The key question, experts say, is the extent to which TPG is prepared to fund CAA's ambitions. One well-placed insider said that TPG was "pretty hard-nosed" and would have to be convinced that a CAA Sports/Infront merger offered obvious areas of growth and ways to cut costs.

He added that many in the industry remained sceptical as to whether there was any real long-term commercial benefit in bringing together a talent representation business and a media business. "TPG will have the same doubts," he said.

### CAA Sports expansion continues

The rapid expansion of CAA Sports, the subsidiary of the Creative Artists Agency Hollywood talent agency, beyond its core business of athlete representation is based on a combination of acquisitions and organic growth.

In the last six months alone the company has bought three smaller sports marketing firms. These are:

- Inside Sports & Entertainment Group, the New York-based corporate hospitality, event management, and marketing company
- Professional Golf Management, the Munich-based event marketing agency which specialises in the development and management of golf events
- PGW, the California-based sports marketing company, launched in 1998.

The agency has also been active in event creation. It conceived the KPMG Women's PGA Championship, which will be held from June 8-14, 2015 in New York, and put together the deal between sponsor KPMG, the PGA of America and the LPGA.

In June, Serie A's Roma was added to the small group of top football clubs advised by CAA Sports. The agency will look to secure a

naming rights deal and other commercial partners for Roma's planned new 52,500-seater stadium and entertainment complex.

The agency also concluded three sponsorship deals for long-term client Barcelona with US brands. These include: a five-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2017-18, worth \$5m (€3.8m) per season, in which the Intel Corporation became the Spanish football club's official technology partner (with the much-publicised first-ever advertising logo inside a club shirt); a three-year deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, worth between €1m and €2m per season, with Gatorade to become official sports nutrition partner; and a three-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2016-17, also worth between €1m and €2m per season, to make Stanley Black & Decker an official global partner of the club.

The deal values are provided by *Sports Sponsorship Insider*, the sister publication of *TV Sports Markets*.

CAA was set up in 1975 by former agents from the William Morris Agency. CAA Sports was set up in 2006.

Most agency observers, including rivals, say that Infront has done a good job of locking down its major contracts, such as its Serie A advisory deal and its winter sports agreements, for the medium term. It also has a good asset in production unit HBS, which is a solid earner. The question is whether any of its individual business activities would offer a private equity house the levels of growth needed to turn a good profit on the deal in the three-to-five year time frame in which they tend to operate.

#### A 'monstrous task'

The threat of Infront merging with CAA could be enough of an incentive for Silver Lake to bid for the agency, some agency executives believe. Whether motivated by a defensive mindset or an expansionist one, the outcome would be the same: a merged WME/IMG/Infront would automatically have a quasi-dominant role in the global sports rights markets.

As one agency source put it, "if WME/IMG were to acquire Infront they would

control a huge chunk of the market. The rights portfolios of the two agencies are big and perfectly complementary."

He argued that IMG's real rival in the current sports-rights market was not Infront but a loose alliance of companies made up of Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera and the MP & Silva, Pitch International, Full Play and Mediapro agencies.

However, an IMG-Infront merger would be, as one insider put it, "a pretty monstrous task, with a number of challenges." The biggest single obstacle to such a merger would be the integration of the top management of the two agencies. One of the perceived strengths of Infront is its stability at senior management level, and the contacts and relationships that men like Philippe Blatter, Marco Bogarelli and Stephan Herth have built.

"Those guys would never accept being junior partners," a rival agency boss said. "The business depends on these names and if you sell Infront to IMG, the business would be gone with the names." ■



## FOOTBALL BULGARIA

# League rights fees slump again as market reality bites

By Robin Jellis

The Bulgarian top-tier football league suffered a rights-fee cut of about 20 per cent in its new deal with Nova Broadcasting Group. The drop is part of a longer-term decline in the value of the league's domestic media rights caused largely by the country's wider economic difficulties.

The league's deal with Modern Times Group-owned commercial and pay-television broadcaster Nova is for two years, from 2014-15 to 2015-16.

The total value of the deal is BGN8.8m (€4.5m/\$5.9m), or BGN4.4m per season. Nova will also pay production costs of about BGN1.6m per season.

The deal was agreed by the Football Pro Media agency, which was set up in 2012 to sell media and sponsorship rights on behalf of the league.

