

TV UK

Sky locks out BT from raft of rights but rights-holders are in driving seat

By Frank Dunne

The £460m (€554m/\$754m) or so which UK pay-television operator BSkyB last week committed to paying in seven long-term rights-deal renewals will help lock pay-television rival BT out of the market for many top rights for the rest of the decade.

The assumption in the industry is that these deals were pre-emptive strikes by a broadcaster on the rebound after losing the rights to the Uefa Champions League. The reality is more complicated.

TV Sports Markets understands that in at least the two most valuable deals – with the PGA and the Rugby Football League – it was the rights-holder which pushed for early renegotiation, using the interest of BT to pressure Sky into paying substantial increases in rights fees.

The other deals were a combination of natural expiries and rights coming on the market in the latter half of last

year. Being able to announce six of the deals on the same day was good PR for Sky but it happened more through accident than design.

The deals also include Scottish football, WWE, UK speedway, England cricket tours of New Zealand, and the 2017 British and Irish Lions tour of New Zealand. They are important for Sky but unlikely to be critical in its rivalry with BT. Sarah Simon, analyst at Berenberg bank, said: "This is a sensible response from Sky. They are trying to secure all the other stuff so that BT can't get hold of it. But football is still the biggest driver of Sky Sports. This doesn't change the fact that the next Premier League auction is going to be more aggressive than ever."

Simon said that Sky was under "significant pressure" due to BT's rapid growth. Regardless of the latest round of
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VOLLEYBALL

Pitch muscles out rival agencies

By Robin Jellis

The Pitch International agency is understood to have won the global media rights to the 2014 men's volleyball World Championship excluding Poland, Brazil and Japan.

The deal is a blow to the IMG Media agency, which had wanted the deal to complement its extensive portfolio of global volleyball rights.

The deal covers the 2014 World

Championship in Poland. Pitch will pay about €7m (\$9.5m) for the rights. The agency won the rights in a second round of bidding. It beat rival bids from the IMG, Infront Sports & Media and Sportsman Media Group agencies. One rival bidder claimed that a more realistic market value for the rights was between €3m and €4m.

The rights were sold by PL2014, a

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Basketball Bundesliga in talks over domestic deal

The German basketball league, the Basketball Bundesliga, is expecting its media-rights value to increase, perhaps even to double, in the next cycle due to the growth of the league.

The league's domestic rights from the 2014-15 season onwards are on the market. The rights are currently held by sports broadcaster Sport1 in a two-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2013-14. Sport1 pays about €1.25m (\$1.7m) per year in rights fees and production costs. The rights are worth about €500,000. Matches cost about €15,000 to produce, with Sport1 showing 50 per season.

The league is in talks with Sport1, basic-tier broadcaster Eurosport Germany and online sports service Laola1.tv. It will ask for bids to be submitted next month.

Jan Pommer, the league's chief executive, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "The position of the Beko Bundesliga is now substantially better than in the past. Therefore, our aim speaking with all stakeholders in the market is to optimise its coverage by far, while at the same time increasing the revenues. With an intelligently tailored rights set-up we will carry on pursuing our aim: becoming the best national basketball league in Europe by 2020."

The Spanish basketball league, the Liga ACB, is recognised as being the best national league in Europe. Its domestic rights are held by state broadcaster TVE in a three-year deal from 2012-13 to 2014-15 worth about €2.5m per year.

The international rights to the Bundesliga are sold by Sport1 in partnership with the Sportsman Media Group. There are no long-term international agreements in place for the league, apart from with bookmakers. Most broadcasters pick up matches on a one-off basis. ■

Japanese gamble pays off for IEC

The last-minute deal agreed late last month by the IEC in Sports agency for the global rights to the finale of Japan's domestic rugby union season was not a big one in financial value. But it enabled IEC to showcase its new state-of-the-art production hub in Stockholm to the league and to broadcasters, with a view to securing a longer-term deal.

IEC picked up the rights from Japanese pay-television operator J-Sports, the league's global media-rights holder, for the last five matches of the season, which ended this week.

The agency had just two weeks to agree deals for the matches. It signed deals for sub-Saharan Africa with pay-television operator SuperSport and in the Middle East and North Africa with pay-television operator OSN.

The challenge for the agency was that J-Sports could only provide a feed which had Japanese graphics and audio because the deal was agreed so late.

IEC took the feed by fibre from Tokyo to Stockholm and fed it back to SuperSport and OSN by fibre with a 10-second delay. This enabled the agency to overlay English-language graphics onto the Japanese graphics as the feed was being played out, using a template supplied by J-Sports.

The J-Sports feed had separate channels for the commentary and ambient sound, allowing IEC to keep the crowd noise but add a live English commentary.

It is thought that the agency paid about \$40,000 (€30,000) for the rights and brought in between \$50,000 and \$60,000 from the two broadcast deals.

IEC is one of several agencies currently talking to J-Sports about a multi-season deal for the global rights from next season.

The league, Top League, was set up by the Japan Rugby Football Union in 2003. With increasing investment coming into the league in the build-up to Japan's hosting of the 2019 Rugby World Cup, teams have been able to

attract players from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. These would be the key target markets for the agency which secures the global rights. ■

Advanced talks in two skiing deals

Two major skiing rights deals were in advanced stages of negotiation as *TV Sports Markets* went to press this week.

The European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters, is finalising a three-year extension to the Austrian skiing federation's international rights, from 2014-15 to 2016-17.

The deal will be worth just under €8.5m (\$11.5m) per year, a five-per-cent increase on the €8m it pays per year from 2011-12 to 2013-14.

The EBU beat competition from the Infront Sports & Media, IMG Media and Ufa Sports agencies when agreeing the current deal (*TV Sports Markets* 15:17).

The EBU provides the federation with wide coverage of its events on free-to-air television. The federation also has long been reluctant to sell its rights to Infront. It has concerns about what it calls Infront's "monopoly" and prefers "the full attention" of the EBU to being one of many federations whose rights are bundled together. Infront holds rights to all the major skiing federations other than Austria.

Infront, meanwhile, is struggling to agree a deal in Germany for Finnish skiing federation rights. It has yet to agree a deal for the 2013-14 season.

Public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF are seen by experts as the only likely buyers of the rights. Event sponsors are pushing Infront to agree a deal. ARD/ZDF offer wide coverage, and Germany is one of the big skiing markets for the federation.

