

## AGENCIES

### MP & Silva eyes diversification 'on a large scale' and plays down split

By Frank Dunne

The MP & Silva agency this week said it was considering expanding "in a very big way" into new business areas, including sponsorship and production, and played down rumours of a split among its founding partners.

Talking exclusively to *TV Sports Markets* 10 years after its launch, the agency's joint founders Riccardo Silva and Andrea Radrizzani said the agency was now at a crossroads. One option was to continue to focus purely on the media-rights business. The other was diversification, to become a full-service agency like its main rivals IMG Worldwide, Infront Sports & Media and Lagardère Unlimited.

From launch in 2004, MP & Silva has grown to be the global number one in sports media-rights distribution, with income of about \$700m (€547m) expected in 2014. However, in overall turnover it still lags behind the merged

WME/IMG and Infront, which offer a much wider range of services.

"There is still growth ahead [in media-rights trading]," Silva said. "Our turnover is \$700m but the total value of the global media-rights market is \$30bn. The second route we are evaluating is to push more into different businesses. We do some production and some sponsorship but we are not really in deep. There are opportunities we could explore to grow more in other businesses. If we do it, we will do it seriously, on a large scale."

He defended the agency's original decision to focus purely on distributing media rights. "I think that what we did in the past five or 10 years was right. The growth of media rights in this time has been far greater than the growth of other sports industry sectors, like sponsorship, which has suffered, especially in Europe,

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## RUGBY UNION 1

### Sky holds on to RFU and Sanzar

By Robin Jellis

UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB has moved to solidify its position as a broadcaster of top-class rugby union through two big deals.

*TV Sports Markets* understands that Sky has beaten strong interest from main rival BT Sport to renew Sanzar rights in a new five-year deal, and has more than doubled its rights fee to renew and expand its rights to England national

team autumn internationals in a deal with the Rugby Football Union.

It is thought the Sanzar deal, from 2016 to 2020, is worth about £100m (€127m/\$161m), or £20m per season. This would be an increase of about 640 per cent on Sky's existing five-year deal, from 2011 to 2015, thought to be worth about £2.7m per season.

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## FOOTBALL

## Premier League's 'moral obligation' to help grassroots

By Richard Welbirg

The Premier League has a "moral obligation" to provide greater funding for grassroots football from the proceeds of its domestic media-rights sales, the UK's Labour party said this week. It will come under pressure to do so if a Labour government is returned to power in the general election expected in spring 2015.

Clive Efford, shadow minister for sport, told *TV Sports Markets* this week that the Premier League had allowed its 1999 commitment to invest five per cent of its media-rights income into grassroots football to "wither on the vine."

Any renewal of the agreement would have to be voluntary, Efford said, but added: "Let me put it this way: I am determined that they will live up to that agreement."

He said that with the UK facing "a huge crisis of inactivity" it was not right that "most of the increase in TV money goes on agents' fees and mobile-phone number salaries for the players. It's sheer greed."

The Premier League earns £1.091bn (€1.38bn/\$1.76bn) per season from the sale of its domestic rights from 2013-14 to 2015-16 (*TV Sports Markets* 16:11). It is almost certain to earn even more in the next cycle, with the rights expected on the market early next year.

Five per cent of current domestic rights income would mean £55m per season going into grassroots football. Labour believes that the league is currently paying about £20m per season, through various funds.

The Premier League contends that it is spending at least £55m. But the two parties disagree over what constitutes 'grassroots.'

As Efford put it, "there are areas of expenditure at the Premier League that they define as being investment at grassroots level which I don't define as grassroots level. For instance, solidarity money and money that stays within

the professional game is not necessarily what I would consider to be genuine grassroots investment."

He also said the Elite Player Performance Plan, the Premier League's youth development programme, cannot be considered as grassroots – unless its facilities are made widely available.

Efford wants to see the Premier League focus its spending on new facilities, which would benefit other sports in addition to football.

Some within the Labour party are understood to be pushing for seven per cent of media-rights income to be directed to the grassroots. Efford said it was simpler to enforce the existing agreement than negotiate a new one.

**Not a levy**

The original Premier League commitment in 1999 came in response to demands from the Football Taskforce set up in 1997 by the Labour government led by Tony Blair.

The Premier League argues that the 1999 agreement has expired but Efford rejects this. "I've spoken to people who were involved, and no one has said to me that that was a time-limited agreement, in the sense that it expired each time [the rights deal] was renegotiated – there's another package of money, therefore there's another fund. I interpreted it to be something that renews itself."

*More Sport for All*, the consultation document on Labour's sport policy, describes the five-per-cent target as "a levy on TV rights." Efford accepted, however, that it is not a levy. It is a voluntary commitment from the clubs. A Labour government would not seek to impose such a levy on the clubs.

**Not good enough**

Labour believes that there is a groundswell of support for a renewal of the five-per-cent agreement among fans and those involved in football.

"If you talk to people at grassroots level in sport, they all point to the fact that the Premier League is not pulling its weight – particularly people in football," Efford said.

He said that in a recent consultation meeting on Labour's football policy in the North West of England, one of the

points that came up "very forcefully" from people from Liverpool was that the Premier League was not pulling its weight and putting enough money into grassroots facilities. "Until 2013, there was only one club with an all-weather pitch in Liverpool that's not owned by the Premier League clubs and that's just not good enough for a city the size of Liverpool."

The league had not replied to a request for a comment by the time *TV Sports Markets* went to press.

[www.▶](#) For the full interview with Clive Efford visit our website. ■

## AGENCIES

## United MP &amp; Silva claims top spot and looks beyond media

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and production. Our strategic choice was right." Continued growth, however, may require a broader approach, he said.

**Radrizzani staying put**

There has been increasing industry speculation that the agency is facing a crisis due to profound differences between the two founders about how to take the company forward. This has led to widespread rumours that Radrizzani is set to leave the company and sell his 40-per-cent stake. He denies this.

"For many years I was personally involved in most of the negotiations and in the development of the business internationally. I had the desire to take a bit of a break in terms of the operational side of the business," Radrizzani said.

"I am only involved at strategic level, working closely with Riccardo and the board of the company to help define, together with the management, the objectives and the strategy. But I still work on some projects that are core for the company."

He said the agency's owners – Silva is the other majority shareholder; the third founder, Carlo Pozzali, has a minority stake – had been approached by many interested parties, including

private equity funds, to sell their stakes. Interest had increased in the wake of the \$2.35bn sale last December of IMG to US talent agency WME. For now, at least, there are no plans to sell. “We are still happy to own our business, which is very healthy. But never say never.”

#### ‘No alliance’

Silva and Radrizzani were keen to play down the extent to which the company’s rapid growth and ability to outbid its rivals was linked to its relationship with Qatari company beIN Media Group.

The view which has taken hold is that the agency is able to make aggressive bids for global properties on the back of lucrative, some say inflated, deals for the rights in the territories where beIN Sports operates.

Some industry insiders go further, and talk of MP & Silva being part of an informal alliance of satellite agencies for beIN Sports, which also includes Pitch International and Mediapro.

