

FOOTBALL

Al Jazeera behind Mediapro's Champions League deal, insiders say

By Robin Jellis

Uefa earned a strong 34-per-cent increase in its Champions League rights fee in Spain last week, with most industry insiders believing it had Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera to thank.

The new Champions League deals, which will run from 2015-16 to 2017-18, are worth a total of just over €170m (\$218m) per season. This compares to €127m per season in the current cycle, from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

Most local industry experts believe Al Jazeera provided some form of backing for the Mediapro agency's winning €125m-per-season bid for pay-television rights. However, they are divided as to the Qatari company's motives.

Some believe it is helping Mediapro stockpile rights which Al Jazeera will take over when it launches its beIN Sports channels in the market in the coming months.

Others think Al Jazeera is only helping Mediapro in return for the agency's services in other markets, and has no plans to launch channels in Spain any time soon. The two companies have been cooperating for several years on production and rights acquisition and distribution in markets including France, the Middle East and the US, where Al Jazeera runs its beIN Sports channels. The two are also part of a loose alliance of rights buyers including the MP & Silva, Pitch International and Full Play agencies.

There have been rumours of Al Jazeera entering Spain for several years. It was reported to have been interested in acquiring the Canal Plus pay-television channels before telco Telefónica landed that deal earlier this year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:5). In July 2013, Spanish media reported that Al Jazeera was on the

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WRESTLING

India takes second spot for WWE

By Richard Welbirg

WWE's five-year extension of its partnership with pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports has made the Indian subcontinent the most valuable media rights market outside the US for the wrestling series.

Ten Sports will pay \$140m (€109m) across the five years from 2015 to 2019, or \$28m per year, for exclusive platform-neutral rights. The new deal is a 180-per-

cent increase on the \$10m per year the broadcaster paid in the five-year deal from 2010 to 2014.

The increase pushed India ahead of the UK in terms of media-rights value for the series. WWE extended its UK rights deal with pay-television operator BSkyB in January, paying £16m (€20m/\$26m) per year between 2015 and 2019 (*TV Sports*

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CyTA and PrimeTel pick up Lumiere's football rights

The closure of Cypriot pay-television operator Lumiere TV has allowed IPTV service CyTAVision and telco PrimeTel to snap up rights to international and domestic football.

Lumiere had been struggling for some time. Local media reported the broadcaster lost €2.3m (\$3m) as a result of the country's 2013 banking crisis. It closed its sports channels in late August. Its sports rights had already been sold to CyTAVision, the broadcasting arm of state telco CyTA, or taken back by their original rights-holders.

In the case of the English Premier League and German Bundesliga, the rights reverted to the leagues, and were resold to CyTAVision. *TV Sports Markets* understands the company is paying comparable fees to those paid by Lumiere – €2m per season for the remaining two years of the Premier League cycle, 2014-15 and 2015-16, and around €100,000 for the 2014-15 Bundesliga season, the last of the current cycle.

Lumiere held the rights to the Spanish Liga and Copa del Rey in a three-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, with the Asset Ogilvy agency, which has been handling the sale of rights to the competitions in Greece and Cyprus since the 2009-10 season.

The agency took back the rights at the conclusion of the 2013-14 season because of missed payments. The remaining season of the cycle was resold to PrimeTel last month for a fee close to €300,000.

Lumiere's financial problems also allowed CyTAVision to sign a five-year deal with Cypriot champions Apoel in late July. CyTAVision had already been close to a three-year deal with the club covering the 2016-17 to 2018-19 cycle. Lumiere's failure to meet its obligations allowed Apoel to cancel its existing 2012-13 to 2015-16 deal and sign with CyTAVision from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

CyTAVision is paying €1.78m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:12). Apoel's deal with LTV had been worth €1.1m per season.

In July, PrimeTel completed negotiations with major clubs Omonia and Apollon Limassol for their rights from 2016-17 to 2018-19. *TV Sports Markets* understands these deals are worth €2m and €1.25m per season respectively.

The Cyprus Football Association intends to pool the rights of the smaller clubs from 2016-17 in order to produce a league television channel. ■

Fiba hopes clicks help rights sales

The International Basketball Federation (Fiba) expects the strong engagement with digital coverage of last month's World Cup in Spain to aid media-rights sales for EuroBasket 2015 and other events.

Fiba is yet to agree deals for 2015 in Germany, Russia, the UK, Italy, Poland and Cyprus. Negotiations with broadcasters in these markets are likely to take place during next week's Sportel convention in Monte Carlo.

Fiba's free Game Center app, providing match data and information, was downloaded 250,000 times during the tournament. Its World Cup YouTube channel, which carried highlights, had 30m views. The tournament generated 4.3m tweets.

The sport's global governing body usually sells its rights in three-year blocks. On the basis of the deals signed so far, it is thought to be on track to earn about \$65m (€51m) for the 2013 to 2015 cycle, which would represent an increase of about 30 per cent on the 2010 to 2012 cycle.

The rights cycles are due to be revamped as part of wider overhaul of the international calendar, which will come into force in 2017 (*TV Sports Markets* 16:21). The rights for the period 2017 to 2019 will include a World Cup in 2019, not 2018 as would have been the case before the overhaul.

Fiba believes that its commercial revenues have been held back by its World Cup being held in the same year as the Fifa World Cup. It is thought that the rights for the 2017-2019 period will come on the market in late autumn 2015 at the earliest. ■

NFL and Sony to develop audience

The National Football League's deal with media company Multi Screen Media this month is seen by both parties as a long-term proposition to develop the sport in India.

The four-season deal runs from 2014-15 to 2017-18. It makes MSM's sports and entertainment pay-television channel Sony Six the exclusive broadcaster of NFL in the Indian subcontinent, for a fee believed to be about \$50,000 (€39,000) per season.

American football has a low profile in India, with support generally limited to US expatriates. Additionally, most live games air after midnight in the country.

Sony Six will initially broadcast one live game per week – the Sunday afternoon game, broadcast by ESPN in the US, that falls in a 10pm slot in India. It will use complementary programming – educational vignettes, highlights shows and pre-season documentary series *Hard Knocks* – to educate viewers about the game.

The broadcaster believes the number of NFL fans in India could grow enough to provide them with some value as a niche sport. For the NFL, the deal secures regular coverage across the Indian subcontinent for the first time.

NFL rights covering the region were previously packaged in the pan-Asian deal with Hong Kong-based pay-television broadcaster Yes TV.