Infront holds the international rights from 2013-14 to 2017-18, in a deal worth about €2.6m per year. Germany is expected to provide about 25 per cent of Infront's total deal. ■

TV UK

Sky locks out BT for long term but top football still critical

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renewals, if Sky were to lose more Premier League games to BT in the next auction it would have a major impact.

“If Sky lost a decent chunk of the Premier League,” she said, “a good proportion of customers would drop it; they would take BT Sport and then do [Sky’s online ppv service] Now TV for the odd match. To argue now that Sky is not extraordinarily reliant on the Premier League would be wrong.”

PGA Tour

Sky is thought to be paying about £20m per season for the rights to PGA Tour golf in a seven-year deal, from 2015-16 to 2021-22. This is up from about £8m per season that it was paying in its existing deal, which was due to run from 2010-11 to 2016-17.

BT began approaching the PGA at the beginning of 2013 to express interest in the rights when the contract came up for renewal. The most high-level of a series of meetings took place in London during the Leaders Sport Summit in October, when BT chief executive Gavin Patterson met the PGA delegation. Patterson is said to have made it clear that BT was prepared to trump Sky’s best offer.

The PGA had a break clause in its contract after 2014 and, armed with strong interest from BT, told Sky that it was prepared to go back to the market if it could not renegotiate the existing contract on more favourable terms.

It is arguable that with both broadcasters so determined to win the rights, the PGA ought to have moved to an auction to pit them against each other. There are two reasons why it didn’t.

First, memories of what happened the last time that the PGA dropped Sky to take a higher rights fee from an emerging player – when it agreed a deal with UK premium channel Setanta in 2007 – were still fresh.

Setanta had ousted Sky by offering a large fee increase. It agreed to pay an

average of £13m per season in a six-year deal, more than double the £6m per season Sky had been paying. Prior to the Setanta deal, Sky had held the PGA Tour rights since 1991.

When Setanta went into administration in June 2009 it created cashflow problems for the PGA and left it without a broadcaster for the final months of the season. Basic-tier channel Eurosport UK stepped in to show the end of the season.

From 2010, the PGA had little option other than going back to Sky, which was able to force the price down. However, it was felt within the PGA that Sky did not push too hard in exploiting the weakness of the PGA’s bargaining position.

The broadcaster secured a fee lower than Setanta was paying but one that was still a step up on what it had paid in its earlier contract. Sky’s chief executive, Jeremy Darroch, is said to have been instrumental in ensuring that the PGA did not get squeezed too hard.

The second factor in Sky’s favour was its commitment to enhance the production from next season. This will involve Sky having a production unit on site at 31 events, as opposed to only three or four at present. Sky will use a dedicated UK commentary team rather than taking the feed with the same commentary as the US coverage.

Sky will also be able to take additional content from 10 streams produced by the PGA’s new technology hub which will enable the UK broadcaster to provide additional footage of golf in what otherwise would be the ‘dead’ periods when the US network coverage takes advertising breaks.

Sky closed the most recent renewal with a strong presentation last month at the PGA’s base in Florida led by commercial director Richard Verow and senior golf producer Jason Wesley.

The PGA events provide Sky with prime time content from Thursday to Sunday. They also provide volume – the loss of the rights to Setanta had left a large hole in the broadcaster’s schedule – and appeal to a more wealthy demographic than Sky’s typical subscriber. This has ancillary value in driving advertising revenues and average revenue per user, as the typical golf fan tends to be more likely to take up add-ons and enhanced services like HD.

Super League

Sky is paying £40m per season in a five-year deal, from 2017 to 2021, for the rights to UK rugby league’s Super League. Sky’s existing five-year contract with the Rugby Football League runs from 2012 to 2016 and is worth about £26m per season.

Renewal talks had not been planned last year but grew out of the discussions about the reformat of the league structure from 2015. Sky needed to be consulted as the changes, including a reduction of Super League teams from 14 to 12, come into force during its contract.

While these talks were taking place, BT was also approaching the league to express its interest for the next contract period. The telco has already snatched the top domestic and some European club rugby union from Sky.

League chairman Brian Barwick is said to have used BT’s interest to push Sky into an earlier renewal, giving the broadcaster a short turnaround time to put up an improved bid to prevent the rights going to auction. This tactic secured the league an increase of almost 55 per cent.

Despite the scale of the increase, which was approved by the clubs, Barwick was criticised by two clubs for not putting the rights out to tender. Ian Lenegan, chairman of Wigan, and Marwan Koukash, owner of Salford, argued that the league would have earned more by properly testing the market.

Sky will show at least 80 Super League matches per season, plus live matches from the Challenge Cup, the second-tier Championship and the annual World Club Challenge.

WWE

Sky is paying about £16m per season for the rights to “sports entertainment” WWE events for five years, from 2015 to 2019, according to one informed source. This is thought to be up from about £10m per season in its current deal. The deal includes weekly programming and 12 pay-per-view events per year.

WWE has been a very successful property for Sky for over 20 years. It is thought to account for at least 100,000 subscribers, it enjoys very high

ratings for its programming, and is thought to provide about £6m per year for its ppv events – boosting three separate revenue streams. BT held talks with the WWE but Sky had an exclusive negotiating period so the rights never came to market.

Scottish FA rights

Sky's deal with the Scottish Football Association for Scottish Cup matches and Scotland friendlies for four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, is thought to be worth between £2m and £3m per season.

A comparison with previous deals has little meaning, as the new contract contains no competitive Scotland matches, which accounted for the bulk of the value in previous deals. Those matches are now sold as part of the centralised Uefa package.

In its last four-year cycle, from 2010-11 to 2013-14, the Scottish FA earned about £15m per season from deals with Sky and BBC Scotland and the sale of its international rights.

Sky will show up to nine games live from every round of the Scottish Cup, both semi-finals – one exclusively live – and the final live.

Lions Tour

Sky is thought to be paying about £18m for the British & Irish Lions tour to New Zealand in 2017. This is a modest increase on the £15m it paid for the 2013 tour to Australia. BT was interested but Sky had an exclusive negotiating period so the rights didn't come to market. The renewal with the Lions Committee gives Sky its sixth consecutive Lions tour, which is considered to be one of its crown jewels.

The 2013 deal was the first time that the rights had been packaged separately to the package of rights sold by Sanzar, the body representing rugby union in Australia, South Africa and New Zealand.

New Zealand cricket

Sky acquired the rights to New Zealand cricket in a seven-year deal, from 2014 to 2020. The deal was agreed with the Pitch International agency, which holds the global rights outside New Zealand.