“We are not part of any alliance, formal or informal,” Silva said. “We have a very good relationship with beIN Sports but we also have a very good relationship with many other broadcasters. We work a lot with Fox, with Discovery. I don’t know why our deals with beIN Sports get more media attention than our deals with other broadcasters.”

Radrizzani added that in terms of revenue, the amount of business the agency did with beIN Sports, Fox and Discovery was “pretty similar.” He said that the agency’s business was “far more balanced than it is often presented in the media.”

Radrizzani put the agency’s rapid growth down to being innovative, creating long-term relationships and “being aggressive when we need to.”

He pointed to the agency’s distribution strategy in Asia, including the “incubation” of premium channels for beIN Sports, as an example of its innovation. He cited its deal with the Fédération Française de Tennis, the French tennis federation, for the French Open as an example of a long-term partnership. Deals for Premier League rights in a number of territories were a sign of its aggressiveness.

“We are more a media company than an agency these days. We have shown a flexible and modern approach,” he said.

#### ‘Not another ISL’

The kind of aggressiveness which has been a hallmark of the agency’s rapid rise is fraught with risk. From ISL to the Kirch Group, and from Octagon to Lagardère Unlimited, there are examples of companies overstretching and getting into trouble.

Silva and Radrizzani are adamant that MP & Silva is not heading in the same direction. Radrizzani said the agency had learned from the failures of ISL and Kirch and would not make the same mistakes.

“We take a risk when we know the market so we can predict what will happen,” he said. “We also have a strong presence locally which means we have a relationship on a weekly basis with broadcasters around the world. This is really important as it allows management to stay on top of what is going on in each market.”

He said that in its early years the agency relied heavily on “business instinct and entrepreneurial skill.” But with a new management team led by joint chief executives Peter Hutton and Marco Auletta this was now mixed with “a more rational” approach.

“We are confident that we are not going to have the same kind of crash that other companies had in the past,” he said. “It’s true that taking big risks over a three-year period is very dangerous and we need to look at things in a more strategic way over a longer period of time.”

As part of this more “rational” thinking, the agency is moving away from a scattergun approach to buying rights to a more targeted strategy. “Before, we were keen to buy many rights and many different rights. Now we are much more selective. Our trend is to focus on the top rights. We will definitely manage fewer properties in future.”

Silva pointed to the recent loss to rival IMG of the rights to the top US football league, Major League Soccer, as proof that the agency was not prepared to pay above the market value of a property (see separate story, page 4). “This is a good sign to show that we will make an investment only when it is potentially profitable,” he said. “We are very aggressive but we have a balance.”

[www. For the full interview with Riccardo Silva and Andrea Radrizzani visit our website.](#) ■

## SERIE A

# Big increase but rivals giving up on ousting MP & Silva

By Frank Dunne

Italy’s Lega Serie A and its media adviser Infront Sports & Media can point to a near 60-per-cent increase in the value of the league’s international rights to claim that this month’s sales process was a success, despite drawing only three bids.

Some experts argue that the lack of interest ought to be a cause for concern for future sales, but such theoretical problems do not generally worry football clubs.

The 20 Serie A clubs last week took just 45 minutes to agree unanimously to accept the €185.7m (\$238m) per season bid from the MP & Silva agency for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18. The payments will be staggered: €172m in 2015-16, €185m in 2016-17 and €200m in 2017-18.

This is almost 60 per cent up on the €117m per season which MP & Silva pays in its current three-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

The tender for the global rights, outside Italy, was open to agencies and media companies. Only two rival agencies bid and the bids were well below MP & Silva’s. IMG Events & Media bid €140m per season, and Marco Bianchi’s B4 Capital €136m per season.

The rival bids were surprisingly timid. Research by *TV Sports Markets* suggests MP & Silva is currently generating about €150m per season from the rights.

No broadcasters bid. This is in stark contrast with the interest of major international broadcasters like Fox International Channels, Discovery/Eurosport and beIN Media Group in the rights of Germany’s Bundesliga.

For the last auction, covering the three-year period from 2012-13 to 2014-15, MP & Silva faced seven rival bids.

The agency has now won the contract each of the three times it has been put on the market since Serie A rights were centralised from the 2010-11 season. Prior to this, under the old individual selling

regime, the agency was one of three – along with Sportfive and Rai Trade, which sold the rights to Serie A and Serie B clubs.

### Incumbent advantage

Many in the industry have come to the conclusion that MP & Silva's position is now unassailable. As one agency executive put it this week, "to beat MP & Silva you first have to assess what you think the current value of the market is, then add a premium to take into account growth and your margin, then add another premium to get to the amount you would need to blow MP & Silva out of the water, because you know they will be very aggressive."

Long-term incumbency provides an agency with a level of market insight which is hard to match. One expert said that conversations routinely taking place

between MP & Silva and broadcasters would tell the agency where the growth was going to come in the next cycle and how much it might be.

"Third parties just cannot access that level of information," the agency source said. "Silva has now had the rights for so long that there are very few people out there with any knowledge of the product. None of the agencies looking at bidding has anyone who has ever worked on it."

It is a position of strength acknowledged by MP & Silva. Riccardo Silva, co-founder of the agency, told *TV Sports Markets*: "The longer we have this property the harder it will be for others to take it away from us, for many reasons. This includes the relationship we have, and the trust, of say 90 per cent of the clubs. Or maybe 100 per cent, seeing

as this time we had all 20 clubs voting for us. This is very important."

Andrea Radrizzani, the agency's other co-founder, pointed to "natural selection" as another reason for the scarcity of rival bids this time.

"The value is getting higher and the number of the companies in the world which can cover that kind of guarantee is small," he said.

"There are three big agencies – IMG, Infront and MP & Silva – which are active in the market of buying and distributing rights. Infront could not bid because they are the adviser. So there are two left. The other bidder [B4] was an Italian company who knows the product and maybe thought they could do something."

[www. Why MP & Silva was the only likely winner for Serie A.](#) ■

## FOOTBALL

# Nova bolsters weakened portfolio with Ligue 1 rights

By Robin Jellis

Greek pay-television broadcaster Nova picked up rights to France's Ligue 1 earlier this month in an attempt to retain subscribers after losing Uefa Champions League and Europa League rights to rival OTE.

The new deal is for two seasons, 2014-15 and 2015-16, and is worth about €500,000 (\$640,000) per season. The deal was agreed with the Pitch International agency.

Ligue 1 was not shown in Greece last season. Nova last held the rights from 2008-09 to 2011-12 in a deal with Canal Plus Events also thought to be worth about €500,000 per year. The fee has not increased in the new deal due the effect of the economic crisis.

There was no coverage in the last two seasons due to a combination of little appetite for the rights and complications as to who was selling them in Greece. BeIN Media Group, which holds Ligue 1 international rights, works with both Pitch and the MP & Silva agency.

Earlier this month pay-television

broadcaster OTE snatched pay-television rights to the Champions League and Europa League competitions from Nova for €35m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:19).

OTE's coverage won't begin until the 2015-16 season, but Nova has moved quickly to acquire some live sports content to replace it. Ligue 1, however, is weaker content than that offered by the Champions League and Europa League.