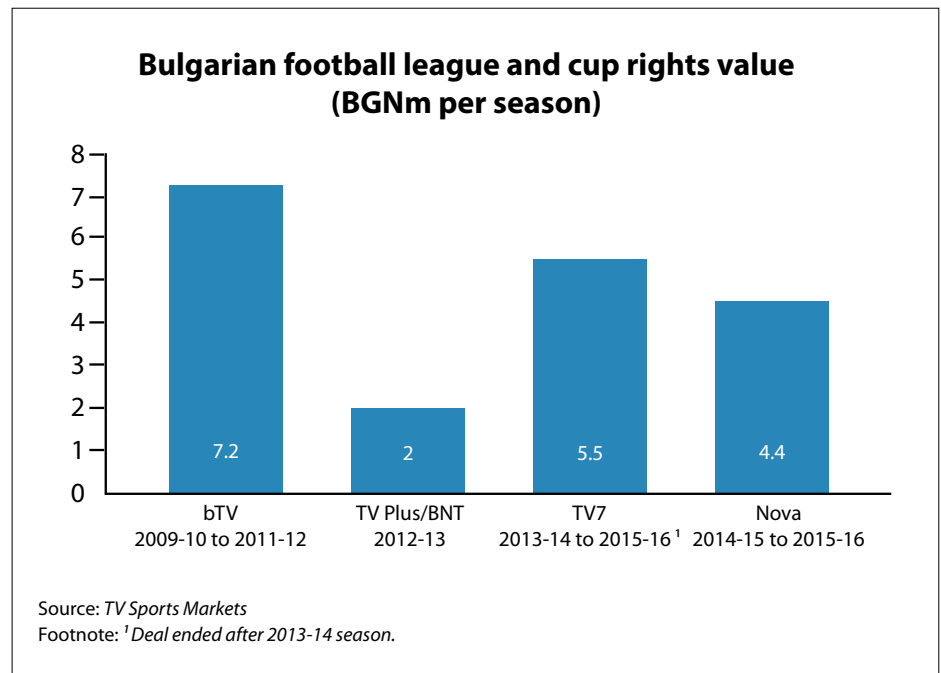
The deal covers the rights to the A Group, the top football league, the Bulgarian Cup and the Bulgarian Supercup – the annual match between the league champion and the domestic cup winner.

The rights to the league are worth BGN4m per season, plus production costs of BGN1.3m per season.

Nova will pay BGN400,000 per season for the rights to the Bulgarian Cup and the Bulgarian Supercup. It will show between 15 and 18 matches per season, with production costs of about BGN300,000 per season.

The same set of rights was previously held by commercial broadcaster TV7 in a three-year deal from 2013-14 to 2015-16. TV7 paid a rights fee of BGN16.5m, or BGN5.5m per season. The deal was terminated early because TV7 was late with payments. This has been a recurring problem for the league in recent years.

The fee per match broadcast in the new deal is roughly the same as in the previous deal with TV7. Nova will show



four league games per week. TV7 showed six league games per week.

Local experts say that the drop in value in the new deal is because the Bulgarian market is still in a poor economic state following the financial crisis which began in 2008. Bulgarian broadcasters have since struggled to refinance rights fees from advertising and carriage fees.

The consensus is that the league has secured a reasonable deal in a tough market. The financial collapse of TV7 fuelled a desire from broadcasters to force down rights fees.

The three-year deal with TV7, which was also due to cover the 2014-15 and 2015-16 seasons, was terminated at the beginning of 2014-15 after the broadcaster missed a fee instalment.

Instalments were due in three stages: one at the beginning of the season, one over the winter and one at the end of the season. Football Pro Media covered the cost of the instalment and ended the contract with TV7 prematurely.

TV7 has close ties to the KTB bank, which was forced to close on June 20 and is now being run by the Bulgarian National Bank.

## New deal

Football Pro Media held talks with a number of other broadcasters, including commercial and pay-television

broadcaster bTV, owned by media company Central European Media Enterprises, public-service broadcaster BNT and pay-television channel TV Plus, which is run by telco Bulgacom.

In initial talks, the broadcasters are thought to have insisted they would not pay more than BGN3m per season.

Nova will refinance at least some of the investment from advertising and carriage fees from local operators. Its main Nova channel is available free-to-air. Its Nova Sport and Diema channels are carried in basic-tier pay-television packages. They are available on the two biggest platforms in Bulgaria – Bulgacom and Blizoo.

Nova can also recoup some of its investment by sublicensing highlights to a free-to-air broadcaster. A deal for 2014-15 is yet to be agreed. The rights are worth about BGN200,000 per season. BNT is thought to be the most likely buyer, but bTV is also understood to be interested.

Nova also has the rights to the English Premier League, for which it pays €6.3m per season for the three seasons from 2013-14 to 2015-16 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:4).

The Premier League is the most important sports property in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian league and the Spanish Liga are the next most important, ahead

of the Uefa Champions League.

La Liga rights are currently held by Bulsatcom channels TV Plus and Film Plus. Champions League rights are held by bTV from 2015-16 to 2017-18 in a deal worth between €3m and €3.5m per season.

Interest in the Champions League in Bulgaria for the 2014-15 season is likely to be higher than usual. Domestic champions Ludogorets became the first Bulgarian team to reach the Champions League group stage since Levski Sofia in 2006.

### Deal terminations

The early termination of the TV7 deal was not the first time that the league has received late rights fee payments from broadcasters.

From 2009-10 to 2011-12 the rights were held by bTV in a deal worth BGN21.6m. The contract was initially for three years with the option of a two-year extension, covering the 2012-13 and 2013-14 seasons. Payments broke down as: BGN3.6m in the first year; BGN8m in the second; and BGN10m in the third. Payments for the fourth and fifth seasons

would have been BGN12m and BGN15m respectively.

The BGN10m fee for the third season was reduced to BGN7m when it became apparent that bTV was struggling to meet the rights fee instalments. However, the broadcaster was only able to pay BGN5m, and was taken to court by the Bulgarian Football Union, the national governing body, and ordered to pay BGN800,000.

There has been a dramatic variation in the value of the Bulgarian league rights across the last few deals (see table, page 5). The bTV deal was agreed at a time of intense competition, shortly after the arrival of Central European Media Enterprises and MTG in the market. Both bid aggressively for the rights.