Most of the value of the deal is in England tours to New Zealand in 2018 and 2020. New Zealand's home series against West Indies, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Australia, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh and South Africa are also included.

The deal is thought to be worth about

£8m. BT is not thought to have been interested because the time difference between New Zealand and the UK means most live coverage takes place in the early hours of the morning. Having the rights in isolation, with Sky having all other decent Test cricket, would also have little value in driving subscriptions.

Speedway

Sky is thought to be paying about £1m per season in rights and a further £1m to £1.5m per season in production costs for speedway's top-tier Elite League. The deal is for five years, from 2015 to 2019, and covers at least 25 meetings per year.

Of the current crop of renewals, this was the most surprising. It had been widely reported that Sky had told the rights-holders, the British Speedway Promoters Association, that it would not renew. Viewing figures have been falling for several seasons.

The sport has value for Sky. It has loyal followers and provides content on a Monday night, when little top sport is played. However, as one insider put it, "that is one that Sky would have allowed to disappear into the ether had BT not been around." [www.█](#)

TV SPAIN

Telefónica returns to media rights as Vodafone presses

By Robin Jellis

Spanish telco Telefónica is returning to the sports-rights market to slow its loss of pay-television subscribers.

The telco is moving back into the market after almost a decade to provide attractive content for Movistar TV, its IPTV platform. By offering stronger triple-play services, Telefónica hopes to slow subscriber losses. Movistar TV had just over 600,000 subscribers in the third quarter of 2013, down from more than 800,000 at the end of 2011. A stronger pay-television service would help the telco in its battle with mobile rival Vodafone.

"Their strategy is to build their own

sports channel," one Spanish rights expert said this week. "They are ready to invest a lot. They are protecting themselves and they are being very aggressive."

The telco has agreed two major motor sports deals. It has picked up rights to the entire MotoGP World Championship, some of which are exclusive, and is set to acquire non-exclusive rights to the Formula One motor racing championship.

Telefónica has agreed a deal worth around €8m (\$10.8m) per year for MotoGP rights to the whole 2014 season, of which 10 races will be exclusive live broadcasts. The Spanish rights were initially picked up by commercial broadcaster Telecinco, owned by Mediaset, in a three-year deal from 2012 to 2014 worth about €30m per year.

The new deal was agreed between Telefónica, Mediaset and the MotoGP commercial rights-holders, Dorna. Telecinco will show nine grands prix live and the other 10 on a delayed basis. Delayed

coverage will be shown about three to five hours after the end of each race.

Telefónica's exclusive rights are expected to be for races in Asia and the Americas, which are not thought to be as attractive to Mediaset. Races in the Americas take place late in the evening when it has other content to show, while races in Asia take place too early.

The telco's Formula One rights will cover the 2014 and 2015 seasons. The deal is being agreed directly with Formula One Management, the rights-holder for the series. The deal is thought to be worth between €3m and €4m per year. Commercial broadcaster Antena 3 will also have rights in the same two-year period, in a deal worth between €32m and €33m per year. Catalan public-service broadcaster TV3 pays about €3.5m per year. The telco faced no competition for either set of rights. It will be the first time that either event has been on pay-television in Spain. █

VOLLEYBALL

Pitch muscles out IMG Media to get foothold in market

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company set up by Polish pay-television operator Polsat and the Polish volleyball federation. A tender was issued for the rights, with bids due by October 28.

Polsat had initially acquired the rights from the international volleyball federation, the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball. Polsat is understood to have paid a substantial fee for the rights in Poland because it is hosting the 2014 World Championship and also as the Poland men's team is strong. Brazil and Japan were excluded as they are two of the most valuable markets for the sport.

IMG, together with Japanese advertising agency Dentsu and XYZ Olympic Sports, a subsidiary of Brazilian marketing company Grupo ABC, holds the global commercial rights for the FIVB's major events. The eight-year deal, from 2013 to 2020, was agreed in March 2012 (*TV Sports Markets* 16:6).

Volleyball rights experts estimate that deal to be worth between \$75m and

\$80m. It also contains a revenue share above the minimum guarantee. The three parties beat rival bids from Infront and Sportsman. The rights to the 2014 men's World Championship were excluded because they had already been sold to Polsat but the women's 2014 World Championship was included.

Strong markets

The strongest markets for volleyball are Brazil, Japan and Poland, which have all been excluded from Pitch's deal. Other markets where Pitch is likely to secure a decent rights fee are Italy, Russia, France, the US, Germany and some countries in North Africa.

The production costs to all matches are expected to be covered by Polsat as host broadcaster. Each match costs between €20,000 and €25,000 to produce. All matches will be produced in high definition. There will be 103 matches at the 2014 championships, which would put total production costs at between €2m and €2.5m.

The World Championship is Pitch's first foray into volleyball rights. Rivals expect the agency to use its close ties to Qatari pay-television operator Al Jazeera to agree lucrative deals in the Middle East and North Africa and in France for its beIN Sports channels. They see this relationship

as being the key to Pitch being able to heavily outbid rivals. Pitch declined to comment on the deal this week.

One expert said that the market value of the rights was about €400,000 in France and €300,000 in the Middle East. These are, however, key territories for beIN Sports, and the value of any deal will be higher than this. Qatar is a possible host of the 2018 men's World Championship.

The majority of the value in each territory lies in the participation of that country. From Mena, Egypt and Iran have qualified for the tournament, and there will be a further two African countries competing. France has also qualified.

Pitch has six months until the start of the championship, which runs from August 30 to September 21.

Global value

The global media-rights value of the 2010 World Championship is understood to have been about €18m. It is thought that the FIVB is already close to this total for the 2014 championship, with a deal in Japan, one of the two most valuable territories, yet to be announced.

The rights have previously been sold as a global rights package, so a like-for-like comparison with the value of the rights Pitch has acquired is not possible. ■

ICE HOCKEY

First steps on long road for new elite Euro competition

By Kevin McCullagh

The Infront Sports & Media agency has got off to a modest start to media-rights sales for new European club ice hockey competition the Champions Hockey League.

Deals have been agreed in the two most important television markets for the property – Finland and Sweden. Competition is not thought to have been strong in either.

Finnish commercial and pay-television broadcaster MTV is understood to be paying a rights fee of less than €500,000

(\$675,000) per year in a three-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2016-17.

The Swedish buyer has not yet been confirmed, but one of the losing bidders, a major sports broadcaster, is thought to have bid less than €100,000 per year plus production costs.