It is thought that Nova had already been looking to bolster its weekend content. Ligue 1 will complement Nova's coverage of the Greek Superleague, the country's top football league.

OTE holds rights to the four other top European football leagues. It has Premier League rights from 2013-14 to 2015-16 for about €8.3m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:3).

It also has: Spanish Liga rights in 2014-15 for about €3m; Italian Serie A rights from 2012-13 to 2014-15 for about €2.8m per season; and German Bundesliga rights from 2012-13 to 2014-15 for about €1.2m per season.

OTE is not thought to have been interested in the Ligue 1 rights as it has enough content.

Nova will show four matches per weekend, as well as magazine shows and highlights on its Novasports channels, and on its Nova Go on demand platform.

Ligue 1 international rights are held by beIN Media Group in a deal worth €32.5m per season from 2012-13 to 2017-18 in a deal with the Ligue de Football Professionnel. This will increase to €80m per season from 2018-19 to 2023-24 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:11). ■

## MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER

# 'Aggressive' long-term plan helps IMG oust Silva

By Frank Dunne

Major League Soccer said it chose the IMG Events & Media agency to handle its media rights because the agency was "aggressive" in its plans, and shared the league's philosophy about creating a long-term partnership to build the MLS profile globally.

IMG this month agreed a deal to sell the US league's rights globally, excluding the US and Canada, for eight years, from 2015 to 2022. The agency replaces the league's current rights distributor, the MP & Silva agency, which sold the rights between 2009 and 2014.

The deal was agreed with Soccer United Marketing, which handles the commercial rights for MLS and the US



national football teams.

There are several differences between the IMG deal and that of MP & Silva. Whereas MP & Silva sold only MLS rights, the new deal also includes the rights to the men's and women's USA national teams. MP & Silva's deal was a straight buyout, whereas in the new deal MLS and IMG are joint principals, with MLS actively involved in the sales strategy.

MP & Silva paid a flat rights fee, thought to be about \$2m (€1.6m) per season. IMG is thought to be paying a minimum guarantee of between \$6m and \$8m per season, plus a share of upside revenues.

For MLS, greater involvement in the sales process was vital. "IMG were aggressive, clear and concise on what they thought they could do for us," Gary Stevenson, president and managing director of MLS Business Ventures, told *TV Sports Markets* this week.

"We were not interested in a complete rights buyout, but rather to be partners with an agency going forward. IMG had the same philosophy," he said. "We wanted to be able to evaluate our opportunity in each market from both a qualitative and quantitative standpoint. So it is not just about money, but also about the best way to build our brand and reputation worldwide."

Stevenson said MLS was growing as a league "both in quality of play and in interest around the world." He pointed to two indicators of the increased interest.

"The first is the data we get from our partner Electronic Arts about the increasing level of interest MLS and our clubs get worldwide from fans who play their Fifa game. Second, our digital traffic from outside North America over the past three years has grown almost 300 per cent, which is partially due to having players from over 60 countries on our rosters."

He said that MLS expected this trend to continue as more top players like Brazilian Kaká, England's Frank Lampard and Spain's David Villa, joined the league. All three will play in MLS in 2015. They join existing marquee names like France's Thierry Henry, Ireland's Robbie Keane and Italy's Marco Di Vaio.

### Not 'crazy money'

Despite the sharp increase in rights fees, IMG insists that its investment properly

reflects the rapid growth of the league and increasing levels of broadcaster interest around the world.

Ioris Francini, president of IMG Events & Media, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "We are not throwing a crazy amount of money at this. We have provided a solid, reasonable guarantee. It is strategic. We think there is upside here and great potential. There is so much that can be done in the way that MLS is branded and marketed."

He added: "We know the interest in this from broadcasters around the world. The technical and tactical aspects are closing on other comparable leagues, such as the Argentinian and Brazilian leagues. MLS is also interesting to broadcasters because it is played in the summer and because of the time that the live games come in."

Having an eight-year deal also gives the agency a lot of flexibility in how it can sell the rights. "There are not many of those in club football," he said.

One region where experts expect the agency to agree a good deal is the Middle East due to interest in the new MLS team New York City, which is majority-owned by English Premier League club Manchester City. Both clubs are financed by the Abu Dhabi sovereign wealth fund, which also holds a three-per-cent stake in IMG through its Mubadala investment arm.

However, Francini played down the significance of the relationships in bringing the deal to fruition. "The Abu Dhabi link has very little to do with it," he said. "They are just one owner of many and one opinion among many opinions."

Having worked closely with SUM on some national team rights, the agency also believes it is well-placed to maximise their value. IMG distributed the rights last year for 'The Road to Brazil,' a series of friendly internationals played in the US in the run-up to the Fifa World Cup.

"This part of the deal is really about continuity," Francini said. "We know all about the market value of the US national team, we know what they are planning, what teams they will host, what tours they will undertake. A lot of really big nations want to play in the US. They have a really interesting programme."

### Interested parties

MLS approached the new sales cycle by first talking to the incumbent, MP & Silva. After those talks, it decided to move to a formal tender. Before launching the process, however, it was approached by a number of interested parties. It eventually agreed a deal with IMG without taking the rights to market. It is thought that the league was advised during the process by Wasserman Media Group.

MP & Silva's valuation of the rights was some way below IMG's. Riccardo Silva, founding shareholder of MP & Silva, said the agency was not prepared to pay a big increase to hold on to the property: "If we know the sales over the last five years of a certain property and we know certain amounts can be achieved, we are not going to pay anything to hold on to it."

In the first two years of the current contract, 2009 and 2010, the agency had to give the rights away free or for very low fees to secure coverage. Only in the latter part of the deal did it begin to get a return on its investment.

The agency's co-founder, Andrea Radrizzani, added: "In the last period it was a good project for us. It was appreciated in terms of quality of production. We have definitely contributed to raising the value of the brand and the reach in markets like Asia, where we had more than 10 broadcasters taking content by the end."

### Growth from the base

To secure more live coverage and better rights fees from broadcasters around the world, the league will gradually need to add star players at the peak, not the tail end, of their careers, and to produce home-grown players of a top level.

The club owners are developing the coaching infrastructure to raise the standard of young players in the US. MLS last year also entered into an agreement with the Fédération Française de Football to use the federation's highly-regarded technical centre at Clairefontaine to help develop the club's academy coaches.

"The greatest asset we have is our ownership group's commitment to the product development side of our sport," Stevenson said.

“If you look at the amount of home-grown talent that our academies have produced, it is much more prolific than even five years ago. The relationship we have with the French federation to help train our coaches is just one example of a multi-tiered player development system.”

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

## RUGBY UNION 1

# Sky pays big fee increases to hold on to RFU and Sanzar

*Continued from page 1 ►*

Sanzar is a joint venture of the Australian Rugby Union, the New Zealand Rugby Union and the South African Rugby Union.

Sky also this week agreed a new five-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, with the RFU, the sport's governing body in England, for global rights, worth just over £35m per season. The RFU declined to comment when contacted.