Yes held the rights in two deals – a three-year deal from 2007-08 to 2009-10 and a four-year deal from 2010-11 to 2013-14. It used the NFL as the cornerstone of its US-oriented All Sport Network. ASN did not broadcast in India. Yes sublicensed the Super Bowl in the country on an ad-hoc basis. ■

FOOTBALL

Uefa gets strong increase in rejuvenated Spain

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verge of buying Mediapro and its pay-television channel Gol T, although a deal never emerged.

Mediapro's recent major rights acquisitions for Gol T lead some market insiders to suspect that Al Jazeera is preparing to take over the channel. The Champions League is the top subscription-driving product in Spain after the domestic football league, for which Mediapro has also secured rights, covering both this season and next (*TV Sports Markets* 18:14).

Al Jazeera's entrance could turn up the heat in a Spanish pay-television sports-rights market that already looks to be recovering from a malaise caused by the country's economic difficulties.

Telefónica returned to the sports-rights market in February this year, acquiring Formula One and MotoGP rights (*TV Sports Markets* 18:3). As well as bidding for sports rights for its Movistar IPTV platform, Telefónica has agreed a deal to take control of Canal Plus, although this is awaiting approval by antitrust authorities.

Fee increases

Mediapro's Champions League rights fee represents an increase of almost 44 per cent on the €87m per season Canal Plus pays for the pay-television rights in the current cycle (*TV Sports Markets* 15:4).

Uefa, European football's governing body, sold the Champions League free-to-air rights to commercial broadcaster Atresmedia and Catalan public-service broadcaster TV3.

The free-to-air rights are worth close to €46m per season, up from €40m per season currently. Atresmedia will pay just under €40m per season, up about 14 per cent on the €35m per season paid by public-service broadcaster TVE currently. TV3 will pay €6m per season in its new deal, a 20-per-cent increase on the €5m per season it pays at present.

For Atresmedia, the rights are important as it will lose its grip on Formula One coverage when Telefónica's exclusive deal, worth about €70m per year, kicks in from 2016.

The deals bring a second successive strong increase in Champions League fees in Spain, following a 44-per-cent increase from the €88m per season in 2009-10 to 2011-12. In that cycle, TVE paid €30m per season, the Forta consortium of regional public-service broadcasters paid €36m per season, and Mediapro paid €22m per season.

The new deals represent a good result for Uefa and its sales agent Team Marketing. As recently as six months ago, local rights experts were expecting fees to remain steady or decrease due to the effect of the weak Spanish economy on broadcasters.

Bidding

The rights were awarded after two rounds of bidding, in which the main competition was between Telefónica and dovetailing bids from the three winning broadcasters, Atresmedia, TV3 and Mediapro.

In the first round, it is understood that Telefónica made a bid for both free-to-air and pay-television rights that was higher than the combined value of the Atresmedia, TV3 and Mediapro offers.

Media company Mediaset, which runs commercial channels Quatro and Telecinco, and Canal Plus, which bid independently from Telefónica, both had bids rejected as too low.

TVE, which holds free-to-air rights in the current cycle, did not bid. It is suffering from budget cuts. Its rights budget has also been reduced by its deal in May with the CAA Eleven agency for rights to Spanish national team matches in 2014-15 to 2017-18, which is worth €38m over the four seasons.

TVE is understood to have made an approach to sublicense from Telefónica live rights to the first-pick match on Tuesday nights, if the telco won the rights. Telefónica is understood to have rejected the offer as it wanted the rights exclusively.

In the second round, Atresmedia, TV3 and Mediapro made improved

offers, the combined value of which was a little greater than Telefónica's second-round offer. Telefónica is not thought to have increased its offer much, if at all, from the first round.

It is thought that Uefa would have accepted a knockout bid from Telefónica for all rights if the telco had been prepared to bid well ahead of its rivals.

Champions League coverage in major European markets was traditionally split between free-to-air and pay-television, but is moving towards greater pay-television exclusivity. It moved almost exclusively to pay-television in France in the current cycle, and will do so in the UK from next season. In both markets, the pay-television broadcasters paid large premiums for exclusivity.

Coverage

Atresmedia and TV3 will share live coverage of the first-pick Champions League match on Tuesdays. Atresmedia will show coverage on its Antena 3 channel. Mediapro's Gol T will show delayed coverage of that match, and live coverage of three other matches per week.

The new deals include rights to the Uefa Super Cup, the annual match between the winners of the Champions League and the Europa League. This will be shown by all three broadcasters on a non-exclusive basis.

Europa League

Uefa is in negotiations for rights in Spain to the Europa League, and is thought to be expecting a rights fee increase. However, one source close to the negotiations said a deal was not imminent and that Uefa may choose to come back to the market at a later date.

The rights are currently held by Gol T and Mediaset in the three seasons from 2012-13 to 2014-15 in deals worth a combined €16.5m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 16:7). Gol T pays €10.5m and Mediaset pays €6m. The rights fee fell last time a deal was agreed, from €18m per season.

Local sources expect Mediapro to win exclusive rights this time around.

Spanish teams have been very successful in recent years, winning two of the last three tournaments. The

2013-14 competition was won by Sevilla, and the 2011-12 competition was won by Atlético de Madrid.

Ukraine

Uefa secured a small fee increase for Champions League and Europa League rights in Ukraine in a deal with commercial and pay-television broadcaster Media Group Ukraine.

The deal covers both competitions and is worth just under €8m per year. Media Group Ukraine faced little competition.

The rights in the current cycle are held jointly by Media Group Ukraine and Media Group 1+1. ■

FOOTBALL

Indonesian football deal will open door to Asia, Infront says

By Richard Welburg

Infront Sports & Media's deal to distribute international rights to the Indonesian Super League (ISL) is "a flag in the ground" in the market for the agency, its managing director in Asia, Ian Mathie, told *TV Sports Markets*.

Infront this week agreed a five-year deal, 2014 to 2018, with BV Sports, an Indonesian company that owns the league's global media rights. The agency has guaranteed BV Sports a minimum income, with a revenue share above the minimum. Mathie declined to comment on the value of the deal. Local football rights experts put it at about \$150,000 (€117,000) per season.

BV Sports is reported by local media to have paid Rp1.5tn (\$125m/€98m), Rp150m per season, for the ISL global rights in a ten-year deal from 2013 and 2022.

"It's a flag in the ground, from which we will grow the business," Mathie said. "We wanted to be able to demonstrate to the ISL and other rights-holders in Asia that Infront has arrived in the market and we have the ability to add value for sports across Asia."

Infront's main markets for the rights will be those with large Indonesian expatriate audiences. Most are located in

Malaysia, Singapore and the Middle East. There are also sizeable populations in the Netherlands and the US. Infront will look to target these groups through a variety of channels.