Infront is guaranteeing between €3m and €4m per year from global sales of media and marketing rights for the competition in a nine-year deal, from 2014-15 to 2022-23. Roughly half the revenues in the first season are expected to come from marketing rights.

Infront's deal is with the European Club Competition, the CHL's organising body. The ECC is a joint-venture between Europe's top clubs, leagues and the International Ice Hockey Federation.

MTV is producing all Finnish teams' homes matches, which adds a large

amount of value to its deal. The number of matches won't be known until the competition draw is made in May. Finland is contributing at least six clubs to the competition – the most along with Sweden – and production costs are expected to be about €15,000 per match.

Public-service broadcaster YLE is thought to have been interested, but not prepared to pay anything beyond some production costs. The other major sports broadcasters in the market, free-to-air and pay-television operators Nelonen and Modern Times Group, have plenty of ice hockey already. MTG shows the NHL, the Russian Kontinental Hockey League, and the Swedish second-tier HockeyAllsvenskan. Nelonen has the SM-Liiga, the Finnish league.

MTV is understood to have been enthusiastic after a good viewer response

to its coverage of the 2008-09 Champions Hockey League, the previous attempt to create a European tournament, which collapsed after making heavy losses in its single season. The coverage also dovetails with another major MTV sports property, the Formula One motor racing season.

KHL not yet keen

Russia will also be a key television market for the competition, but the value is being undermined by the refusal of clubs from the KHL, Europe's strongest league, to take part, at least in the first season.

One of the reasons the Russian league is sitting out is that the other CHL clubs do not want Jokerit, a Finnish club that is joining the KHL next season, to play. The other leagues fear the KHL will take teams from them too – the KHL has a stated ambition to create a pan-European league.

Talks in January between the CHL and Alexander Medvedev, the KHL president, failed to produce a resolution. The CHL has since offered the KHL two 'wild card' places in the 2014-15 tournament. The teams that take part in the inaugural CHL must be finalised by mid-May, before the 2014-15 draw, which is scheduled for May 21, during the ice hockey World Championships in Minsk, Belarus. ■

FOOTBALL

Federation nets 17% increase for French Cup rights

By Robin Jellis

The French football federation secured an increase of 17 per cent in the value of its Coupe de France rights late last month. Interest from pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports pressured the incumbent rights-holders to pay more.

The federation, the Fédération Française de Football, agreed a four-year joint deal with state broadcaster France Télévisions and basic-tier sports broadcaster Eurosport, from 2014-15 to 2017-18. The deal is worth €66m (\$89m), or €16.5m per year. The two broadcasters have held the rights jointly for the last two cycles.

In the first round of bidding, the

federation's reserve price was not met. Bids were increased in a second round. The fee is an increase on the previous four-year deal, from 2010-11 to 2013-14, in which the two broadcasters paid €14.15m per year.

beIN Sports also bid, along with one other broadcaster. Pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus did not bid and there was no competition from other free-to-air broadcasters.

Julie-Anne Gross, the federation's TV rights manager, this week told *TV Sports Markets* that the joint bid of France Télévisions and Eurosport offered the most exposure and biggest rights fee.

"They made the best offer financially and in terms of exposure," she said. "The Coupe de France is a very important product for them, especially Eurosport. We knew that the competition was on the pay-TV side, and that's why they were motivated to make a big offer."

Had it won the rights, beIN Sports would have had to make the final, at least, available to a free-to-air channel as it is protected by listed-events legislation. It is understood that the federation's preference was for other key games to also be on free-to-air television. In order to take all matches outside the final on to pay-television, beIN Sports would have had to pay a big premium. Free-to-air exposure is crucial to the federation's sponsorship deals.

Sponsorship deals for the four years from 2010-11 to 2013-14 are worth €11.2m per year. Sportswear manufacturer Nike also has some Coupe de France rights in its sponsorship deal for the national team, which is worth €42.6m per year.

France Télévisions was keen to renew its deal because it is strong sports content from January to June which provides it with good ratings. It is also one of the few football properties still shown free-to-air.

France Télévisions is thought to pay about 75 per cent of the rights fee, with Eurosport paying 25 per cent. The broadcasters will also cover production costs of at least €25,000 per match.

The interest from beIN Sports did not drive the kind of percentage increase seen in other deals in France since the broadcaster emerged but the federation is satisfied with the increase, Gross said.

"I think we can be pleased with regard to the value of other rights on the market in France."

The deal also includes the women's Coupe de France, and the women's top football division, the Division 1 Féminine.

The federation is also in talks with interested parties for the international rights for the cup. The majority of the deals for the Coupe de France outside France end in 2013-14. The exception is a deal with Sport1 in Germany ending in 2015-16. The international rights are thought to be worth about €1m per year.

Coverage

The broadcasters will show between 35 and 40 matches per season, of which between 12 and 15 will be in prime time. France Télévisions will show at least one match per round from the last 64. Both broadcasters will have highlights and magazine rights.

There will be more programming slots than before. In the current deal, the afternoon slot at 5pm on either France 2 or France 3 was unpopular with clubs because it was too early for fans. In the new deal, the clubs will have more say over the time slot. France Télévisions will only show matches in prime time.

The final of the women's Coupe de France will be shown live on France 4 and on Eurosport. Eurosport will show between 16 and 22 matches of D1 Féminine or the women's Coupe de France. France 4 will show four matches.

Other rights

The federation also tendered two other rights packages, one for the French U-21 team and the other for the women's national team. Both were won by D8 and D17, digital-terrestrial channels owned by Canal Plus. The value of the deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, is thought to be a slight increase on the previous four-year deal, which was worth €1.7m per year.

"We were surprised when we saw their offer, which was better in finances and exposure than the previous deal," Gross said. "We thought it would be difficult to renew the existing contract because Canal Plus had said they didn't want sport on D8."

The deal was agreed in a second round

of bidding. France Télévisions and L'Équipe 21, the digital-terrestrial broadcaster owned by newspaper L'Équipe, also bid. Rights to the women's national team are quite attractive – the team is fifth in the Fifa rankings.

The U-21 team, however, has a slightly tarnished reputation after a group of its players travelled from Le Havre to Paris for a night out in October 2012, the evening before a play-off match to qualify for the 2013 European Championship.

The team lost 5-3 to Norway the next day.

The deal includes all friendly and qualifier matches of both teams. Each team will play about 10 matches per year. Most matches will be shown on D17, with one or two of the best matches on D8. ■

OLYMPIC GAMES

Claro claws back some money but must wait for prize

By Kevin McCullagh

América Móvil's investment in Olympics rights in Latin America is beginning to pay off, but it will be 2016 before the success of the deal can be measured, local industry experts said this week.