In Sky's current five-season deal for domestic rights only, from 2010-11 to 2014-15, it pays £17m per season. Sky also covers production costs of about £50,000 per game.

### Sanzar inflation

The Sanzar fee has increased dramatically due to the hypercompetitive UK market. It is understood that a deal has been agreed, but is yet to be signed off. It is thought that BT was strongly interested in the rights.

BT and Sky are battling each other for every top sports property. BT has exclusive rights to the top English rugby union league, the Premiership, and shares rights to the European Champions Cup and Challenge Cup with Sky. Sanzar rights would have complemented its rugby offering.

The rights provide good quality content in the summer months which helps pay-television operators avoid churn – when customers end their subscriptions after the conclusion of the football season. The package includes a

huge amount of good quality content.

The deal includes: national team matches played by Australia, New Zealand and South Africa against northern hemisphere teams; the Rugby Championship competition between Argentina, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa; Super Rugby, the regional club competition; the National Rugby Championship, the Australian domestic league; the National Provincial Championship, the New Zealand domestic league; as well as the Currie Cup and Vodacom Cup, two club competitions in South Africa.

The rights to the British and Irish Lions Tour were formerly sold in the Sanzar package, but have been sold by the Lions Committee since 2013. The 2017 tour to New Zealand is held by Sky in a deal worth £18m (*TV Sports Markets* 18:3).

### Sky looks globally

Sky's new deal with the RFU includes international rights, as well as the UK and Ireland rights. The international rights are currently held by the Pitch International agency in a five-year deal, from 2010-11 to 2014-15, worth about \$2m per year.

It is unusual for Sky to acquire international rights as part of its domestic deals. It is likely that it would sell rights on to pay-television broadcasters which are either part of the same ownership group or with which it has a close relationship.

These include Fox Sports in the US and in Australia, which are both wholly-owned by Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox and News Corp respectively – 21st Century Fox is the largest shareholder in BSkyB. It also has close links with Sky New Zealand, in which Murdoch held a 43.6-per-cent stake until March 2013, and a good relationship with pay-television broadcaster SuperSport in sub-Saharan Africa.

As one insider said: “Every so often Sky will think globally rather than focus just on the UK. I think the move to form Sky Europe with Sky Deutschland and Sky Italia shows they are thinking more globally.”

The deal will be a blow to Pitch International, which lost the rights to the main European club rugby competitions to IMG Events & Media in May (*TV Sports Markets* 18:11).

### Upward trend

The deal represents the second consecutive big increase for the RFU. The last time a deal was agreed, in November 2008, Sky paid an inflated fee as it faced strong competition for the rights from pay-television broadcaster Setanta, which has since retreated from the UK. One source said: “Within the walls at Sky, before BT got into the game and all rationale went out of the window, they considered the deal very expensive.”

It is understood that the new deal was agreed directly between the RFU and Sky, with the rights not offered to the market. The RFU was happy to renew with Sky as a tried and trusted partner.

The current Sky deal includes England's home autumn internationals, Rugby World Cup warm-up matches, the Anglo-Welsh Cup, matches of the women's national team and one-off matches such as Army v Navy and the varsity match between Oxford and Cambridge University. The value lies with the autumn internationals, of which the English team plays four per year.

In the new deal, Sky is obliged to show at least two matches of the England women's team each season, and rights to England U-20s, U-18s and Saxons matches. It also covers at least 11 second-tier domestic Championship matches, plus autumn international clips rights. Anglo-Welsh Cup rights are not included in the new deal as it will not take place in 2015-16 due to the World Cup, and the varsity match has been removed. All other content in the new deal is the same.

The RFU will also agree a highlights deal with a free-to-air broadcaster for its autumn internationals from 2015-16 onwards. Public-service broadcaster the BBC and commercial broadcaster ITV are the most likely buyers.

- Sky is being forced to pay big increases across the board to hold on to rights. In its deal late last month with American football's National Football League it is thought to have paid an increase of between 60 and 100 per cent. The new five-year deal, from 2015 to 2019, is believed to be worth between \$8m (£6.25m) and \$10m per season. Sky currently pays about \$5m per year in a three-year deal, from 2012 to 2014. ■

## RUGBY UNION 2

## Pitch shores up under-pressure rights portfolio

By Robin Jellis

The Pitch International agency agreed international rights deals for the Irish, Scottish and Welsh rugby unions earlier this month. The deals will help the agency shore up an international rugby rights portfolio which has come under pressure this year.

Pitch will pay a total of about \$2.6m (€2m) per year for the rights to home autumn internationals of the Irish, Scottish and Welsh national teams. The deals with the Irish and Welsh unions were renewals.

The deals come at the same time as the agency losing one of its major rugby union rights contracts, with England's Rugby Football Union (see separate story, page 1).

This would be its second major loss in a year after the Heineken Cup and the Amlin Cup, the old European continental club competitions. Pitch previously held the international rights in a deal worth about €1.6m per season. The IMG Events & Media agency took the rights to the revamped continental competitions from 2014-15, in a deal worth €5.5m per season.

Pitch's new Scottish deal is for three years, covers the rights to Scotland's home autumn internationals, and is worth about \$700,000 per year. It covers 2014, 2016 and 2017. It does not include 2015 as this is a Rugby World Cup year and there are no autumn internationals. The deal was agreed with Scottish Rugby, the governing body for rugby union in Scotland. Pitch replaces previous rights-holder the Sportfive agency, which held rights from 2010 to 2013.

Pitch renewed a deal for the home matches of the Welsh rugby union team for the four years from 2015 to 2018. The deal is worth between \$850,000 and \$1m per year and was agreed with the Welsh Rugby Union, the governing body for rugby union in Wales. Pitch holds the rights from 2011 to 2014, following a one-year deal for 2010.

The agency last week also renewed its rights to home matches of the Irish rugby union team for the four-year period from

2015 to 2018. The deal is worth about \$1m per year and was agreed with the Irish Rugby Football Union, the governing body for rugby union in Ireland. Pitch holds the rights in a four-year deal from 2011 to 2014.

In 2015, the Irish and Welsh deals include warm-up matches instead of the regular autumn internationals.

All three deals exclude rights in the UK and Ireland. All deals are minimum guarantees and are decent increases on previous rights fees. Each deal includes a share of revenues above the minimum guaranteed.

**Recouping the fee**

With increased competition for rugby rights in many markets around the world, experts expect Pitch to get a return on its investment.

The value of second-party rights varies substantially depending on the nations involved. Broadcasters in South Africa and New Zealand are willing to pay higher rights fees than broadcasters in Argentina and Australia due to the importance of the sport. Outside of these nations there is value for the rights in France, the Middle East, the US and Japan.

Pitch has played an important role in developing rugby outside its heartlands. The agency has "opened up markets and increased exposure of the sport" one expert said. For Scottish Rugby specifically, it has improved coverage in various territories in Asia, an important expatriate market.

The deals cement Pitch's place as the dominant agency in rugby union international rights. It currently has rights to the Six Nations, for which it pays about €5m per year; English Premiership Rugby, worth about \$2m per season; English RFU matches, worth about \$2m per year; the Pro12 league and some matches of the Argentina Rugby Union.