### Football Pro Media

With no broadcast deal in sight for the 2012-13 season following bTV's financial difficulties, the Football Pro Media agency was created on November 1, 2012 to help the league agree a broadcast deal. It was set up by Cyril Domuschiev, owner of Ludogorets, and Todor Batkov, president of Levski Sofia. These are two

of the biggest clubs in Bulgaria.

The agency agreed one-year deals with TV Plus and BNT worth a total of BGN2m. TV Plus paid BGN1.2m and BNT paid BGN800,000. Both TV Plus and BNT showed one match per round, but TV Plus could not pay the rights fee and its deal was terminated in January 2013. The BNT deal ran until the end of the 2012-13 season.

At the end of the 2012-13 season, the league agreed a deal for the agency to sell its rights for a further three years, from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

Football Pro Media pays 10 per cent of the domestic television deal to the BFU, with the remaining 90 per cent paid directly to the clubs. The agency keeps money from all sponsorship deals, worth close to €350,000 per year, and deals for radio rights, which are worth about €50,000 per year.

The league also has a deal with the Playbook International agency for exclusive internet rights outside Bulgaria. The agency is understood to pay a total of about €120,000 for three seasons, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, or about €40,000 per year. ■

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

# Three-way battle in Hong Kong gives Uefa big uplift

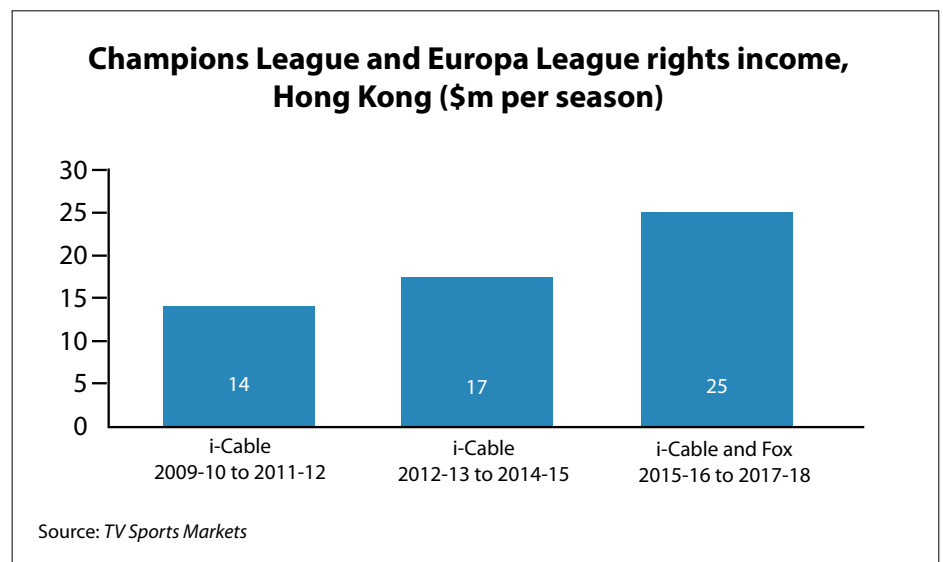
By Richard Welbirg

Pay-television platform i-Cable paid a significant increase to retain rights amid stiff competition for the Uefa Champions League in Hong Kong.

The company will pay close to \$22.5m (€17m) per season for three seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

It was enough to win the rights in the first round of bidding, shutting out competition from telco PCCW and its rival pay-television platform Now TV, as well as Qatari pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports.

Local sources said i-Cable needed to hold on to the Champions League – its



top sports property – to maintain any challenge to Now TV. I-Cable lost the English Premier League, the 'must-have' in Hong Kong, to Now TV in 2012.

The broadcaster pays \$17m per season for both the Champions League and the

Europa League in the current deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15. In the previous cycle, from 2009-10 to 2011-12, it paid \$14m per season (see table).

For the first time, i-Cable did not bid for both properties. Global channel

syndicator Fox International Channels picked up the Europa League rights for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18, paying \$2.5m per season.

Fox beat a rival bid from beIN Sports. It is unclear whether or not Now TV was also bidding for the Europa League rights.

The deal with i-Cable includes the annual Super Cup match between the winners of the previous season's Champions League and Europa League. Both deals, brokered on behalf of Uefa by the Team Marketing agency, are platform neutral.

The two deals give Uefa a total annual income from the market of \$25m per season – a 47-per-cent increase on the value of the current cycle.

This is a big improvement on the 21-per-cent increase between the current cycle and the previous cycle, when the sports-rights market in the country was cooling. I-Cable's determination to prevent Now TV acquiring another premium property, and the addition of beIN Sports, has revived the market.

In December, beIN Sports paid between \$10m and \$14m for the rights in Hong Kong to Uefa's Euro 2016 tournament (*TV Sports Markets* 17:22). The broadcaster also offers football from the top domestic football division in France, as well as English football's second-tier Championship and North America's Major League Soccer.

Having the Champions League and the Europa League would have further

strengthened the broadcaster's hand in negotiating carriage deals with the Now TV and i-Cable platforms.

The Al-Jazeera-owned broadcaster's channels are currently only available on TVB Network Vision, Hong Kong's third-ranked domestic pay-television platform. In 2013, TVB had 200,000 subscribers. Now TV and i-Cable's Cable TV both had over 1m.