América Móvil, which is rolling out a sports pay-television service, Claro Sports, across Latin America, in the last month sublicensed non-exclusive pan-regional rights for the 2014 and 2016 Olympics Games to the three biggest pay-television sports broadcasters in the region – ESPN, Fox and DirecTV.

It is also understood to have agreed a pay-television rights deal in Argentina with local agency Torneos y Competencias (TyC). It has also been sublicensing rights for the 2014 winter Olympics to free-to-air broadcasters across the region.

The deals leave América Móvil's pan-regional pay-television channel Claro Sports with no exclusivity over the Olympics rights – ESPN, Fox, DirecTV and TyC are understood to have the same rights packages. However, América Móvil has retained exclusive digital rights.

Rights-sharing among rival pay-television broadcasters is common in Latin America and was part of América Móvil's strategy from the start.

The broadcaster has two main motivations with the sublicensing deals: to recoup part of its large rights fee, and to meet the coverage obligations in its deal with the International Olympic Committee.

América Móvil is not expected to recover the entire \$110m (£81m) it is paying the IOC – a 211-per-cent increase

Non-exclusive Olympics make sense in Latin America

There are several reasons why 2014 and 2016 Olympics rights are valuable to Latin America's biggest pay-television broadcasters, despite being shared with their rivals, the companies told *TV Sports Markets*.

With the 2016 summer Games taking place in Rio, Brazil, Fox Sports Latin America felt that as one of the region's leading sports broadcasters it had to be "part of the party," Francisco Pazmino, senior vice president of programming and acquisitions, said.

"It's in our back yard, it's in our timezone, and Fox Sports is often the number-one-rated sports channel in the region," he said.

ESPN said the experience it had showing the last two Olympic Games convinced it that it was worth investing again. "Based on feedback from clients and fans, we felt that the new agreement for Sochi 2014 and Rio 2016 would be equally positive," Tim Bunnell, senior vice president, programming and marketing at ESPN International, said.

on the rights fee in the region for the 2010 and 2012 Olympics. But making a profit from sublicensing was not its main aim. Securing blue-chip content for Claro Sports, and establishing itself as a major player in the Latin American sports rights business were equally important.

Coverage commitments

América Móvil's coverage guarantees to the IOC include free-to-air coverage in every Latin American market. Coverage in Latin America for the 2014 winter Olympics is said to be comparable to coverage for the 2010 winter Olympics in Vancouver. Free-to-air coverage in every market was secured with last-minute deals in Uruguay and Bolivia.

The IMG Media agency, which has

Fox said it would be able to differentiate its coverage from the others. There are two broad ways to do this, Pazmino said. "First there is commentary and analysts, or talent. Second is what you can do with your teams on the ground looking behind-the-scenes, providing colour, interviews, stories.

"That's what differentiates it for us. Because at the end of the day, everyone is going to get a nice HD feed that is well produced, and has graphics and statistics."

Fox will have built new broadcasting facilities in Rio in time for the 2016 Games, which Pazmino said would give the company an edge over its rivals.

The huge volume of content produced at the Olympics will also make the job of differentiating coverage easier.

Industry executives said that non-exclusive rights deals were being encouraged by escalating rights fee costs. "It comes down to the premium you pay for exclusivity, and whether you can get credit for that from affiliates and advertisers," Bunnell said. ■

advised the IOC on media rights sales in the Americas in recent cycles, has been helping América Móvil in the process by identifying potential sublicensees.

The sublicensing deals with the major pay-television operators were done very late – "at the eleventh hour and 59th minute," as one local expert put it. This gave the buyers very little time to prepare and advertise their winter Olympics coverage.

Goals

América Móvil's core business is mobile telecoms, which it operates across the Americas. It moved into pay-television with its Claro TV platform, which launched in 2008. Claro TV is available across Latin America, on IPTV, cable or satellite, depending on the territory. Its biggest

markets are currently Mexico, Colombia and Chile. Its new pay-sports channel Claro Sports launched in December.

Acquiring blue-chip content for Claro Sports, and using that to drive the channel's subscribers, is considered the biggest goal of the Olympics deal by most industry insiders. It will be 2016 before its full impact can be assessed. The 2016 summer Olympics in Rio will drive huge interest in the region, and will be far more significant for Claro Sports than this year's winter Olympics.

The Olympics acquisition was also designed to establish Claro Sports as a serious player in the sports-rights market. One expert said this week that the deal had worked in this regard. "One-and-a-half years ago they were just another group of people wanting to create a channel and talking big. Now they sit at the top table at talks for every major rights property."

América Móvil has hired staff experienced in rights acquisitions and producing Olympics coverage – including staff in Mexico hired from the market's two biggest broadcasters and previous Olympics rights-holders, Televisa and TV Azteca.

América Móvil has sold on rights in Mexico to 26 free-to-air broadcasters, so far excluding Televisa and TV Azteca. ■

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Mediaset requires fresh investors for pay-TV gamble

By Frank Dunne

Mediaset's €700m (\$945m) investment in the rights to the Uefa Champions League will almost certainly contribute to continued losses for Mediaset Premium, the company's Italian pay-television platform, in the medium term. But the deal arguably makes sense for the broadcaster as part of its plan to build an Italo-Spanish pay-television operation.

Several analysts this week said that holding the rights will make Mediaset's new venture more attractive to potential investors. The markets appeared to agree, with Mediaset's share price gaining several points this week.

Mediaset said in December that it would evaluate "international development potential, possible synergies, the expansion of over-the-top services, as well as the eventual involvement of industrial and/or financial partners in the newco."

The new company will include Mediaset Premium and the 22-per-cent stake that Mediaset holds in Spanish pay-television platform Digital Plus.

Other analysts say that unless Mediaset already has an agreement in place with a potential partner the Champions League deal could undermine its expansion plan.

Claudio Aspesi, analyst at Bernstein, said: "If Mediaset is still trying to sell a stake to a third party, they just devalued that stake for any sane buyer for two reasons. First, they are raising the cost base of the business and making it less likely to ever make money. Second, any clever negotiator will now know that Mediaset needs a deal a lot more than it did before this agreement – hence Mediaset's negotiating power has deteriorated."

Media groups reported to be interested in taking a stake in the new company include 21st Century Fox, Al Jazeera, Telefónica, TF1, Canal Plus and RTL.