**Celtic union rights**

The Irish and Welsh union rights are appealing to broadcasters as they have strong national teams. Ireland and Wales are ranked fifth and sixth respectively in the world. Scotland is ranked eighth. Each nation plays between three and four autumn internationals each year.

It is thought that the unions chose to agree deals with Pitch because of the

money it was offering, and its record of taking the sport to new markets.

The IRFU told *TV Sports Markets* that it did not hold a tender process, but instead "engaged a number of interested parties." It had received "strong offers", but declined to confirm the other bidders.

Craig Maxwell, head of commercial and marketing for the WRU said the governing body drafted a tender, but renewed with Pitch without releasing an ITT as the agency was the WRU's desired partner.

"We spoke to a few other companies but what we wanted from the initial brief, Pitch were happy to work with us on," he said. "The financial side is of course important and Pitch have over-performed for the WRU in this area."

He added: "Pitch are consistently developing new markets and we are always looking to be broadcast in new territories."

Dominic McKay, Scottish Rugby's director of commercial operations, communications and public affairs, told *TV Sports Markets* that the body received "strong interest from all the major players" after tendering its rights.

McKay declined to confirm the value of the Pitch deal but said: "It is a significant uplift on previous arrangements we have had. It gives us a reach into some new markets which we were keen to get into."

**Domestic rights**

The domestic rights to the three Celtic countries were held by public-service broadcaster the BBC in a joint five-year deal, from 2005 to 2009, worth £6m (€7.6m/\$9.7m) per year. Each of the unions received £2m per year. From 2010, the WRU broke away from the others to sell its own rights, believing it could earn more by selling individually.

The BBC holds WRU domestic rights from 2014 to 2018 in a deal worth £4.5m per year. This is up from the £4m per year it paid from 2010 to 2013.

The IRFU rights are held by Irish public-service broadcaster RTÉ and UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB in a four-year deal from 2014 to 2017. The rights are worth about £4m per year, with Sky paying the bigger share.

The BBC holds domestic rights to Scotland matches for 2014 and 2016 in a deal worth about £1.5m per year. [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com)



## BASKETBALL

## Worsening Russian rights market slows Euroleague growth

By Robin Jellis

Media rights income for Euroleague basketball is likely to be about the same in the 2014-15 season – €20m (\$25.6m) – as it was last season, partly due to difficulties in Russia, one of the sport's key markets. The league all but completed its sales cycle for next season with eight deals this month.

The plateauing of fees follows an increase of about 18 per cent, from €17m to €20m, between the 2012-13 and 2013-14 seasons (*TV Sports Markets* 17:18).

The Euroleague struggled to agree deals in Russia, where rights-holders are facing a difficult climate with broadcasters trying to force down rights fees, and Poland, where incumbent rights-holder Fox International Channels handed its rights back to the league.

The league did, however, secure an increased fee of about 33 per cent in the Balkans. It also agreed deals in the UK, Czech Republic and Slovakia – territories where there was no coverage in 2013-14.

The league also renewed its deal with NBA TV, the channel owned by the North American basketball league. NBA TV will pay about \$100,000 in 2014-15, the same as in 2013-14. It includes a rights fee and technical costs.

### Deep freeze

In Russia, the Euroleague has renewed with pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus, and also agreed a deal with digital-terrestrial broadcaster Sport 1, owned by state-owned broadcaster VGTRK.

The deals are for one season, 2014-15, and the combined fee is understood to be about half the value of the previous deal. NTV Plus held rights for three years, from 2011-12 to 2013-14, paying €1.1m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 15:21).

The value has decreased due to a lack of competition for the rights. NTV Plus is the main buyer of sports rights in Russia and has been looking to cut costs due to stagnant subscriber levels, a decline in

advertising revenues, high rights fees and limited local interest in international sport.

Despite the fee cut, both NTV Plus and Sport 1 have allowed the league to sell advertising slots around the coverage, which will allow the league to claw back at least some of the decrease. The deal was agreed by the league, working with the IMG Events & Media agency.

NTV Plus coverage will not be limited to pay-television in the new deal. Matches will also be shown on free-to-air digital-terrestrial channel NTV Plus Sport Plus.

### Fox falters

In Poland, the Euroleague agreed a deal with pay-television broadcaster NC Plus for two seasons, from 2014-15 to 2015-16. It is understood that NC Plus will not pay a rights fee in the first season, and will only guarantee production and technical costs. In the second season NC Plus will pay a rights fee as well as the other costs. This deal was also agreed between the Euroleague and IMG.

The league agreed the deal after the rights were handed back by FIC. The channel operator had acquired rights in selected European and African territories for four seasons, from 2013-14 to 2016-17, in October last year for just over €5m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:19). The rights fee in Poland is understood to have been about €200,000 per season, which FIC will continue to honour, leaving the league no worse off overall.

FIC is thought to have cancelled or at least delayed plans for a launch of its Fox Sports channels in Poland. The company showed Euroleague coverage online last season.

### Balkans boost

The Euroleague received a boost from long-term partner Sportklub in a deal covering eight Central European and Balkan territories.

The pay-television broadcaster agreed a four-year deal, from 2015-16 to 2018-19, worth close to €1m per season. This is a 33-per-cent increase on the value of its existing three-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, worth about €750,000 per season.

The broadcaster negotiated a longer term due to the increased rights fee it will pay. It will also receive some additional

ancillary programming.

There was strong interest in the rights, with three rival bids to Sportklub's winning offer. One came from the Sportsman Media Group agency. A second was from another agency and the third from a multi-territory broadcaster.

The deal covers Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.

### New coverage

The Euroleague agreed one-season deals to ensure coverage in three markets – the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the UK – where it was not broadcast in 2013-14. The deals are worth a total of about €150,000.

In the Czech Republic, the league agreed a deal with public-service broadcaster Česká Televize worth about €100,000. Česká Televize will also pay technical costs. The league was not shown in the Czech Republic in the last two seasons, with Česká Televize citing economic reasons behind failing to renew its previous deal.

There is also a clash with the Euroleague's end-of-season Final Four event and the International Ice Hockey Federation men's World Championship. Ice hockey is very popular in the Czech Republic and the World Championship has traditionally been shown by Česká Televize. Allowing the broadcaster to show the Final Four either live or delayed was an important factor in agreeing the deal.

The league also agreed its first deal in Slovakia, with pay-television broadcaster Slovak Sport, worth about €50,000, as well as technical costs.

IMG helped agree the deals in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In the UK, the league agreed a deal with pay-television broadcaster BT Sport. The broadcaster is not thought to be paying a rights fee, but is paying technical costs. BT showed the Final Four only in 2013-14.

The biggest markets in which the league does not yet have broadcast coverage for the 2014-15 season are Albania, Iceland and Japan.