"We need to find a way to reach those fans, and that's a challenge in itself – some are wealthy, some are students, some are low-earning expats who don't have access to pay-television or high-speed broadband," Mathie said.

"The traditional TV model is available to us and there are opportunities we can also look at, like streaming, OTT or YouTube. Malaysia and Singapore are the areas we will primarily look to agree deals with broadcasters."

Realistically, there are few territories in which Infront can hope to achieve either free-to-air coverage or a significant rights fee from a pay-television broadcaster. The agency's main objective is to increase exposure of the league by reaching fans outside the country. If building the audience sometimes means sacrificing revenue, Mathie said, it was prepared to do that.

One rights expert said that the only way the agency would be able to reach its target audiences, and make any money on the deal, would be via internet platforms, such as YouTube or subscription OTT channels, as broadcaster interest would be too weak.

Opportunities

The deal covers only media rights, but Infront is keen to develop production and other commercial opportunities within Indonesia. ISL production is currently handled by free-to-air network antv, owned by media group VIVA.

Infront has a memorandum of understanding with BV Sports to take over Super League production from the 2015 season. World Cup producers Host Broadcast Services, a subsidiary of Infront, are understood to be meeting BV Sports this month.

"We feel what we can do is bring a consistency for a start; there's some tweaking that can be done, sharing current best practices," Mathie said. "We can coach people; we can establish consistency of camera position and stadium set-up."

The agency is also hopeful its close

relationship with BV Sports and PT Liga Indonesia, the body which administers the Super League, will lead to further opportunities.

"I don't think it's possible to simply cut and paste what we do in Europe, but we could bring some practice of how we go into a club and improve their commercial practices – sponsorship and the like. Or implement an integrated digital media platform similar to Milan Media Factory," Mathie said.

Infront is the official marketing partner of AC Milan. Through the Milan Media Factory it curates club-related content for broadcast, mobile and internet platforms.

Gambling

Infront has already included the ISL rights in its rights deal with sports and betting services company Sportradar, announced this week.

The five-year deal gives Sportradar global rights to stream the ISL – in addition to other Infront properties the TBF, the top division of basketball in Turkey; the European Handball Federation European Championship; and the International Ice Hockey Federation World Championships – on its Betradar Live Channel. The channel is distributed to betting operators around the world.

Sportradar's rights are exclusive among betting companies only – the deal does not prevent Infront selling media rights to broadcasters and other platforms.

Duality

International rights for Indonesian football were unsold in recent seasons due to an unusual situation – for two seasons between 2011 and 2013, it hosted two professional football leagues.

The Indonesian Premier League replaced the ISL as the sanctioned highest football tier in 2011, but the ISL continued in the 2011-12 and 2013 seasons without the authorisation of the Football Association of Indonesia. Under pressure from Fifa, the two competitions merged as the Super League in 2014. ■

[www.infront.com](#) For the full interview with Ian Mathie visit our website.

WRESTLING

Indian WWE fees overtake UK after Ten Sports deal

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Markets 18:3).

Ten Sports will continue to broadcast WWE's flagship programmes Raw, SmackDown and NXT, and also its monthly pay-per-view events, in the new deal. WWE and Ten Sports will also aim to develop WWE's presence in the country in three ways:

1. Producing localised content.

From January 2015, Ten Sports will show a one-hour customised version of the WWE Raw programme tailored for the Indian market.

2. Using local languages. WWE programming is currently exclusively broadcast in English. In the new deal, Ten Sports will broadcast in Hindi, and possibly also Tamil and Bengali.

3. Holding events in India. The last live WWE event in India took place in 2002, when Ten Sports first acquired broadcast rights. Under the new deal, the partners propose to hold one WWE event in India each year between 2015 and 2019.

Second to cricket

WWE is the biggest television sports property in the market outside of Indian cricket, generating consistently high television ratings. It is a cornerstone of Ten Sports' programming and an important part of Ten Sports being the most-watched Indian sports channel every year since 2003.

WWE has been building its brand in India for more than 15 years. Early deals with Ten Sports were brokered by the Total Sports Agency. In the five-year deal from 2005 to 2009, the broadcaster paid \$5m per year.

In 2007, WWE ended its relationship with TSA and brought Asian rights sales in-house. Sales into India were initially handled from London, before a Mumbai office was opened in 2011. ■

FOOTBALL

Bundesliga's strong sales continue in Africa and beyond

By Frank Dunne

Germany's Bundesliga is thought to be finalising a number of rights deals involving substantial increases on current deal values.

African media sources say the league's commercial arm, DFL Sports Enterprises, is close to a deal for the rights in sub-Saharan Africa. Bidding is understood to have come down to a head-to-head battle between pan-African pay-television operators SuperSport and StarTimes, with the latter said to be favourite to acquire the rights.

Chinese-owned StarTimes is thought to have bid about €7m (\$9m) per season over five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20. If confirmed, that would represent an uplift for the league of about 140 per cent on its current three-year deal with SuperSport, worth just under \$3m per season from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

The Bundesliga has a decent following in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and South Africa, and is growing in popularity in countries including Zambia, Tanzania and Uganda. DFL Sports Enterprises has been active in trying to build up interest and awareness in Africa through exchange programmes between German and African clubs, and media events where African broadcasters are brought to Germany to observe Bundesliga matches and their television production.

Local media sources say that Germany's victory in the Fifa World Cup in Brazil also had a big impact in raising awareness of German football on the continent.

The deal follows closely on the heels of one in the Middle East and North Africa with Qatari broadcaster beIN Sports (*TV Sports Markets* 18:16). That deal, also for five seasons from 2015-16, is thought to be worth between \$48m and \$50m per season – higher than the figure local media sources were reporting one month ago. A figure in that range would put the increase for the league at over 200 per cent.

It is thought that as part of the same

negotiations, beIN Sports is also close to agreeing a deal for the rights in France, for two seasons, from 2015-16 to 2016-17.

The rights in France are currently held by the MP & Silva agency in a three-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, thought to be worth just under €3m per season. The agency sold the rights on to both the major French pay-television platforms, beIN Sports and Canal Plus.

The league has also renewed a deal with pay-television operator Charlton for the rights in Israel. The new deal is thought to be a 20-per-cent increase on the fee of about €400,000 per season which Charlton pays in its current deal. Competition for the rights is thought to have been limited in what has become a flat market.

European deadline

October 1 was the deadline for first-round bids for the rights in the remaining 17 European markets where the Bundesliga has not yet sold the rights for the next cycle.