Big increase

Mediaset agreed to pay just over €230m per season for exclusive rights to the Champions League for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. In the current three-year deal, rival television platform Sky Italia pays €130m per season for the pay-television rights. Mediaset pays a further €30m per season for the free-to-air rights to the top Wednesday night match.

Sky responded by picking up the rights to the Europa League for the same period for about €30m per season, the same amount that Mediaset pays in its current deal.

The increase of just under 45 per cent for the Champions League is not the biggest Uefa has achieved. In last month's deal in Myanmar with state-owned broadcaster S Media, for example, the value rose from \$1m per season to almost \$10m per season. However, in terms of a swing from what the market expected the outcome is one of the more dramatic achieved by European football's governing body and its sales agency, Team.

Macroeconomic indicators are still very

negative in Italy, both pay-television platforms have been losing customers and there had been increasing signs of a non-belligerence pact between the two.

The deal is also good news for the Italian football league, Lega Serie A. Having lost the Champions League, Sky is now very much on the back foot. Losing Serie A too would be disastrous, so it can be expected to be aggressive in the bidding.

Challenge

Most experts agree that Mediaset will struggle to refinance its investment. Mediaset Premium currently has 1.9m subscribers and a further 1.9m customers who use pre-paid top-up cards.

Estimates vary about how many of these can be considered to be 'active' customers, with most analysts working on the assumption of a maximum of around 3m active customers. This compares to the 4.5m subscribers to Sky Italia.

Analyst estimates on the number of new subscribers that Mediaset would need to add to break even on its investment range from 300,000 to 1.6m. Even at the lower end, that will represent a big challenge.

The Champions League is a long way behind Serie A as a driver of subscriptions. Only three Italian teams qualify and in recent years have performed badly. This season only one team, Milan, got beyond the group stage.

Mediaset's plan to show the top Wednesday night game exclusively on one of its free-to-air channels will increase the broadcaster's return from advertising revenue but will also provide the casual football fan with a good reason not to sign up for a pay-television subscription.

Holding the rights does, however, give Mediaset a strong bargaining position with Sky. Unless Mediaset's new investment partner has extremely deep pockets, the broadcaster is thought certain to look to recoup some of its investment by sublicensing rights to Sky in return for cash plus rights to the Europa League.

The two broadcasters had a sharing deal covering the 2012-13 and 2013-14 seasons. Mediaset is said to have paid €60m per season on top of the Europa League rights. Sky refused to renew the deal for next season but may now be forced to reverse that decision. [www.■](#)

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 30 to February 12

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

American football, MLB baseball, cricket, football, PGA and US Masters golf

- **American Football:** US network CBS was awarded rights for a new Thursday night package of NFL games. The agreement will run for the 2014-15 season, with the NFL having an option to extend the deal by a further year. The package includes live coverage of 16 regular-season games, including 14 on Thursday evenings and two on Saturday evenings. The first eight early-season games will also be simulcast on the league-owned pay-television channel NFL Network. CBS will produce coverage of all 16 games.
- **Baseball:** Canadian pay-television sports broadcaster TSN retained rights for US pay-television broadcaster ESPN's Sunday Night Baseball package of Major League Baseball games and, for the first time, acquired rights for the pay-television broadcaster's Monday Night Baseball and Wednesday Night Baseball games. TSN will show live coverage of 75 games per season as well as ESPN's magazine show Baseball Tonight and a package of digital content as part of an eight-year deal, from 2014 to 2021.
- **Cricket:** UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB acquired live rights to New Zealand cricket (page 1).
- **Football:** Commercial broadcaster Mediaset acquired rights in Italy for the Uefa Champions League for three years, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 8).
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia acquired rights in Italy for the Uefa Europa League for three years, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 8).
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB acquired rights for exclusive live coverage of the Scotland national team's home friendly matches plus the Scottish Cup and Scottish FA Youth Cup knockout tournaments (page 1).
- **Football:** Public-service broadcaster France Télévisions and the Eurosport France division of the pan-regional sports broadcaster retained rights for the men's and women's Coupe de France tournaments and the top-tier Division 1 Féminine women's league for four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18 (page 6).
- **Football:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus acquired rights for all France U-21 national team and national women's team games (page 6).
- **Football:** Sport Mediatream, the in-house streaming service operated by UK horse racing pay-television broadcaster At The Races, acquired rights for the Football Conference, which comprises the three divisions below the English Football League. At The Races will produce and distribute an audio-visual service comprising live coverage of 30 Conference matches that are shown on UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport.
- **Football:** The Pitch International agency struck rights deals with four broadcasters for SpursTV, the weekly television programming package dedicated to English Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur. The agency agreed deals with: pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports in Asia, North America, France, the Middle East and North Africa; Indian sports and entertainment pay-television broadcaster Sony; pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand; and pay-television broadcaster Arena Sport in the Balkans. The programming includes delayed coverage of league games.
- **Golf:** UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB extended a rights deal for events operated by the PGA Tour sanctioning body. Sky will show live coverage of 32 events from the PGA Tour, the FedExCup Playoffs and the Presidents Cup representative tournament in 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021 (page 1).
- **Golf:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights in Australia for the US Masters. The deal with the Augusta National Golf Club, which hosts the tournament, will run for three years, from 2014 to 2016, and covers television, online, IPTV, mobile and broadband platforms. The free-to-air rights were acquired in January by commercial broadcaster Seven.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Media companies Liberty Global and Discovery Communications made a joint approach to private equity group CVC Capital Partners to begin talks over acquiring CVC's 35-per-cent stake in the Formula One motor racing championship. As part of a plan to acquire a 49-per-cent stake, Liberty and Discovery could acquire Lehman Brothers' 12.3-per-cent shareholding, with the investment bank reportedly obliged to offload its stake before the end of June.
- The Lagardère Unlimited sports marketing division of media conglomerate Lagardère posted a 13.6-per-cent drop in turnover after a sharp fall in sales in the final quarter of 2013. Annual net sales for Lagardère Unlimited, which operates the Sportfive, World Sport Group and IEC in Sports agencies, fell in 2013 to €409m (\$552m) from €470m. In the quarter to December 31, sales fell by 28.2 per cent, from €150m to €107m.