The league works with the Mediapro agency on rights sales and production in some territories. Last October, it agreed a long-term consultancy deal with IMG covering a number of territories. [www.IMG.com](http://www.IMG.com)



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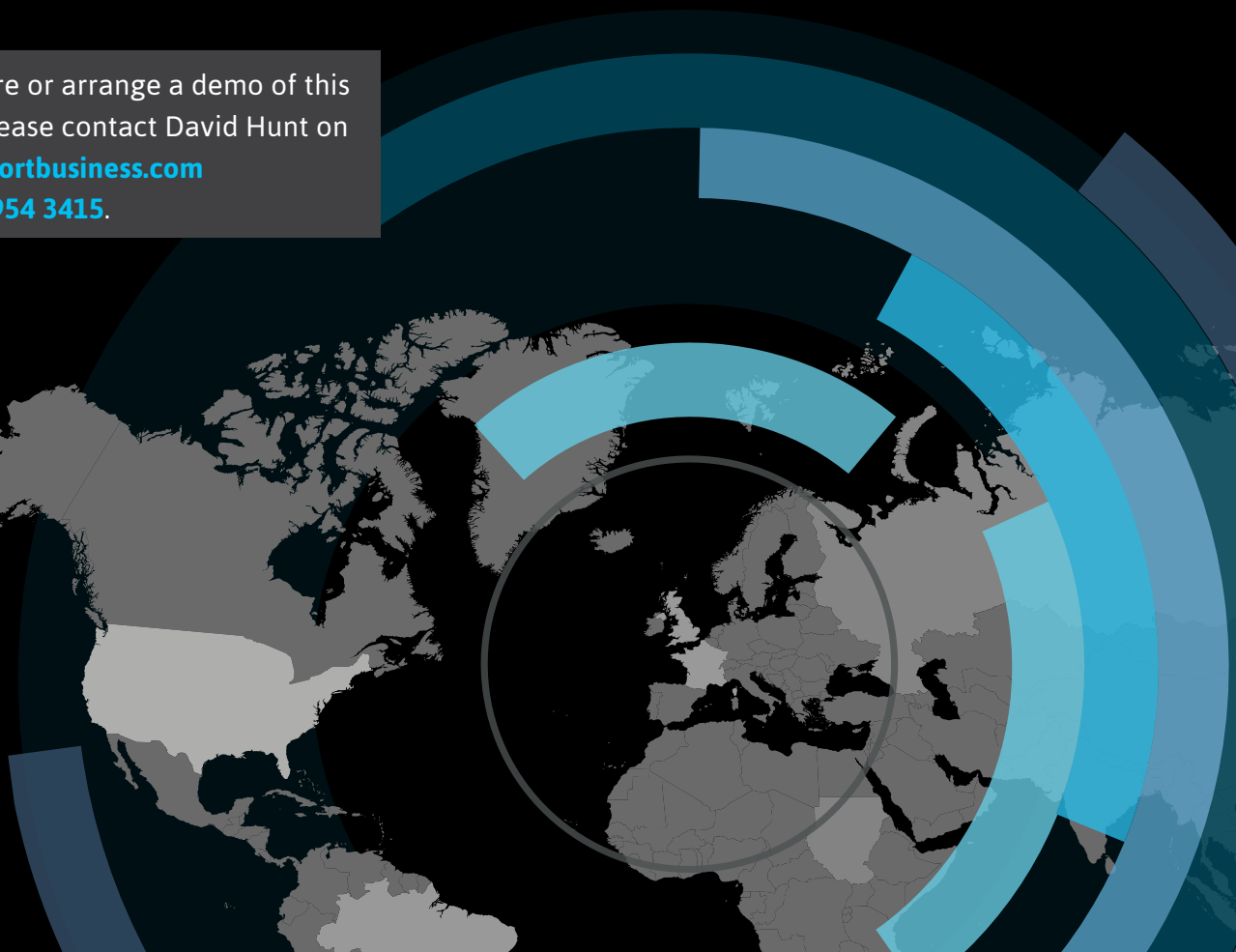
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**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from October 16 to October 29**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: Serie A, MLS, Uefa Champions League, Ligue 1 and more**

- **Football:** The MP & Silva agency extended its international rights deal for Serie A, the sport's top division in Italy, for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, paying an average of €185.7m (\$238m) per season. The agreement includes the rights in all countries outside Italy, including live coverage of matches, highlights and magazine programming. MP & Silva also secured rights to produce and broadcast programmes relating to the pre-match, half-time or post-match slots and interviews (page 3).
- **Football:** The IMG Events & Media agency acquired global distribution rights for Major League Soccer and the US Soccer governing body's properties for eight years, from 2015 to 2022. The rights include MLS matches and US men's and women's national team home matches as well as Fifa World Cup qualifiers. The multi-platform distribution rights exclude the US and Canada. IMG struck the deal with Soccer United Marketing, which represents the league and US Soccer's commercial and media rights (page 4).
- **Football:** Brazilian free-to-air sports broadcaster Esporte Interativo struck a deal to acquire rights for the Uefa Champions League club tournament. Esporte Interativo acquired pay-television and online rights for all matches for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Media company Globo has acquired some free-to-air rights. Esporte Interativo's agreement still needs to be approved by Uefa, the sport's European governing body. Esporte Interativo overcame a joint bid from incumbent pay-television rights-holder ESPN and Globosat-owned pay-television channel Sportv.
- **Football:** Greek pay-television broadcaster Nova acquired rights for Ligue 1, the sport's top division in France, in a two-year deal, running from 2014-15 to 2015-16. Nova will exploit the rights across its Novasports channels and its Nova Go platform (page 4).
- **Football:** Australian public-service broadcaster ABC acquired rights for the Asian Football Confederation's 2015 Asian Cup national team tournament in a sublicensing deal with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports, which will show live coverage of all 32 tournament matches. The ABC1 channel will show a daily half-hour highlights programme as well as coverage of host nation Australia's matches against Kuwait on January 9, Oman on January 13 and South Korea on January 17 on a two-hour delay, plus live coverage of any match featuring Australia from the quarter-final stage, the semi-finals and the final. The deal includes live coverage of the Japan v Australia friendly game on November 18.

**SINCE LAST TIME**

- The International Olympic Committee's executive board backed the proposed launch of a new Olympic television channel. The plan, which will form part of the broader 'Olympic Agenda 2020' roadmap, will be put to a vote in front of the full IOC membership in December. IOC president Thomas Bach, who refused to confirm that the channel could launch next year, said the board had received a positive feasibility study on the creation of a channel to promote Olympic sports between the summer and winter Games.
- A district court judge in the US granted a temporary injunction against Aereo, blocking the video streaming service from transmitting broadcasters' programmes to its subscribers. In June, the US Supreme Court ruled that Aereo breached the copyright of major sports leagues and their broadcast partners, but the company has since tried to reclassify itself as a cable-television provider in order to continue operating.
- José Antonio Sánchez, the new president of TVE, halted a plan to close the Spanish public-service broadcaster's sports channel, Teledporte, at the end of this year. The cost-cutting measures proposed by former company president Leopoldo González-Echenique will not be implemented by Sánchez, who will propose other solutions, according to news channel ABC. The report said the channel might return to an advertising-based approach, which was scrapped in 2010. TVE was due to take Teledporte off digital-terrestrial television and offer it only as an online channel from early 2015.