Bidders for multiple territories are thought to include the IMG Events & Media and MP & Silva agencies, and international channel operators including Fox International Channels, beIN Sports and Discovery/Eurosport. Bids have also been made by broadcasters in individual markets.

The total value of the rights in these territories in the current cycle is just over €6m per season. The league is expected to double or even treble this in the next cycle. The most valuable of the markets on offer are Spain, Turkey, Russia and Greece.

Interest is expected to be stronger than usual in Spain, in part at least, because of the arrival at Bayern Munich of Spanish coach Pep Guardiola and Spanish midfielder Xabi Alonso. The rights are currently held by pay-television operator Canal Plus, which is being taken over by telco Telefónica.

In the current cycle, the Sportsman Media Group agency acquired the rights for Greece, Turkey, Malta and Cyprus. In Turkey, the agency sold the rights on to state broadcaster TRT and in Greece to pay-television operator OTE.

In Russia, the rights are held jointly by sports broadcaster Eurosport and pay-television platform NTV Plus. ■

GOLF

European Tour given helping hand by Ryder Cup

By Robin Jellis

Global media interest in last weekend's Ryder Cup finale confirmed the extent to which the competition has become one of sport's blue-ribbon events. Few events have the power to hold the US and Europe in thrall over three days.

But some golf experts say the Ryder Cup has become so strong it is masking challenges facing the European Tour and that the event is now propping up the Tour as a media product.

Challenges for the Tour include top European players increasingly choosing to play more events on the US PGA Tour than in Europe.

Media rights for the European Tour and Ryder Cups are sold bundled together in Europe. One industry insider claimed this week that the Ryder Cup accounts for the overwhelming bulk of the rights fee paid for the two properties by pay-television broadcaster BSkyB in the UK, golf's second-biggest media rights market after the US.

However, the analysis is rejected by European Tour Productions, which produces and distributes rights for the European Tour and Europe-based Ryder Cups. ETP is a joint venture between the Tour and the IMG Media & Events agency.

"I don't think it's fair to say that the Ryder Cup props up the value of the European Tour," Rupert Hampel, the managing director of ETP, told *TV Sports Markets* this week.

He added: "The European Tour is a 45- or 46-event season and provides quality tournaments for broadcasters week-in, week-out. It's a benefit to the European Tour to have an event like the Ryder Cup, but the Tour has a real value in its own right."

In markets where golf is less popular, European Tour rights are more valuable than Ryder Cup rights as the Tour provides more content. A senior executive

How much Ryder Cup media rights are worth, and how they are sold

Golf media rights experts believe that a Ryder Cup held in Europe is worth about €38m (\$49m) in global media-rights revenues. A Ryder Cup held in the US is worth close to \$60m, of which half is generated in the US.

It is difficult to value Ryder Cup rights because they are sold bundled with other golf properties.

Ryder Cups take place every two years, with hosting duties alternating between Europe and the US. The rights are sold by two bodies – the PGA of America and European Tour Productions.

Ryder Cups hosted in Europe are sold by ETP globally, excluding North America where they are sold by the PGA of America.

Ryder Cups hosted in the US are sold by the PGA of America globally, excluding Europe where they are sold by ETP. The PGA of America has a deal with the IMG Events & Media agency to sell rights for US-based Ryder Cups in territories outside the US and Europe.

ETP sells live rights to the European Tour and the Ryder Cup in a package. The PGA of America sold live Ryder Cup rights together with the senior PGA Championship in its most recent domestic deal with US media group NBCUniversal.

The rights to a Ryder Cup held in the US are more valuable than one in Europe because of the strong domestic market,

and because it is broadcast in a good time zone for both sets of audiences. The climax on the third and final day is in European prime time.

NBC paid a premium to secure the US rights in the long term in a 16-year deal last October with the PGA of America. The deal runs from 2015 to 2030, and is estimated to be worth \$30m per year.

UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB's deal is understood to be by far the most valuable media rights agreement for the European Tour. Sky's six-year deal with ETP, agreed in April 2012 and covering the European Tour and Ryder Cup from 2013 to 2018, is worth about £36m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 16:7). This is about the same value as its previous deal, from 2009 to 2012.

UK public-service broadcaster the BBC holds Ryder Cup highlights rights over the same six-year period in a deal worth an average of about £1m per Ryder Cup. Its rights fee is slightly higher when the event is held in Europe, as the highlights are in a better time slot.

It costs about £2m to produce a Ryder Cup, which uses about 350 production staff. A regular European Tour event, which requires about 100 staff, costs about £500,000. ETP is responsible for broadcast production at European Tour events and Ryder Cups held in Europe. NBC produces the world feed for a US Ryder Cup.

at a pay-television broadcaster in one of golf's smaller European markets said that the split in value was about 70:30, with the European Tour accounting for the larger proportion.

Consensus view

The consensus among industry insiders is that being bundled with the Ryder Cup is a major commercial boost for the European Tour.

"The European Tour benefits both financially and promotionally from the Ryder Cup in a very major way," golf sponsorship expert Scott Seymour, SVP managing director of golf at the Octagon agency, said. "The Ryder Cup has allowed the Tour to grow because of its success."

Ryder Cup media rights undoubtedly give ETP leverage to guarantee coverage of the less glamorous European Tour events. But ETP is not the only golf media rights-holder to use stronger content to leverage sales of weaker content.

For example, the US Golf Association bundles rights for the US Open major tournament with its smaller properties like the US women's Open and the US senior Open championships. Last August, the USGA agreed a 12-year deal with US pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports, from 2015 to 2026, thought to be worth about \$93m (£73m) per year.

European Tour and Ryder Cup rights will continue to be sold together for the "foreseeable future," Hampel said. The

properties were enjoying “substantial growth” in media rights value, he said, with strong performances by top European players one of the main factors. Four of the top six golfers in the world are European.

Talent drain

In recent years, many top European players have begun playing the majority of their season in the US on the PGA Tour, and only play in the minimum of 12 tournaments required by the European Tour.

The reasons behind this are three-fold, according to John Hopkins, a senior golf writer for UK newspaper *The Times*: “The competition is better, they can play all year round using better facilities and they can get more money.”

To secure the participation of top players, European Tour tournaments and their sponsors are thought to have increased appearance fees paid to players for playing at tournaments. Appearance fees are controversial as they are banned on the PGA Tour.

Eastern riches

The European Tour has added an increasing number of tournaments in Asia and the Middle East in recent

years to tap into what are growth markets for golf.

The most lucrative events on the Tour in terms of prize money, the four season-ending Final Series tournaments, this year feature two in China and one each in Turkey and Dubai. Prize money across the four amounts to \$30.5m.