Fox Sports channels are carried on the Now TV platform. While beIN Sports's strategy is to bid aggressively for top sport for its two channels, Fox offers platforms a larger package of sport, news and entertainment channels. Its business model does not require heavy investments in top-tier sports properties. It did not bid for the Champions League rights. ■

## RUGBY UNION

# BeIN takes new club competition from hesitant Canal Plus

By Robin Jellis

French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports easily beat its main rival Canal Plus to land rights to European rugby's new club tournaments, adding evidence to claims that the previously intense competition between the two broadcasters is cooling.

It is understood that beIN Sports will pay between €12m (\$16m) and €13m per season in a four-season deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, for pay-television rights to European Professional Club Rugby's two tournaments – the Rugby Champions Cup and the Rugby Challenge Cup. The competitions are replacing the Heineken Cup and the Amlin Challenge Cup.

The beIN Sports deal will cover rights to all matches from both competitions. It will have non-exclusive rights to one game per week from the Champions Cup, with rights for this match also expected to be sold to public-service broadcaster France Télévisions. Negotiations with France Télévisions are

at an advanced stage. Its deal for the Champions Cup, covering free-to-air rights, is thought to be worth about €7m per season across the same four-year period. It is understood that the public-service broadcaster is also trying to acquire non-exclusive rights to one match per week from the Challenge Cup. This would push the total value of the deal up to about €8m per season.

The potential total of €21m per season that the EPCR is expected to earn from the French media rights is well below the reserve price of €27m per season it set for both European rugby competitions.

The deal marks the first major rugby property beIN Sports has bought in France, and raises questions why Canal Plus was not more aggressive in trying to hold on to its European rugby rights.

It also reinforces the belief that there has been a cooling of the intense competition between the broadcasters, which became evident following lower-than-expected rights fee increases for Ligue 1 and Uefa Champions League rights – two of the top subscription-driving properties in France (*TV Sports Markets* 18:7; 18:8).

But there may be a more crucial battle over rugby union rights in France in the coming months, with the possibility of domestic Top 14 rights being put back on the market.

## Pressure on EPCR

The value of the rights in the new deals is 22 per cent below the reserve price, but the EPCR had to agree a deal quickly. The competitions begin in little over a month. Bids had to be submitted by June 18, with the EPCR promising a decision by August 31. However, the bids lodged by beIN Sports, Canal Plus and France Télévisions did not reach the reserve price, forcing the EPCR into direct negotiations with the broadcasters.

Eurosport France, the French arm of the pan-regional sports broadcaster, which held Amlin Cup rights in the previous cycle, did not bid, as none of the packages would allow it to acquire a similar number of matches from the second-tier competition.

Canal Plus and France Télévisions submitted a joint bid, which the EPCR rejected and asked for both broadcasters to submit separate offers. The beIN Sports offer is understood to have beaten an offer of around €10m per year from Canal Plus.

The fee the EPCR will earn from the French market is dwarfed by the £39m (€49m/\$65m) per season it earns in the UK, where the rights are shared by pay-television broadcasters BSkyB and BT Sport (*TV Sports Markets* 18:7).

But it still marks an increase of about 50 per cent on the previous value of the

rights in France. From 2010-11 to 2013-14, the rights were worth €13.8m per season in separate deals with France Télévisions and Canal Plus. France Télévisions paid €11m per season and Canal Plus about €2.8m per season.

From 2006-07 to 2009-10, France Télévisions is thought to have paid about €11m per season, and sublicensed some rights to Canal Plus in a deal worth about €1.8m per season.

If its new deal is confirmed, France Télévisions will have renewed what is one of its bigger sports properties, but will have lost at least one match per week from the top-tier tournament. It would have nine games from each competition, 18 in total.

France Télévisions would show Champions Cup matches on France 2, and Challenge Cup matches on its France 4 digital-terrestrial channel. BeIN Sports is expected to show matches on

its new beIN Sports 3 channel which begins broadcasting on September 15.

Production costs for Champions Cup matches are expected to be about €100,000 each. Matches from the Challenge Cup are expected to cost about €50,000 each to produce.

### Top 14 up for grabs?

French pay-television experts say that the European rugby rights could help beIN Sports generate 100,000 to 200,000 new subscribers on an existing subscriber base of just over 2m.

The broadcaster is also understood to be keen to acquire the rights to the Top 14, which would be a far more powerful subscription-driver. In acquiring the EPCR rights it has shown the Ligue Nationale de Rugby that it has a strong appetite to acquire top rugby union rights.

Canal Plus was awarded the rights by

the league in a five-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2018-19, worth about €355m, or €71m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:2).

However, beIN Sports successfully appealed against the decision as the initial tender process was suspended before the rights were awarded to Canal Plus. The national competition authority, the Autorité de la concurrence, deemed the agreement to be anticompetitive.

Due to the proximity of the 2014-15 season it was agreed that Canal Plus would retain the rights in the first season, but that the rights must be re-tendered before January 31, 2015. Canal Plus is appealing the decision in the Court of Appeal in Paris. A ruling is expected on October 9.