**FOOTBALL**

- The English Premier League is considering shifting more games from the traditional Saturday 3pm kick-off slot in the next cycle of rights. The league might offer a new package of rights for Sunday evening games by increasing the number of matches available on a live basis.
- Premier League club Liverpool will alter its in-house television channel LFCTV from a free-to-air to subscription-based model when it relaunches. From November 4, LFCTV will be available on Sky for £7 (€9/\$11) per month in the UK or €9 per month in Ireland.
- The Ekstraklasa, the top division of football in Poland, launched a new mobile service offering video content from the league. Ekstraklasa.tv is free to use and available on iOS and Android devices, with content including goals, highlights and news updates. The league created the service in partnership with online portal Onet.pl and the Polish division of media company Ringier Axel Springer.
- Danish channel TV3 Sport 1, owned by multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group, teamed up with FC København to develop the top-tier Superliga football club's in-house online channel. FCK TV will broadcast live from FC København's Telia Parken stadium after home games and provide coverage from the team bus or hotel for away matches. FCK TV will also offer live coverage of reserve team games, selected youth team matches and training sessions. The Copenhagen club will remain responsible for producing content, while MTG will be responsible for production and distribution.

**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from October 16 to October 29**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****World Series baseball, Euroleague basketball, ICC events and more**

- **Baseball:** French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports acquired exclusive rights for North America's 2014 Major League Baseball World Series. BeIN Sports broadcast all of the games live.
- **Baseball:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights in the Netherlands for the MLB World Series, with the Fox Sports 2 channel offering Dutch-language commentary and the Fox Sports 4 channel providing English-language commentary.
- **Basketball:** NBA TV, the pay-television broadcaster owned by the North American league, extended its rights deal with Euroleague Basketball for the 2014-15 season. NBA TV will broadcast the Euroleague 'game of the week' on a delayed basis every Sunday afternoon, including regular- and post-season games as well as two games from the Final Four season-ending competition (page 8).
- **Basketball:** Russian pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus and digital-terrestrial broadcaster Sport 1 agreed a rights deal with the IMG agency for the Euroleague to broadcast more games in the country during the 2014-15 season. A total of 120 Euroleague games will be broadcast on Sport 1 as well as the NTV Plus pay-television channels and the NTV Plus Sport Plus digital-terrestrial television channel. NTV Plus and Sport 1 previously only showed games featuring Russian teams (page 8).
- **Cricket:** Pay-television operator OSN acquired exclusive rights in the Middle East and North Africa for all 18 International Cricket Council tournaments and qualifiers in the eight years from 2015-16 to 2022-23. OSN agreed the sublicensing deal with parent company Star. The deal includes two editions of the Cricket World Cup, World Twenty20 and Champions Trophy tournaments each plus qualifying events for the former two events. Two editions of the women's World Cup and women's World T20, and four U19 World Cups are included in the deal.
- **Horse Racing:** The Sky Racing channel, which is operated by Australian pay-television provider Foxtel, acquired rights for the 2014 Melbourne Cup Carnival. Sky Racing acquired the rights in a sublicensing deal with Australian commercial broadcaster Seven. The Sky Racing 2 and Sky Racing World channels will show live coverage of all races apart from the four feature races – the AAMI Victoria Derby, Emirates Melbourne Cup, Crown Oaks and Emirates Stakes – which will be shown on a two-minute delay. Sky Racing World will also be temporarily rebranded as Racing World Australia and will provide live coverage in 21 countries across the Middle East and Africa as well as the UK and Ireland.
- **Ice Hockey:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 extended its rights deal with the Deutsche Eishockey-Bund, the sport's governing body in Germany, for four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18. Sport1 will continue to broadcast live coverage of the national team's games on its free-to-air channel. Coverage will also be available via Sport1's mobile and online platforms. The deal includes live broadcasts of at least four Germany home games and three away games per season. Sport1 will broadcast live and exclusive coverage of all six games in the annual Deutschland-Cup national team tournament.
- **Ice Hockey:** North American NHL franchise the Anaheim Ducks agreed a long-term rights extension with regional pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Prime Ticket, which will show all 82 of the team's regular-season games per campaign.
- **Ice Hockey:** The NHL's Dallas Stars agreed a multi-year extension to its local rights deal with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Southwest. The deal includes all regular-season games and selected first-round games if the team reaches the Stanley Cup Playoffs.
- **Ice Hockey:** Canadian pay-television sports broadcaster TSN renegotiated a rights deal with College Hockey Inc, the commercial rights-holder of the US National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I men's college tournament, to offer more extensive coverage of the 2014-15 season. TSN will broadcast 37 games, including the season-ending Frozen Four event. Games will be available for live streaming and on an on-demand basis to TSN subscribers through the TSN Go service. TSN will also deliver news updates and analysis of NCAA Hockey events across multiple platforms.

**MEDIA INTERNATIONAL**

- Madison Square Garden Company, which owns US regional pay-television channels MSG Network and MSG Plus, as well as basketball and ice hockey franchises the New York Knicks and the New York Rangers, is considering spinning off its media and sports businesses from its entertainment division.
- North American media company Anthem Media struck a partnership with digital sports content production and distribution company CineSport. CineSport will produce and distribute Anthem Media content to a network of premium news and information sites. CineSport will also support the development of SportsGrid.com, Anthem Media's US-based video-centric sports portal.
- UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB could merge Sky Italia with rival pay-television service Mediaset Premium when it finalises a deal to acquire the Italian company, according to analysts at Bernstein. The Mediaset Premium division of Italian commercial broadcaster Mediaset competes with Sky Italia for premium sports-rights. Bernstein said that BSkyB could try to reduce its spending on such rights by bringing together the two companies in an "attractive" merger. BSkyB is trying to acquire Sky Italia and also German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland, bringing together leading pay-television sports broadcasters in three of Europe's four largest markets, and hopes to complete the deals in November. BSkyB expects to own at least 69 per cent of Sky Deutschland once the takeover period closes.



**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from October 16 to October 29**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****Supercross, Olympic Games, IRFU, Champions Tennis League and more**