There is strong interest in sponsoring tournaments among companies that are from, or are targeting, these markets, such as with the Maybank Malaysian Open, the Volvo China Open, and the Omega Dubai Desert Classic.

Seymour said that sponsors are keen to associate their brands with golf because of the wealthy demographic the sport attracts.

The downside for European Tour media rights is the poor time zones for television audiences in Europe. But ETP expects growth in Asian rights.

“Future growth [in media rights fees] is likely to come from Asia, although there is plenty of room for growth in other regions,” Hampel said.

He added: “We have had successful negotiations globally, and the next big step is Asia. Their economies are growing, there is growing interest in the game, broadcasters are looking to sell subscriptions and new TV stations are

popping up all the time.”

Outside the US and the UK, Japan is the third biggest market for golf. South Korea is considered a major growth market for the sport.

Pay-TV properties

The European Tour is almost exclusively a pay-television property, and the Ryder Cup has become increasingly so too. Golf is widely recognised as being better-suited to pay-television as free-to-air broadcasters often struggle to schedule large blocks of live coverage.

“We are always interested in free-to-air coverage. Sadly though, in many countries around the world, there isn’t a tremendous amount of interest in golf from free-to-air broadcasters,” Hampel said.

He said that ETP has “free-to-air interest” in the US, the UK, Japan and South Korea. In the UK, golf coverage has moved from being dominated by public-service broadcaster the BBC to being dominated by pay-television operator Sky over the last 20 years, mainly due to the bigger rights fees Sky has been able to offer. ■

[www.ETP.com](#) For the full interviews with Rupert Hampel and Scott Seymour visit our website.

BASKETBALL

Liga ACB coaxes increase from cash-strapped TVE

By Robin Jellis

The top basketball league in Spain, Liga ACB, earned a domestic rights fee increase of around 20 per cent in its renewal with public-service broadcaster TVE.

The two-season deal, from 2014-15 to 2015-16, is worth about €600,000 (\$768,000) per season. This is up from the €500,000 per season TVE paid in the previous two-season deal, from 2012-13 to 2013-14.

The broadcaster is also giving advertising airtime to league sponsors worth between €2.5m and €3m per season, roughly the

same as it did in the previous deal.

TVE’s budget for the rights increased, in part at least, because its rights for football’s Uefa Champions League end after 2014-15 (see separate story, page 1).

As well as Liga ACB, the deal includes the Supercopa and Copa del Rey knockout competitions.

The deal was agreed directly between the league and TVE, who are long-term partners. TVE has covered the league since the 2003-04 season.

There was also interest in the rights from Mediaset’s Quatro and Atresmedia’s La Sexta commercial channels. One source close to the league told *TV Sports Markets* that the TVE offer was the “best option in terms of coverage, economic terms, production, and the commercial space it offers.”

TVE will show between 45 and 50 live games per season. Flagship channel La 1

will show 20-25 games per season, covering all games of the Supercopa, the Copa del Rey and the end-of-season play-offs, as well as the nine best regular-season matches.

Sports channel Teledporte will show 25 games per season until this December when the channel shuts, after which the games will be shown on La 2.

The league also has a deal with Forta, the consortium of regional public-service broadcasters, for 2012-13 to 2014-15. The deal was initially worth €1.5m per season, but has been reduced to €1.2m per season because regional broadcasters Telemadrid, Canal Sur and Canal Nou pulled out due to financial difficulties.

The deal is currently guaranteed by TV3, Aragón TV, TV Canaria, ETB, TVG and 7RM. Catalan public-service broadcaster TV3 is understood to contribute the highest amount. ■

AGENCIES

Adviser deals will work for 'weak' football leagues

By Frank Dunne

The adviser model for football leagues operated by the Infront Sports & Media and MP & Silva agencies could be rolled out in more European markets than the three where it already exists, rights experts say. But it is unlikely to be adopted by leagues which are confident about their growth prospects.

The Polish league, the Ekstraklasa, last month became the third league, after Italy's Serie A and the Belgian Pro League, to agree a six-year deal with an adviser based on a minimum guarantee (*TV Sports Markets* 18:17).

The model involves the adviser committing a minimum guarantee which is sometimes referred to as either a top-up, soft or negative guarantee. The 'guarantee' is really a projection of income against which the agency underwrites any shortfall and only earns on the income earned above the projection. It was pioneered by Infront Sports & Media in its deal with Serie A. MP & Silva copied the model in Belgium and Poland.

The top-up adviser model has one massive benefit for a league, provided the minimum guarantee is big enough: it offers medium-term security without any antitrust issues. Six-year deals with broadcasters for domestic football league content would not be permitted by regulators.

Media rights income is the biggest revenue stream for most European football clubs. For some, it accounts for over 60 per cent of turnover. Having certainty about that for six years, rather than three, is advantageous for clubs in being able to plan player acquisitions and other medium-term investments.

"It enables clubs to be far more strategic in their financial planning," football finance expert Tom Markham, formerly of PricewaterhouseCoopers, told *TV Sports Markets*. "Usually clubs are firefighting financially and can only operate on a season-by-season basis. The

This year's model: the top-up adviser

The top-up adviser deals signed by MP & Silva this year in Belgium and Poland reflect the continuing evolution of rights-trading models.

The oldest model, an agency buy-out, such as that used for Premier League international rights sales, is rarely used on big-value deals because of the high risks involved for the agencies and the high costs of servicing the bank loans needed to underwrite such deals.

A more common model tends to include two or more of the following: a minimum guarantee, commission on sales, and a revenue share above certain targets. The risk and reward for agencies are both lower than with buy-out deals. The rights-holder usually remains the final signatory of contracts and the legal owner of the rights.

This model does not always come with a minimum guarantee. An alternative is where there is a projection of income and the agency is paid a commission plus

performance bonuses. In such deals, there is very little risk for agencies and very little certainty for rights-holders.

In top-up adviser deals, risk is also limited for the agency. It does not need to provide a bank guarantee for the full amount guaranteed. However, rights-holders usually seek some form of security on the potential shortfall, either in the form of a parent company guarantee or 'letter of comfort.' In such deals, the rights-holder remains owner of the rights and the signatory of deals.

Traditional adviser or consultancy deals, like that which media rights consultant David Kogan has with the Premier League, are fee- or commission-based, sometimes with an upside share or other performance bonus. The agency in these cases is not a seller, but often has an active role in talks.

Other models include deals where the agency is in a joint venture or is part-owner of an event, or situations where the agency is the event organiser and rights-holder.

assurance of guaranteed income in the medium term will allow clubs to operate more efficiently."