FOOTBALL

- Real Madrid and Barcelona will have their media-rights income capped at four times as much as the Spanish Liga's smallest club, according to Javier Tebas, the president of the Liga de Fútbol Profesional, the Spanish football league. The clubs currently earn about 6.5 times as much as the smallest Liga club. Real and Barcelona's annual media-rights income will remain at about €150m (\$203m) each for several years while the other clubs catch up.
- Spain's Liga de Fútbol Profesional launched an online channel providing live coverage of games from the second-tier Liga Adelante. The channel, which will show the "vast majority" of the division's games live, is free to access through the league's official website. The LFP also teamed up with the Consejo Superior de Deportes, the country's sports council, to launch an advertising campaign warning about piracy violations of the league's media rights.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 30 to February 12**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****Hockey, ice hockey, kickboxing, motorcycling and Formula One**

- **Hockey:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 acquired exclusive rights for the 2014 men's and women's Hockey World Cup and 2014 Champions Trophy in a deal with the International Hockey Federation, the sport's global governing body. Live coverage and highlights will be shown on free-to-air and pay-television channels plus the Sport1.de website and mobile platforms.
 - **Ice Hockey:** Commercial and pay-television broadcaster MTV acquired rights in Finland for the new Champions Hockey League pan-European club tournament. Live coverage of games will be offered on the MTV Sport pay-television channel with highlights shown on the broadcaster's free-to-air channels. The rights include coverage on broadband internet and mobile platforms (page 5).
 - **Ice Hockey:** Canadian NHL franchise the Ottawa Senators agreed a local rights deal with telco Bell Media. The 12-year deal will run from 2014-15 to 2025-26 and covers Eastern and Northern Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic Canada and Newfoundland. Bell's pay-television channel TSN will show at least 52 regular-season and pre-season games per year. Bell's French-language pay-television channel RDS will broadcast at least 40 regular-season and pre-season games per year. The deal, which includes radio and sponsorship rights, is worth up to C\$400m (€269m/\$360m) or about C\$33m per season.
 - **Kickboxing:** Glory Sports International, the parent company of the Glory World Series, extended rights deals with pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport in Europe, free-to-air sports broadcaster Esporte Interativo in Brazil and pay-television broadcaster Sky Mexico in Central America as well as terrestrial and pay-television broadcaster Telesur and pan-regional pay-television operator DirecTV across Latin America.
 - **Kickboxing:** Online media company Epicentre agreed a deal with Glory Sports International to stream live coverage of the Glory World Series.
 - **Kickboxing:** The Fighting Spirit agency will distribute global rights for events staged by Hong Kong-based promoter K-1 over two years, from 2014 to 2015.
 - **Motorcycling:** Telco Telefónica acquired rights in Spain for the 2014 MotoGP season. Telefónica struck the deal with the Dorna Sports agency, the series' commercial rights-holder, and commercial broadcaster Telecinco, which has a three-year MotoGP rights deal in Spain, from 2012 to 2014. Telefónica's IPTV platform Movistar TV will show every race, qualifying session and practice session live via a dedicated new channel, which will also provide news updates, historic races, documentaries and films. Telecinco will show nine grands prix live and the remaining 10 races on a delayed basis this year (page 4).
 - **Motorcycling:** Pan-European motorsport channel Motors TV agreed a three-year extension to its rights deal for the Motocross World Championship, from 2014 to 2016. Motors TV acquired the rights from series promoter Youthstream and will show the championship's MXGP and MX2 race categories plus the Motocross of Nations end-of-season event live or on a delayed basis.
 - **Motorcycling:** Italian commercial broadcaster Mediaset acquired rights for the Motocross World Championship over two years, from 2014 to 2015, in a deal with Youthstream. Mediaset will show the championship's MXGP race category, the Motocross of Nations, the Junior Motocross World Championship and the Snowcross World Championship.
 - **Motorcycling:** US pay-television broadcaster MAVTV acquired rights for the 2014 season of the Pro Motocross Championship in a deal with MX Sports Pro Racing, which operates the series.
 - **Motorsport:** Maltese telco Go agreed a three-year extension, from 2014 to 2016, to its rights deal for the Formula One championship. Go will broadcast every grand prix, qualifying and practice session.
-
- The Lega Serie A assembly, comprising the 20 clubs of the top Italian football division, approved guidelines for the sale of media rights for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The guidelines now require the approval of Agcom, the Italian communications authority, and AGCM, the country's competition regulator. The guidelines were drawn up by the Lega and its media-rights adviser, the Infront Sports & Media agency.
 - German Bundesliga top-tier football club Hertha Berlin extended a deal with the Sportfive agency for the marketing of its media and commercial rights. The new agreement will run until 2025.
 - The parent company of financially-troubled Comcast SportsNet Houston, the exclusive local media-rights-holder of Houston Rockets NBA basketball and Houston Astros Major League Baseball games, was placed under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.
 - UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB extended a deal to be carried on the TalkTalk telco's pay-television service for three years, from 2014 to 2016. The deal includes the Sky Sports 2014 NFL season, will be available through online, mobile, tablet and internet-connected television platforms, including the Verizon Communications telecommunications service, Microsoft's Xbox One games console and the Yahoo! Sports website.
 - Regional sports network Fox Sports San Diego, which is the local rights-holder of San Diego Padres Major League Baseball games, agreed a carriage deal with cable-television operator Time Warner Cable in the US.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- American football's NFL will launch a new online service, NFL Now, which will allow fans to tailor content, including highlights of games, to focus on their favourite teams and players. The service, which will launch ahead of the