Experts say that the league will struggle to earn significantly more than the €71m per season it agreed with Canal Plus, even with a tender process. ■

## CRICKET

# ECB archive gives Sunset+Vine taste for the rights game

By Richard Welbirg

UK sports production and media company Sunset+Vine will look for “more and more” opportunities for rights acquisitions following its four-year archive rights deal with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

“Is this a long-term strategy or an opportunistic grab? It’s both,” Andrew Piller, commercial director at Sunset+Vine, told *TV Sports Markets*.

“We offer a value-added proposition to a rights-holder. Sometimes, that affords us the opportunity for these acquisitions. We want to look at more and more of those opportunities.”

Cricket rights experts say the value of the property would be tiny in comparison with a deal for live or highlights rights. Both Piller and the ECB declined to comment.

The agreement includes global rights for all English domestic competitions

and England international matches played in England and Wales between the 1995 and 2013 seasons. It also includes global rights, excluding the UK, before 1995. The UK rights remain with the BBC. The three parties are in negotiations toward a deal which would see a revenue share on the pre-1995 block in the UK.

## “Long-term strategy or opportunistic grab? It’s both”

*Andrew Piller, commercial director, Sunset+Vine*

The ECB’s long-term deal for archive rights with the BBC Motion Gallery expired at the end of 2013. BBC Worldwide, which operates the Motion Gallery, showed no interest in renewing the deal.

The ECB held conversations with several parties, but its long-standing relationship with Sunset+Vine tipped the balance. The company produces highlights of England internationals for

commercial broadcaster Channel 5, and held the production contract when commercial broadcaster Channel 4 held the rights to home England international matches.

As such, it has an existing store of footage it can now exploit. Sunset+Vine hope to develop the archive and produce bespoke programming for broadcasters.

“That’s our ambition,” said Piller. “We would love to be in a position to take that archive and create meaningful content strands around that, such as the all-time greatest catches at Lord’s or Sachin Tendulkar’s greatest innings in England.”

This is not the first time Sunset+Vine will have distributed media rights. It is the media partner of the International Sailing Federation and distributes programming from the Dubai World Cup horse race internationally.

Sunset+Vine’s parent company, Tinopolis, is reported to be in takeover talks with private equity firm MSD Capital and Canadian film and television company Entertainment One. MSD Capital is said to have had an offer for the company rejected last year. Tinopolis is reported to be valued at between £250m (€314m/\$415m) and £300m. ■



# TVSportsMarkets 400

TV Sports Markets celebrates its 400th edition in October. Since 1997, we've brought the best insight and analysis on the key developments and trends in the media rights sector. To celebrate this landmark, we are proud to present a series of events at SPORTEL Monaco in the Grimaldi Forum which will bring together some of the biggest names in the sports broadcasting industry to talk about the state of the industry 17 years on since our first newsletter.

**MONDAY OCTOBER 6**

## *TVSM Live*

The third annual, invitation-only event features presentations from:

**Garry Cook**, chief global brand officer, UFC

**Guy-Laurent Epstein**, marketing director, Uefa Events

**Richard Verow**, commercial director, Sky Sports

**TUESDAY OCTOBER 7, 2pm**

## *Sport Online:*

### *The evolution of business models for digital sports content*

A panel discussion featuring:

**Tomos Grace**, senior partner manager, YouTube/Google

**Simon Greenberg**, global head of rights, News Corp

**Frank Leenders**, director general, Fiba Media & Marketing Services

**TUESDAY OCTOBER 7, 5.15pm**

## *JB Perrette: Exclusive Interview*

TV Sports Markets' editor Frank Dunne in an exclusive one-to-one interview with

**JB Perrette**, president of Discovery Networks International

**WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 8, 3.30pm**

## *Winning Media Strategies: the media-rights strategies of Europe's top football leagues*

A panel discussion featuring:

**Jörg Daubitzer**, managing director, DFL Sports Enterprises

**Mathieu Ficot**, chief commercial officer, Ligue de Football Professionnel

**Frank Rutten**, chief executive, Eredivisie Media & Marketing

**Javier Tebas**, president, Liga Nacional de Fútbol Profesional

**Join us at the Grimaldi Forum for these special events or visit our stand (F03) to celebrate our 400th edition.**

# SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from August 21 to September 3

## MEDIA RIGHTS 1

### Football: Concacaf events, Champions League, Bundesliga and more

- **Football:** The IMG Events & Media agency acquired international rights for events operated by Concacaf, the sport's governing body in North America, Central America and the Caribbean (page 3).
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox International Channels acquired rights in Hong Kong for the Uefa Europa League club competition for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The deal covers 205 matches per season over linear channels, IPTV, internet and mobile platforms (page 6).
- **Football:** The TV Media Sport agency acquired free-to-air rights for the 2014-15 season of Italy's top-tier Serie A in a deal with the MP & Silva agency covering 47 countries across sub-Saharan Africa. The rights include coverage of one game per week plus weekly highlights.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports agreed a sublicensing deal with state-owned broadcaster Dubai Sports to show the German top-tier Bundesliga on an exclusive basis in the Middle East and North Africa region, starting with the 2014-15 season (page 1).
- **Football:** BeIN Sports acquired exclusive rights in France for the Argentinian top-tier Primera División in a five-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2018-19. BeIN Sports will show the top game of the week plus all of the goals from the other games on the 'Expresso' and 'The Club' programmes on the beIN Sports 1 channel (page 2).
- **Football:** Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE agreed a two-year rights deal, from 2014-15 to 2015-16, with the LNFS, the country's national futsal league. Sports channel Teledeporte will begin the coverage by broadcasting the game of the day from the top-tier Primera División at 1pm on Saturdays, along with the league's play-off rounds and the Supercopa de España and Copa de España competitions. Live coverage will also be streamed on the RTVE.es website.
- **Football:** Telecommunications and pay-television operator PrimeTel acquired rights in Cyprus for the Liga and Copa del Rey Spanish club tournaments. PrimeTel will show live and delayed coverage of all games from the top-tier Liga as well as the Copa del Rey tournament. The length of the deal, which starts with the 2014-15 season, was not disclosed. PrimeTel acquired the rights from the Asset Ogilvy agency.
- **Football:** Irish public-service broadcaster RTÉ struck a rights deal with the Football Association of Ireland for domestic tournaments operated by the sport's governing body in the Republic of Ireland. RTÉ will show live coverage of 78 Premier Division and FAI Cup games per season. The agreement starts immediately and will run for just over four years until November 2018.
- **Football:** Irish pay-television broadcaster Setanta Sports agreed a rights deal with the FAI covering exclusive live rights to the Republic of Ireland national team's home friendly games. The deal will run for four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, and includes live coverage of a total of 16 senior women's team and U-21 team matches, as well as sponsorship of the FAI's Emerging Talent Programme.

## SINCE LAST TIME

- The US federal court will not hear online streaming service Aereo's argument that it should be allowed to operate in a similar way to a cable-television company. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Aereo will have to take its argument to the district court. In June, the Supreme Court ruled that Aereo was violating copyright law by not paying broadcasters for transmitting their programming, including sports coverage.
- Perform urged its shareholders to reject an offer from US conglomerate Access Industries to increase its stake in the digital sports media company from about 42.5 per cent to 100 per cent. Access, through its AI PG subsidiary, made a final cash offer of 260p per share for Perform, valuing the company at £701.6m (€877m/\$1.17bn), a "significant premium to the current trading level," according to Access chief executive Lincoln Benet. AI PG's sister company PVT is the holder of the 42.5-per-cent stake.
- Daniel Bilalian, the director of sport at France Télévisions, called for a ban to be lifted on advertising on the public-service broadcaster in the evening. For the past five years, advertising on France Télévisions' channels has been banned between 8pm and 6am, with the state providing a subsidy to the broadcaster to offset the loss in revenue. However, according to *l'Équipe*, the subsidy has decreased from €420m (\$554m) in 2012 to €115m this year.

## MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- The SEC Network, the new pay-television sports channel dedicated to college sport's Southeastern Conference, reached a carriage deal with pay-television provider Verizon FiOS. The channel, which launched on August 14, is available to all FiOS television customers in Florida and Texas who receive ESPN in their FiOS TV package and to FiOS Extreme and Ultimate customers in all other markets.
- Newspaper publisher Axel Springer expanded the reach of its online highlights clips service for German football's top-tier Bundesliga by agreeing a carriage deal with video-sharing website YouTube. The Bundesliga bei Bild service will be provided via the YouTube channel of German newspaper *Bild*. The 90-second highlights will be available via *Bild's* YouTube channel from midnight on Mondays. *Bild* will also produce a new Bundesliga magazine show, which will be available via its official website and YouTube channel.
- BSkyB will have a "real problem" if it is unable to retain rights to live coverage of 116 English Premier League football matches per season in the next cycle, according to John Petter, chief executive of the consumer division at BT, which operates rival pay-television service BT Sport. Petter questioned whether Sky could retain the rights "given the high prices that they charge" and said BT Sport's bidding for sports rights since it acquired domestic rights for Premier League matches had left Sky in a potentially fragile situation.

**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from August 21 to September 3**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****American football, badminton world championships, basketball and cricket**