Complete control

Despite the benefits of the top-up adviser deals, media rights experts say they will not work for all leagues. Very few believe, for example, that the model would ever be adopted by the top English, French, or German leagues, or any league which expected to enjoy substantial growth in its domestic media rights values.

The major downside for a league is that if rights sales go well, an intermediary will get a big chunk of the upside. Infront earns over €40m (\$51m) per season from its Serie A deal, more than all but the top seven clubs.

Leagues are also usually handing over a large degree of control over their property. Control over brand and strategy have become increasingly important to rights-holders. As one well-placed league source said: "Many league bosses have strong egos and would never agree to this kind of adviser deal. They see it as being held hostage."

Where it will work

Experts say there are specific circumstances in which an adviser deal is more likely to work. These are where:

1. The league feels insecure about its ability to secure a good deal from the domestic market, either because the market is flat or because it lacks in-house expertise. As such, it is prepared to hand over a large proportion of the upside in media-rights deals to a third party.
2. Those in charge of the league are prepared to give up a large degree of their commercial control.
3. The value of the league is relatively low, so the agency's risk is modest. Serie A is the obvious exception, but there are political reasons why it works there.
4. The adviser can leverage the content in a way that the league cannot, either by having a big portfolio of rights that broadcasters want or a portfolio of channels that platforms need.
5. The league executive is not as strong as its most influential clubs, as in Italy.
6. There is a relatively loose regulatory framework which would allow the adviser a lot of leeway in how it sells the rights. ■

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 SPORTELMonaco 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

John Gleasure
Chief Commercial Officer
Perform

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 September 18 to October 1**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Champions League, Indonesian Super League, Bundesliga and more**

- **Football:** Spanish pay-television broadcaster Gol T, commercial broadcaster Atresmedia and Catalan regional public-service broadcaster TV3 acquired rights for the Uefa Champions League from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 1). The deal was brokered by the Team Marketing agency on behalf of Uefa.
- **Football:** Telecommunications company Telecom Italia will show Uefa Champions League and Euro 2016 qualifying games during the 2014-15 season on its TIMvision video-on-demand service after agreeing a sublicensing deal with pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia.
- **Football:** Commercial and pay-television broadcaster Media Group Ukraine acquired exclusive rights in Ukraine for the Uefa Champions League and Europa League for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The deal was brokered by the Team Marketing agency on behalf of Uefa. The rights will be exploited on free-to-air channel Ukraine, as well as pay-television sports channels Football 1 and Football 2 (page 1).
- **Football:** The Infront Sports & Media agency struck a deal with media company BV Sports to distribute international rights for the Indonesian Super League, covering the five years from 2014 to 2018 (page 4).
- **Football:** Thai video-streaming platform PPTV acquired rights for live coverage of the German Bundesliga in a sublicensing deal with pay-television operator GMM Z. PPTV HD will show 34 games during the 2014-15 season live on a paid-for basis, and will share revenue with GMM Z.
- **Football:** Digital media services company RR Media agreed a three-year rights deal, from 2014-15 to 2016-17, for English Premier League club Arsenal's international programming block. The agreement with the MP & Silva agency includes two magazine shows plus delayed coverage of matches.

SINCE LAST TIME

- The US Federal Communications Commission voted to eliminate the 'blackout' rule that blocks certain sports events from being shown live on television in their local market if they fail to meet a specified level of ticket sales.
- UK pay-television operator Virgin Media asked the country's media regulator Ofcom to investigate how football's English Premier League sells its media rights. Virgin Media said that a review is required ahead of the "imminent" launch of domestic rights sales for the next three-year cycle, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Ofcom is expected to make a decision on Virgin's request in late October or early November. The league said that its rights "have always been sold in a transparent and open process."

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- Shareholders of DirecTV approved a takeover of the international satellite-television operator by US telecommunications company AT&T. The \$45bn (€35bn) deal is likely to be completed in the first half of 2015, following regulatory approval.
- US cable-television operator consortium the National Cable Television Cooperative agreed a distribution deal with pay-television sports broadcaster Universal Sports Network. The cooperative's 900 members will carry Universal Sports Network's Olympics, endurance and action sports programming. The length of the multi-year deal was not disclosed. The agreement includes Universal Sports Network's linear channel, as well as video-on-demand content and authenticated TV Everywhere rights.
- International telecommunications company Digicel acquired St. Lucia-based International Media Content, the parent company of Caribbean pay-television sports broadcaster SportsMax. Digicel acquired a controlling shareholding in IMC, which also operates North American broadcaster CEEN-TV, for an undisclosed sum. SportsMax is available in 23

countries across the Caribbean, and shows regional and international football, cricket and athletics.

- Benfica reported improved financial results thanks to the Portuguese Primeira Liga football club's pay-television channel, Benfica TV. Benfica TV generated gross revenues of €28.1m (\$36m), helping the club earn a profit of €14.2m in the 12 months to June 30. Benfica said its new broadcast strategy had contributed to the improved results. The club began showing live coverage of its matches on its own channel in 2013-14. Historically, the club exploited its media rights by selling them to Portugal's Olivedesportos agency.
- Sports channel Best4Sport.TV launched in Latvia through a carriage deal with the Lattelecom telco. The channel's sports properties include about 100 games per season from the Spanish ACB basketball league, which features a number of Latvian players.

TV RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- Lega Serie A, which runs Italian football's top division, and its strategic media rights adviser the Infront Sports & Media agency launched a tender for the international rights to Serie A, covering territories outside Italy. The rights cover three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. They include live coverage of Serie A and weekend games of the second-tier Serie B when Serie A matches are not taking place, plus highlights of both divisions and pre- and post-match content. Bids must be submitted by October 15.
- The European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of European free-to-air broadcasters, launched a tender for the rights in several European territories to the Vuelta a España cycle race for the five years from 2016 to 2020. The tender is open to broadcasters only – agencies or intermediaries are not allowed to bid.
- UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport opened talks with commercial broadcaster ITV over sharing live rights for the Uefa Champions League and Europa League club football competitions,

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from September 18 to October 1**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****American football, athletics, basketball, boxing, motorsport and more**