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 30 to February 12

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

World Rally Championship, Olympic Games, Paralympics and rugby

- **Motorsport:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus acquired rights for the World Rally Championship. Canal Plus will exploit the rights on its Sport Plus and Infosport Plus channels. Up to three stages will be shown live from every rally, with a half-hour highlights programme broadcast on Sunday evenings and a one-hour round-up show broadcast on Monday evenings. Canal Plus struck the deal with WRC Promoter, the championship's commercial division.
 - **Olympic Games:** Pay-television broadcaster ESPN acquired rights across Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America for the 2014 winter Games in Sochi, Russia, and the 2016 summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. ESPN acquired the non-exclusive pay-television and digital rights from América Móvil, the Mexican telecommunications company owned by billionaire Carlos Slim. ESPN will exploit the rights on its pay-television channels, the ESPN.com website and ESPN Play, its live multi-screen broadband service (page 7).
 - **Olympic Games:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights across Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America for the 2014 winter Games and the 2016 summer Olympics. The Fox International Channels Latin America broadcast subsidiary of media company 21st Century Fox acquired the rights from América Móvil (page 7).
 - **Olympic Games:** Pan-regional pay-television broadcaster DirecTV acquired rights in Latin America for the 2014 winter Games and the 2016 summer Olympics in a deal with América Móvil. The agreement, which includes television, online and mobile rights, covers Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (page 7).
 - **Olympic Games:** Pay-television broadcaster OSN, which operates in the Middle East and North Africa, acquired rights for the 2014 winter Olympics in a deal with the Arab States Broadcast Union consortium of broadcasters. OSN will show coverage across four channels – OSN Sports 1 HD, OSN Sports 2 HD, OSN Sports 3 and OSN Sports 4 – as well as the OSN Play online viewing platform.
 - **Olympic Games:** South African public-service broadcaster the SABC acquired rights for the 2014 winter Games and the 2016 summer Olympics. The SABC acquired exclusive free-to-air television rights and non-exclusive internet and mobile rights in a deal with the International Olympic Committee.
 - **Olympic Games:** Free-to-air and pay-television broadcaster TVB acquired rights in Hong Kong for the 2014 winter Games. The exclusive rights, including live coverage and highlights, cover all media platforms. The deal was brokered by the Dentsu advertising agency on behalf of the International Olympic Committee.
 - **Paralympic Games:** Production company Attitude Pictures acquired rights in New Zealand for the 2014 winter Games. Attitude will show 44 hours of free-to-view live coverage and highlights as well as documentaries about the athletes via the AttitudeLive.com online service. New Zealand public-service broadcaster TVNZ will show Attitude's news, highlights and on-demand content. Attitude's deal with the International Paralympic Committee includes an option to provide coverage of the governing body's athletics, shooting and swimming world championships in 2014 and 2015.
 - **Rugby League:** UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB extended a rights deal for the Super League club competition for five years, from 2017 to 2021 (page 1).
 - **Rugby Union:** UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB extended a rights deal for exclusive live coverage of the British & Irish Lions representative team's tour to New Zealand in 2017 (page 1).
 - **Rugby Union:** The IEC in Sports agency struck a deal to distribute rights for the final five matches of the 2013-14 campaign of the Top League club competition in Japan. The agency acquired worldwide rights, excluding Japan. It bought the rights from Japanese pay-television broadcaster J Sports, the competition's global rights-holder (page 2).
- channels plus entertainment channels. Sky's internet television service, Now TV, is now available to TalkTalk's customers on a flexible day-pass basis.
- The Diario AS news service teamed up with the NBA to launch a new website in Spain for fans of the basketball league. The NBA.es website, which will be hosted in a special section of AS.com, will offer video highlights of games.
 - Digital sports media company Perform struck a deal with the NBA to launch an online service in New Zealand. Perform will offer localised NBA video and editorial content, including live online streaming coverage of one NBA regular-season game per week and up to four play-off games per season. The coverage will be available free via Perform's sports news service, Sportal, and available in English and Maori.
 - Al Jazeera-owned premium sports channel beIN Sports secured a carriage deal in Thailand on pay-television operator TrueVisions.
 - Australian commercial broadcaster Channel Nine and pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports would consider acquiring rights for a new summer rugby league 'nines' competition, which is being considered by the Australian National Rugby League.
 - Scottish Rugby, the country's governing body of rugby union, will stream live coverage of two Scotland U-20 national team matches and two Scotland women's national team games on video-sharing website YouTube in February and March, with QuipuTV producing the coverage.
 - The Liberty Global media company's European satellite-television arm, UPC DTH, agreed a deal for the Slovak Sport.TV2 pay-television channel to be carried on its freeSAT Plus service in the Czech Republic.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 30 to February 12**MEDIA RIGHTS 4****Skiing, speedway, table tennis, tennis, volleyball and wrestling**

- **Skiing:** Pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport Asia-Pacific acquired rights for four Ski Classics long-distance races in 2014 – Vasaloppet and Årefjällsloppet in Sweden, Birkebeinerrennet in Norway and König Ludwig Lauf in Germany. The deal covers South Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Papua New Guinea and Australia.
- **Speedway:** UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB acquired exclusive rights for the UK's top-tier Elite League for five years, from 2014 to 2018, in a deal with the British Speedway Promoters Association (page 1).
- **Table Tennis:** Pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired live rights for the 2014 International Table Tennis Federation's World Tour. Eurosport will show the six World Tour Super Series events and the World Tour Grand Finals in 54 countries across Europe. Eurosport agreed the deal with TMS International, the federation's marketing agency.
- **Tennis:** Pay-television broadcaster Teleclub acquired rights in Switzerland for ATP World Tour tournaments. The deal will run for three years, from 2014 to 2016, and covers all top-tier Masters 1000 series and second-tier 500 series events. Teleclub will show live coverage, highlights and the ATP Uncovered magazine programme.
- **Volleyball:** The Sportsman Media Group agency struck a deal to distribute rights for the Montreux Volley Masters tournament. Sportsman will market the rights on a global basis, excluding Switzerland, where the event will take place from May 27 to June 1.
- **Wrestling:** UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB acquired rights for the WWE entertainment series for five years, from 2015 to 2019 (page 1).

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The IMG agency acquired a minority stake in video technology company LiveClips, which delivers real-time highlights of sporting events to mobile devices.
- Learfield Sports strengthened its US college sports media rights portfolio by acquiring rival agency Nelligan Sports Marketing. Learfield took control of the rights of 41 new collegiate properties, increasing its overall portfolio to 92 colleges.
- International Olympic Committee members pledged their support to president Thomas Bach's plans to develop an Olympic television channel at the governing body's general assembly.
- Olympic Broadcasting Services, which was created by the International Olympic Committee to serve as the host broadcaster for all Olympic winter, summer and youth Games, confirmed an agreement with the organising committee of the 2018 winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea.
- German Basketball Bundesliga team Bayern Munich will stream live coverage of all home league games via its official website. Production will be handled by Bayern's in-house media team and coverage will include interviews, magazine programming and highlights plus live action.
- Video search engine Blinkx launched a dedicated channel for the 2014 winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, showing the most newsworthy clips from each day of action.
- The total number of people who watched at least 15 non-consecutive minutes of Formula One action worldwide fell by 50m year-on-year to 450m in 2013, according to the motorsport championship's annual global media report.
- US network Fox's coverage of the Super Bowl NFL American football championship game on Sunday, February 2 attracted an average of 111.5m viewers to set a new all-time audience record for a television programme in the country.
- Walter Böhm will assume the role of global head of media distribution at the Kentaro agency at the end of February, replacing Lasse Eckartsberg.

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« The Future of Sports
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