- **Motorcycling:** The Fox Sports division of the Fox network acquired rights for the 2015 edition of the US-based AMA Supercross series. Fox Sports struck the deal with the series' commercial rights-holder, Feld Motor Sports. The Fox network will show live coverage of the event at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on April 25, with the remainder of the season's 16 events split between pay-television channels Fox Sports 1 and 2. The Fox Sports Go service will provide live coverage of every event.
- **Olympic Games:** Canadian public-service broadcaster CBC acquired rights for the 2018 and 2020 Games in partnership with telecommunications company Rogers Communications and media company BCE, which operates Bell Media. CBC will be the primary broadcaster, with Bell's TSN and Rogers' Sportsnet pay-television channels offering secondary coverage. Secondary sports channels operated by Bell and Rogers, which are only available on more exclusive pay-television packages, will provide additional coverage. All three companies will share production resources. The agreement, which also includes every edition of the Youth Olympics until 2020, covers free-to-air and pay-television, internet and mobile platforms in all languages.
- **Rugby Union:** The Pitch International agency extended a deal with the Irish Rugby Football Union for the global distribution of rights to the Ireland national team's home fixtures. The exclusive deal will run for four years from 2015 until 2018 and cover all territories outside the UK and Ireland (page 7).
- **Tennis:** US pay-television broadcaster Tennis Channel acquired rights for the inaugural 2014 Champions Tennis League in India. Tennis Channel struck the deal with Second Serve, the operator of the tournament, which will run from November 17-26.
- **Tennis:** Liv Sports, the digital division of Indian media group Multi Screen Media, acquired online rights in the country for the 2014 Champions Tennis League. Liv Sports will stream live coverage and video-on-demand highlights of the tournament.
- **Tennis:** Indian pay-television broadcaster Star Sports confirmed the acquisition of rights for the inaugural 2014 International Premier Tennis League franchise competition. The deal, which features events in India, the Philippines, Singapore and Dubai, will run from November 28 to December 13.
- **Volleyball:** The Eurosport France division of pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired rights for the Ligue Nationale de Volley's Ligue A Féminine competition, the sport's top women's division in France. Eurosport will show 12 games on a live basis during the 2014-15 season.

- UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB made a \$7m (€5.5m) investment in US cross-platform media network Whistle Sports. The deal will allow Sky and Whistle Sports – which links up with personalities who create unique video content themed around sports, sports brands and teams – to collaborate on content creation across both services. Separately, Sky agreed a deal with Twitter to make some of its sports content and other material available through the social networking website's Amplify platform.
- The online sports television channel of the Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund (DOSB), Sportdeutschland.TV, was granted a television broadcast licence. The licence was awarded to DOSB New Media, the operator of the platform, by ZAK, the German Commission on Licensing and Supervision.
- Federazione Italiana Sport Invernali, the Italian winter sports federation, launched a new website in partnership with the Infront Sports & Media agency, featuring exclusive video content. The website's Fisi TV function, which is also available through the federation's dedicated channel on video-sharing website YouTube, will provide viewers with clips of the action plus interviews and special features.
- Polish commercial broadcaster TVN applied for a licence for a new sports channel that will be available via digital-terrestrial television. The application for TVN Sportive, along with another new channel TVN Fabula, was made to the KRRiT, Poland's National Broadcasting Council.

**MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS**

- The athletics division of US university Arizona State terminated its multimedia rights deal with IMG College and sued the agency for more than \$5m (€3.9m) in damages for allegedly failing to meet contractual obligations. IMG's deal to serve as the college's rights-holder for American football, men's basketball, women's basketball and baseball started in 2009 and was due to run until 2021. The agency refutes the college's claims and is taking action over the termination.
- Mediapro is in talks with Spanish Liga football club Barcelona over a new rights deal, according to the agency's president, Jaume Roures. The deal would begin in 2016. Mediapro pays about €135m (\$173m) in the 2014-15 season for coverage of Barcelona games in the domestic top-tier Liga.
- The England & Wales Cricket Board's member counties are applying pressure on the governing body to ensure that domestic cricket appears on terrestrial television in the UK when the current rights deal with pay-television broadcaster BSkyB expires. Tom Harrison, the ECB's new chief executive, and Giles Clarke, ECB chairman, are being urged to secure at least a highlights package from the T20 Blast Twenty20 competition on free-to-air television. Sky's current deal will run until 2017, with an option to extend the arrangement for a further two years, until 2019.
- The New Zealand Rugby Union said that it and its fellow Sanzar rugby union associations in South Africa and Australia had

## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 16 to October 29

agreed a “conditional” deal to renew a rights agreement with pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand. The five-year deal, which will run from 2016 to 2020, is due to be signed off by all parties before the end of November.

- The AFL Aussie Rules league will set an asking price of between A\$1.5bn (€1bn/\$1.3bn) and A\$1.6bn for its next cycle of domestic rights. The existing five-year deal with commercial broadcaster Seven, pay-television broadcaster Foxtel and telecommunications company Telstra is worth a total of about A\$1.25bn and will expire at the end of 2016. The league is open to the possibility of two free-to-air broadcasters sharing coverage as well as selling games directly to fans via an in-house live streaming service.
- Seven is set to acquire rights for the Victorian and West Australian Aussie rules competitions, the VFL and WAFL, after Australian public-service broadcaster the ABC dropped its regional coverage of the sport.
- Danish public-service broadcaster DR and commercial broadcaster TV2 submitted a joint bid for the rights to the 2015 men’s Handball World Championship in Qatar.

### ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- North America’s Major League Baseball streamed live coverage of the World Series for the first time for free to US subscribers of MLB.tv, the league’s online service. Non-subscribers could sign up to watch each game of the series for \$9.99 (€7.80) with no blackout restrictions.
- The IMG agency divested its majority interest in live sports data provider Enetpulse APS back to the Danish management of the Enetpulse Group as part of a move to consolidate its sports-related streaming and live data business.
- British Eurosport, the UK division of pan-European broadcaster Eurosport, agreed a carriage deal with BSkyB to enable the British Eurosport 2 channel to be offered on the pay-television broadcaster’s Sky Go mobile television service.
- The West Indies Cricket Board’s media-rights partner, regional pay-television broadcaster Digicel SportsMax, expressed its concern to the governing body following the collapse of the West Indies’ tour to India. The West Indies team declined to fulfil a remaining itinerary of a One-Day International, one Twenty20 international and three Test matches due to an ongoing payment dispute between the West Indies Players Association and the board. The Board of Control for Cricket in India subsequently withdrew from a planned tour to the West Indies and said it would sue the West Indies board for losses of \$60m (€47m) in sponsorship and broadcasting revenue.
- White label smart-television portal provider NetRange struck a deal to make content from the Euroleague club basketball tournament available on an on-demand basis. The content includes game highlights, previews, magazine programmes and classic games. The service is available on all television portals operated by NetRange, including sets manufactured by companies such as Sharp, Loewe, TCL/Thompson, IKEA TV and Changhong.
- French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports agreed a carriage deal with satellite-television operator Fransat for its beIN Sports 3 channel. BeIN Sports 3, which launched in France on September 15, offers coverage of football, handball, tennis, volleyball and athletics.
- Bertrand Méheut, the chief executive of Canal Plus, is “happy” that rival French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports has entered the market. Méheut said beIN Sports’ arrival had stoked an interest in sports programming in the country, which had boosted interest in Canal Plus’s offering.
- Betradar, a division of sports and betting-related services company Sportradar, struck a carriage deal with Spanish gaming operator Codere for its Live Channel service. The deal will allow Live Channel – which shows live coverage of sporting events as well as betting odds and statistics – to be available in 100 Codere outlets across Spain before expanding to more of the company’s outlets in 2015.
- Liga ACB, the top division of basketball in Spain, will be shown in a record 117 countries in the 2014-15 season. The MP & Silva agency markets the division’s global rights.

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OUT THIS  
MONTH



## KNOWTHEFAN

# The Global Sports Media Consumption Report 2014

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

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

Markets researched in the 2014 report include:

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

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