- **American Football:** UK-pay-television broadcaster BSkyB extended and expanded a rights deal for the NFL for five years, from 2015 until 2019. Sky will broadcast more than 80 games per season, including five games per week during the regular season. Coverage will include Thursday and Saturday night games, a Sunday double-header and the Monday Night Football programme, plus each play-off fixture, the Super Bowl, Pro Bowl and other events. Sky will also broadcast live coverage of all games in the NFL International Series in England, and will show the NFL RedZone programme every Sunday.
- **American Football:** Media company Multi Screen Media acquired rights in the Indian subcontinent for the NFL in a four-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18. MSM will exploit the rights via sports and entertainment pay-television channel Sony Six. The deal includes live coverage of regular-season and play-off games plus the Super Bowl (page 2).
- **Athletics:** UK commercial broadcaster Channel 4 acquired rights for the Yorkshire Marathon. A 50-minute highlights programme will be shown on October 19, one week after the event.
- **Basketball:** Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE renewed its rights for the domestic Liga ACB and Supercopa and Copa del Rey knockout tournaments for two seasons, from 2014-15 to 2015-16 (page 7).
- **Basketball:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 acquired free-to-air rights for the German Bundesliga in a sublicensing deal with telecommunications company Deutsche Telekom. The deal covers two seasons, from 2014-15 to 2015-16, and includes 34 regular-season and 14 play-off games per season.
- **Basketball:** Modern Times Group-owned pay-television broadcaster Viasat extended a rights deal in Russia, the CIS countries and Georgia for the NBA. The length of the multi-year deal, which includes the 2014-15 season, was not disclosed. Coverage will continue to be shown on the Viasat Sport and Viasat Sport HD channels.
- **Basketball:** Telecommunications company Levira struck a rights deal for coverage of the Basketball Premier League, the sport's top club competition in Estonia. The deal will run for three years, from 2015 until 2017. The rights will be exploited on free-to-air channel TV6. Levira struck the deal with the Estonian Basketball Association.
- **Boxing:** Golden Boy Promotions struck a rights deal with US pay-television broadcaster HBO for live coverage of several fights featuring light-middleweight star Canelo Alvarez. The length of the agreement was not disclosed, but the deal will begin with the December 6 bout against Joshua Clottey.
- **Cricket:** Pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports, which operates in the Indian subcontinent, acquired rights for Pakistan's 2014 series against Australia and New Zealand. The deal with the Pakistan Cricket Board is worth \$5.4m (€4.2m). Late bids from the Sporty Solutionz agency and the Nimbus Communications telecommunications company forced up Ten's offer from \$2.9m. Pakistan will play Australia in a Twenty20 international, three One-Day Internationals and two Test matches from October 5 to November 3. It will play New Zealand in three Tests, two T20s and five ODIs between November 11 and December 19. Both series will take place in the UAE.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** Irish commercial broadcaster TV3 acquired rights for the Ultimate Fighting Championship in a two-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2015-16. TV3 acquired free-to-air rights for delayed coverage of all pay-per-view events in North America and Europe. The rights will be exploited on the 3e channel.
- **Motorcycling:** Pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired rights in Germany for the MotoGP world championship. The deal with Dorna Sports, the championship's promoter, will run for four years, from 2015 to 2018. It covers television and digital coverage of all rounds of MotoGP plus the Moto2 and Moto3 classes, including Friday free practices, Saturday qualifiers and Sunday races. Eurosport will provide live coverage via its Eurosport and Eurosport 2 channels, as well as the Eurosport Player online television service.
- **Motorcycling:** Eurosport acquired television and digital rights in the Netherlands for MotoGP for four years, from 2015 to 2018, in a deal with Dorna Sports. The deal includes practice, qualifying and race coverage of all three MotoGP classes. The rights are exclusive with the exception of the Dutch TT Assen race, which will be non-exclusive.
- **Motorcycling:** Eurosport acquired pay-television and digital rights in Belgium for MotoGP for four years, from 2015 to 2018, in a deal with Dorna Sports. The deal includes practice, qualifying and race coverage of all three MotoGP classes. The agreement includes exclusive Flemish-language rights in Belgium for the three years from 2016 to 2018 and non-exclusive digital rights for all races via Eurosport Player.
- **Motorsport:** AMC Networks International, part of US entertainment company AMC Networks, acquired exclusive rights for the Formula One world championship in Czech Republic and Slovakia for three years, from 2015 to 2017. The Sport1 and Sport2 channels will show live coverage of all races and qualifying sessions, plus coverage of the GP2 and GP3 support classes.
- **Motorsport:** World Touring Car Championship promoter Eurosport Events secured rights deals in China for the 2014 races in Beijing and Shanghai. Regional broadcasters Channel Max in Shanghai and CSPN Network in Beijing – covering the Shandong TV, Hubei TV, Xinjiang TV and Jiangxi TV channels – acquired rights for live coverage. Nationwide state-owned sports broadcaster CCTV 5 acquired highlights rights.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from September 18 to October 1**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****Rugby union, sailing, tennis, US college sport, wrestling and more**

- **Multi-sport:** Sports betting services company Sportradar agreed a rights deal with the Infront Sports & Media agency for 4,000 sporting events per year, including football, basketball, handball and ice hockey. The coverage will be streamed on Sportradar's Betradar Live Channel, which is distributed to betting operators around the world (page 4).
- **Rugby Union:** BSkyB extended a rights deal with Sanzar, the sport's umbrella body in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, according to UK newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*. The deal will run for six years, from 2015-16 to 2020-21, and cover England's tours to Australia in 2016 and South Africa in 2018, plus a possible tour to New Zealand in 2020. The deal includes rights to any tours to the countries by the Scotland, Wales, Ireland and France national teams, along with rights to Sanzar's Rugby Championship and other home matches of the Australia, New Zealand and South Africa national teams.
- **Rugby Union:** The Pitch International agency reached a three-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2016-17, with Scottish Rugby for the national governing body's global media rights. Pitch will be the exclusive distributor of Scotland's home autumn Test matches.
- **Rugby Union:** Free-to-air broadcaster Nuvolari acquired rights in Italy for the Pro12 club tournament in 2014-15. The deal includes live coverage of all matches, including the play-offs and final.
- **Sailing:** NBC Sports Network, the cable-television sports channel owned by US media company NBCUniversal, and satellite broadcaster Outside Television, agreed rights deals in the US for the 2014-15 Volvo Ocean Race. NBCSN will show 39 half-hour programmes in late afternoon weekend slots, starting in late October. NBCUniversal's Universal Sports Network pay-television channel will also show coverage. Outside Television will broadcast television coverage on Mondays, and provide live streaming and other coverage online.
- **Tennis:** Fox Sports Asia, part of Fox International Channels, extended a rights deal for the Wimbledon championships. The six-year agreement with the All England Lawn Tennis Club will run from 2015 to 2020. It covers Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, Hong Kong, Guam, Indonesia, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, North Korea, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and Vietnam. Fox Sports Asia will show live and highlights coverage, plus on-demand programmes online and on mobile. Viewers in Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei and Thailand will be able to access commentary in local languages as well as English.
- **Tennis:** The Ufa Sports agency agreed rights deals with pay-television broadcasters for the 2014 International Premier Tennis League in the Balkans, India and the Middle East. SportKlub acquired rights for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia. Star India acquired the rights in India. Abu Dhabi Media Company acquired the rights in the Middle East.
- **Tennis:** Eurosport acquired rights in the Nordic region for the 2014 ATP Stockholm Open men's tournament in a deal with the IEC in Sports agency. Eurosport will provide live coverage in the host country of Sweden, as well as Norway, Finland and Iceland.
- **US College Sport:** The Learfield Sports agency agreed a five-year extension, from 2014-15 to 2018-19, to its media rights deal with US Army Athletics, which oversees US Army college sports teams.
- **Wrestling:** Promoter WWE agreed a rights deal with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Latin America for five years, from 2014-15 to 2018-19. The weekly Monday Night Raw, SmackDown, Main Event, NXT and WWE Vintage Collection programmes will be shown on Fox Sports, Fox Sports 2 and regional digital platform Fox Play. WWE's pay-per-view events will be available via Fox Play in Brazil and Fox Premium in the rest of Latin America.