- **American Football:** Swedish commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV4 acquired rights for the International Federation of American Football's 2015 World Championship, which will take place in Stockholm, plus the 2014 and 2015 finals of the Swedish Championship. TV4 will broadcast live coverage of all World Championship games featuring the Sweden team plus the final on its new TV12 channel. All other games will be shown on TV4 Sport and every match from both tournaments will be available via the broadcaster's video-on-demand service.
  - **Badminton:** The British Eurosport division of pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired rights for the 2014 Badminton World Championships. The rights were exploited on the British Eurosport 2 channel in late August.
  - **Badminton:** Sportdeutschland.TV, the German Olympic Committee's online sports television channel, acquired rights for the 2014 Badminton World Championships. Sportdeutschland.TV, which rebranded from Splink.TV in August, showed live coverage and highlights.
  - **Basketball:** The Fox Sports division of US network Fox acquired rights for the 2014 Las Vegas Invitational and Las Vegas Classic regular-season college events. The Fox Sports 1 pay-television channel will show two games on both days of the Las Vegas Invitational on November 27-28 and the final two games of the Las Vegas Classic on December 23. Fox Sports will also sell the events' multimedia sponsorship and television advertising spots.
  - **Cricket:** Eurosport extended a rights deal for the Champions League Twenty20 franchise tournament for three years, from 2014 to 2016. The deal covers more than 50 European countries. Eurosport will offer live action, delayed coverage and replays plus catch-up services of the tournament, which will feature the top teams from Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, West Indies and host nation India.
  - Eurosport struck the deal with Asian pay-television broadcaster Star Sports, the tournament's global rights distribution partner.
  - **Cricket:** UK sports production and media company Sunset+Vine agreed a four-year archive rights deal, from 2014 to 2017, with the England and Wales Cricket Board. The agreement includes global rights for every international and domestic match played in England and Wales from 1995 to the end of the 2013 season plus international rights for matches before 1995. Sunset+Vine will produce bespoke programming for broadcasters using existing archive footage (page 8).
  - **Cricket:** Indian sports and entertainment pay-television channel Sony Six acquired rights for the third season of the Karnataka Premier League state-level domestic Twenty20 tournament. Sony Six will show 24 games from the 2014 campaign, which ends on September 12.
- 
- Mediaset Spain was granted rights for additional games from the 2014 basketball World Cup after more than 1,000 fans complained about the commercial broadcaster's limited coverage of the tournament, which is taking place in Spain. Fiba, the sport's global governing body, allowed Mediaset to show six additional group games via the broadcaster's Mitele.es website. Mediaset initially had scheduled coverage of two games per day during the group phase.
  - José Ramón Díez, the director of Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE, confirmed a plan to close sports channel Teledporte on December 31. The plan must be ratified by the Spanish government. The programming currently shown on Teledporte would be shown by sister channel La 2.
  - The Fight Sports pay-television channel will launch in Spain on September 13 after media company CSI Sports, which owns the channel, agreed a multi-year carriage deal with pay-television operator Ono.
  - Liga de Fútbol Profesional, the Spanish football league, launched its online channel, La Liga TV, on Apple iOS and Android mobile devices. The league is planning to make La Liga TV, which was launched for PCs last year, accessible via internet-connected televisions and Google Chromecast devices in the coming months.
  - Danish commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 will launch a new sports channel early next year. The channel will run alongside TV2's primary channel and offer additional coverage of various sports. Coverage of major events will remain on TV2's main channel. Satellite-television provider Canal Digital, cable-television operator Stofa, broadband company Wao and pay-television operator Boxer will carry the new channel, with the broadcaster also in discussions with other distributors.
  - Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports offered a one-month free extension to its online streaming service in the Middle East and North Africa after customers were denied access to coverage of some matches from the opening weekend of football's 2014-15 English Premier League season due to piracy concerns.
  - The Fox International Channels broadcast subsidiary of media company 21st Century Fox completed the rebranding of its sports channels in the Philippines. Fox Sports, Fox Sports 2 and Fox Sports 3 replaced ESPN Philippines, Star Sports, and Fox Sports Plus.
  - Argentinian media conglomerate Grupo Clarin struck a deal to sell seven pay-television channels, including TyC Sports, to US investment fund 34 South Media. The deal is worth about \$31m (€23.5m). Clarin shareholders will vote on the sale on September 22. Clarin had originally planned to break up its operations into six different companies in order to comply with new regulations in Argentina concerning media licence ownership. The deadline for Clarin to reorganise its properties expired on August 17.

## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from August 21 to September 3

### MEDIA RIGHTS 3

## Golf, horse racing, ice hockey, mixed martial arts and motorsport

- **Golf:** The PGA Tour extended a rights deal with pay-television broadcaster ESPN International in Latin America and the Caribbean for five years, from 2015 to 2019. ESPN International will show up to 12 PGA Tour tournaments per year, including the annual Players Championship and the Presidents Cup in 2015 and 2017, plus magazine programming. Coverage will be shown on ESPN's television, broadband and mobile platforms. The deal includes rights for additional PGA Tour content from selected tournaments across its digital platforms, including coverage from up to four competition holes as well as featured groups of golfers.
- **Horse Racing:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven acquired rights for the country's Magic Millions event. The length of the long-term, multi-platform deal was not disclosed. Seven will broadcast and promote the Magic Millions carnival, sale and race day in Gold Coast, Queensland.
- **Ice Hockey:** French digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 acquired rights for the European Champions Hockey League, starting with the inaugural 2014-15 season of the club competition. The length of the deal with the Infront Sports & Media agency was not disclosed. L'Équipe 21's coverage will also be available in French overseas territories as well as in several other countries around the world including Australia, New Zealand and Venezuela.
- **Ice Hockey:** North American pay-television broadcaster One World Sports acquired rights for the Russia-based Kontinental Hockey League club tournament. The multi-platform deal with the Ufa Sports agency is exclusive and covers multiple seasons. One World Sports will show up to 99 games on a live basis per season, starting with the 2014-15 campaign, including 50 regular-season games and the Gagarin Cup Finals in April.
- **Ice Hockey:** Canadian pay-television broadcaster Rogers Sportsnet acquired the English-language regional rights for games featuring the Montreal Canadiens NHL team. The deal will run for three years, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. Sportsnet will broadcast 39 Canadiens matches during the 2014-15 season on its regional Sportsnet East channel and three more on its regional City Montreal channel. Sportsnet will also broadcast 40 Canadiens matches during the season on a national basis.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** Irish commercial broadcaster TV3 agreed a rights deal with the Ultimate Fighting Championship. The length of the agreement was not disclosed, but TV3's free-to-air channel 3e will show several of the series' events this autumn.
- **Motorsport:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland acquired exclusive live rights in Germany for the Formula E Championship, the new electric motor-racing series operated by the FIA, motorsport's global governing body. Sky will show all races during the 2014-15 season on a live basis, with the deal covering television, internet, IPTV and mobile rights.
- Coliseum Sports Media, the rights-holder for the English Premier League in New Zealand, expanded its coverage of England's top club football division into Chinese Taipei. Coliseum's PremierLeaguePass.com pay-per-view online platform, which broadcasts coverage of the league and was launched in New Zealand last year, will provide coverage of all 380 games per season plus on-demand highlights, preview and review programmes. PremierLeaguePass.com can be accessed via desktop, mobile and tablet devices as well as internet-connected Apple TV and Samsung TV devices.
- The Australian Football League will open talks over a new domestic broadcast rights deal after this season's Aussie rules grand final on September 27. *The Australian* newspaper said that AFL chief executive Gillon McLachlan was confident of surpassing the value of the league's current five-year cycle, which will expire at the end of 2016 and is worth A\$1.258bn (€886m/\$1.16bn), with commercial broadcaster Seven, pay-television operator Foxtel and telecommunications company Telstra. The league is aiming to secure a new deal for the 2017 season onwards during the early rounds of next season in March or April.

### MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The Pakistan Cricket Board rejected two bids for the rights to its national team's 2014 series against Australia and New Zealand, according to the Indian Television news website. Bids from Ten Sports, which operates in the Indian subcontinent, and Pakistani public-service broadcaster PTV, were below the asking price. The rights cover multiple platforms and sponsorship rights. Pakistan will play Australia in a Twenty20 international, three One-Day Internationals and two Tests from October 5 to November 3, while New Zealand will contest three Tests, two T20s and five ODIs between November 11 and December 19. Both series will take place in the UAE.

### ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports vowed to clamp down on footage of goals from its football matches being shown online through video-sharing service Vine. Laurent de Camas, beIN Sports' director of marketing and business development, told newspaper *L'Équipe* that media platforms which share the Vine posts without obtaining the necessary copyright were "accomplices" and "complicit in this phenomenon."
- Fiji's communications ministry is in talks with the International Rugby Board over the status of commercial broadcaster Fiji TV's rights deal for the Sevens World Series following the passing of legislation regarding coverage of major events. According to Fiji's



**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from August 21 to September 3**MEDIA RIGHTS 4****Motorsport, rugby union, swimming, water polo, wrestling and more**

- **Motorsport:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport struck a deal to show highlights of the Formula E Championship. BT Sport will show a one-hour highlights programme in the weeks following all 10 rounds of the 2014-15 championship. The broadcaster, which agreed the deal with the MP & Silva agency, will show race and qualifying coverage plus the latest news, features and interviews in each programme.
- **Multi-sport:** Indian subcontinent pay-television broadcaster Taj TV acquired rights for the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia. Taj TV will exploit the rights via its Ten Sports channel.
- **Multi-sport:** Turkish sports broadcaster NTV Spor acquired rights for the inaugural European Games, which will take place next year in Baku, Azerbaijan. NTV Spor will broadcast seven hours of coverage per day across television, internet and mobile platforms.
- **Rugby Union:** French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports acquired rights for the sport's new European club tournaments, the Rugby Champions Cup and Rugby Challenge Cup, for the next four seasons, from 2014-15 to 2017-18 (page 7).
- **Swimming:** Pan-regional broadcaster Eurosport acquired rights for the new Singapore Swim Stars event in 51 European countries. The deal was struck with event organiser Sports Swim Organisation. The event will be shown on the Eurosport 2 channel except in France, where it will be broadcast on the Eurosport France channel.
- **Water Polo:** The European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters acquired rights for the Champions League club tournament operated by the Ligue Européenne de Natation, aquatic sport's European governing body. The EBU will guarantee live coverage of 60 matches during the 2014-15 season's preliminary rounds plus the Final Six tournament's matches.
- **Wrestling:** SuperSport, the pay-television broadcaster that operates in sub-Saharan Africa, acquired rights across the region for the TNA Impact Wrestling series covering five years, from 2014-15 to 2018-19. SuperSport will show weekly magazine programmes on Mondays plus monthly pay-per-view events.

new Television Cross Carriage of Designated Events Decree, the series is an event that must be shared by Fiji TV with commercial channels Mai TV and FBC TV. Fiji TV said that its deal with the IRB prevents the broadcaster from sharing coverage of the series.

- Golf's PGA Tour launched a new subscription channel on video-sharing website YouTube that will allow fans to access archived footage from historic tournaments. The PGA Tour Rewind channel will feature content produced by PGA Tour Entertainment from as far back as 1990.

distribution divisions of the Discovery Networks Central & Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa (CEEMEA) unit of US media and entertainment company Discovery Communications and pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport. Benjamin Deshayes will continue to co-ordinate distribution of the Eurosport channels in his new role as Discovery's CEEMEA deputy distribution strategy director. • The IMG agency appointed Karen Brodtkin as its new president of business affairs. Brodtkin previously served as executive vice-president of business and legal affairs at the Fox Sports Media Group. • Piotr Pietrzak was appointed as the new co-managing director of the Polish division of the Sportfive agency. The former chief executive of the Havas Sports & Entertainment agency's Polish division will work alongside Andrzej Placzynsk.

**INDUSTRY MOVES**

- Oxana Yanushkovskaya will lead a new team comprising the merged

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