according to UK newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*. BT Sport last year acquired exclusive rights for the competitions for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, dislodging Sky and ITV as rights-holders. BT Sport had said a selection of matches would be shown on free-to-air television, including the finals of both tournaments and one match per season of each participating British club.

- Dutch pay-television broadcasters Fox Sports and Sport1 are competing for Formula One rights from 2016 onwards, according to Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf*. A deal is expected to be concluded within weeks.
- Bill Pulver, the chief executive of the Australian Rugby Union, the governing body of rugby union in the country, said that a recent drop-off in viewing figures for the national team will not have "any negative impact at all" in negotiating the next cycle of rights beginning in 2016. An Australia v New Zealand match on August 16 drew 1m viewers on commercial channel Ten. A match between the two teams on September 13 drew only 250,000.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- News Corp's BallBall digital football service increased its reach in Vietnam via a wholesaling deal with one of the country's largest websites, 24h.com.vn. The site will embed a BallBall media player showing free clips from the English, Italian, German and French football leagues. The deal is thought to be based on a share of advertising revenues.
- Australia's seven leading sports bodies joined pay-television broadcasters in urging the country's Federal Communications Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, to relax the country's anti-siphoning law, which requires that certain events be broadcast on free-to-air television. The AFL Aussie rules league, rugby league's NRL, rugby union's ARU, football's FFA, Tennis Australia and Netball Australia signed a letter to Turnbull, along with Foxtel chief executive Richard Freudenstein, Fox Sports chief Patrick Delaney and Astra chairman Tony Shepherd.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from September 18 to October 1

- German public-service broadcaster ARD will consider showing boxing bouts beyond the end of this year on a case-by-case basis, and might bring back live coverage of the Tour de France cycle race, according to spokeswoman Anna Engelke. ARD had earlier said it would stop boxing broadcasts. Engelke said ARD was exploring the possibility of a “partial re-entry into live coverage of the 2015 Tour de France”, with a decision likely by the end of this year.
- UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport launched a ‘red button’ interactive service, BT Sport Extra, to enable subscribers to access additional content. The service will feature live coverage of events including French Ligue 1 and German Bundesliga club football.
- YouTube and Nascar Digital Media, the media arm of North American stock car series Nascar, agreed a deal to show full replays of races for free on the video-sharing website until the end of the 2014 post-season campaign.
- The International Rugby Board, rugby union’s world governing body, streamed live coverage of the Rugby World Cup 2015 qualifier between Russia and Uruguay for free on its official website.
- The World Series of Fighting unveiled a new financial model for its pay-per-view events involving a revenue share with its fighters. From the second half of 2015, 50 per cent of revenue earned from live pay-per-view events will be distributed to the fighters featured on the broadcast.
- The Infront Sports & Media agency claimed record broadcast reach for cycling’s 2014 UCI Road World Championships. The event was shown in 158 territories, including new territories in Asia and Europe.
- Horse racing pay-television channel Racing UK is planning further football-related collaborations with betting company SkyBet after a trial broadcast of the Ayr Gold Cup race at a second-tier English Championship match between Brighton & Hove Albion and Blackpool on September 20. SkyBet, which is owned by UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB, is the title sponsor of the Championship and the race. The race was broadcast via big screens and concourse televisions at Brighton’s stadium.
 Meanwhile, Racing UK began offering digital coverage, including live-streaming, on-demand and catch-up, to viewers outside the UK and Ireland, under a partnership with production company Simplestream.
- Tata Communications became the first company to deliver a live 4K, ultra high definition feed from a Formula One motor-racing event on September 19. The telco produced the coverage at the Singapore Grand Prix practice session, with the footage delivered over the company’s Global Video Connect Network to broadcast executives at Formula One Management’s headquarters in the UK.
- Sky New Zealand is considering offering season tickets to allow viewers to watch individual sports or competitions online without purchasing a full subscription with the pay-television broadcaster.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Gianni Infantino, the general secretary of football’s European governing body Uefa, was appointed to the board of directors at the Team Marketing agency. Infantino succeeds David Taylor, who died in June. Bernhard Burgener will continue to be chairman of the board at Team Marketing, with Michael van Praag serving as a board member and Martin Wagner working as a delegate of the board. Wagner, Uefa marketing director Guy-Laurent Epstein, Uefa chief counsel Simon Drake and Team chief executive Jamie Graham will form the board’s management committee.
- Fred Kogel joined the executive committee of German media company Constantin Medien. The company’s subsidiaries Sport1, the German sports broadcaster, and the Constantin Sport Marketing agency underwent management restructures. Olaf Schröder became chairman of the management of Sport1. Robin Seckler will continue to be responsible for the broadcaster’s digital activities. Patrick Fischer became chairman of Constantin Sport Marketing’s management, while Matthias Kirschenhofer will continue to be responsible for marketing outside advertising and sponsoring activities. Leif Arne Anders will continue as the commercial managing director of both subsidiaries.
- Francois Pellissier was named as the new head of sports-rights acquisitions at French commercial broadcaster TF1.
- Jeff Slack left the IMG agency to become a partner and executive vice-president of second-screen company TOK.tv. Slack, formerly senior vice-president of global football at IMG, will drive TOK.tv’s bid to further increase its presence in the football market.

EDITORIAL

Editor	Frank Dunne
Contributing Editor	Kevin McCullagh
Senior Reporter	Richard Welbirg
Reporter	Robin Jellis
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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