

FORMULA ONE

Latin America deal confirms trend of big increases with Asia set to follow

By Frank Dunne and Robin Jellis

This week's deal with the Mediapro agency continues the extraordinary start that Formula One Management has made to 2014, renewing broadcast contracts with substantial increases in rights fees.

Mediapro is thought to be paying about \$25m (€18m) per year for the rights in Central and South America and the Caribbean for five years, from 2015 to 2019. The current deals covering the same territories are worth about \$10m per season.

This follows a 100-per-cent increase in Spain earlier this month and an increase thought to be at least 40 per cent in the Middle East at the turn of the year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:1). Another major renewal under discussion, for the rights in Asia, is expected to deliver a sizeable uplift.

The sequence of deals confirms Formula One's position as one of a small handful of sports properties that broadcasters and agencies are prepared to pay massive

premiums for. More widely, it underlines the role of live sport as the most valuable real estate in an increasingly fragmented and on-demand media world.

The increases also to some extent reflect one key difference between Formula One Management and most other major rights-holders: it does not sell its global rights in fixed cycles, but has different contract periods in different territories. This enables it to react quickly to changes in local market conditions. The deals in Spain and the Middle East, for example, were put together very quickly when an unexpected opportunity arose.

Enter Mediapro

The Mediapro deal breaks the long-term grip on the rights in the region of Fox Latin America and has announced the entry of a major new player in sports

Continued on page 6 ►

TV SPAIN

Rights blitz gives Prisa a dilemma

By Frank Dunne

Telefónica's blitz this month on exclusive Formula One and MotoGP rights is part of a cat-and-mouse game for share of the Spanish pay-television market which will have far-reaching consequences for sports rights in the territory.

Last month, the company acquired non-exclusive rights to both series for 2014 and 2015 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:3.)

The company has since wrapped up a

deal with Formula One Management for the exclusive rights to the championship for two years, 2016 and 2017. It is thought to be paying about €70m (\$97m) per year, double the value of the current deals, which cover the 2014 and 2015 seasons.

An exclusive deal is also thought to be close for MotoGP. Negotiations with the commercial rights-holder to the

Continued on page 8 ►

CONTENTS

- 1,6 Latin America becomes latest market to deliver F1 increase
Mediapro: Deal reflects our DNA

- 1,8 Telefónica motorsports deals will pile more pressure on Prisa

- 2 Fastrack: Sport1 gets MLB; Silva needs Fox in Belgium; Masters holds value in Germany

- 3 NOS in surprise Eredivisie highlights deal as Fox waits

- 3 Mystery player keeps football league in Romania on track

- 4 Formula E: smart investment or the latest motorsport flop?

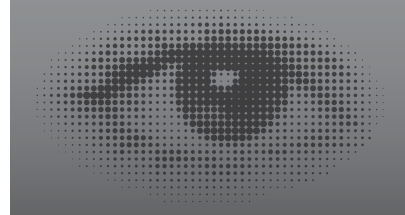
- 8 SBS shows interest in skating but not enough to shake off EBU

- 9 Sports Clips

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of Watching Brief



FASTRACK

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sport1 snaps up MLB rights and looks to add the NHL

German sports broadcaster Sport1 last week picked up Major League Baseball rights in a deal worth about \$500,000 (€360,000) per year.

The rights are for three years, from 2014 and 2016, and cover Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Sport1 did not face any competition for the rights, but the league was able to keep up its rights fee because the content provides Sport1 with valuable programming over the summer. One insider said the league had originally been looking for up to \$1m per year.

The rights have added value to Sport1 because of its US-themed sports pay-television channel, Sport1 US. It also has rights to American football's NFL and basketball's NBA. There is local interest in the performances of German-American Donald Lutz, who plays for the Cincinnati Reds.

The MLB was previously shown on the ESPN America channel, owned by pay-television broadcaster ESPN, which closed last July.

From 2006 to 2010, MLB rights across Europe were worth about \$5m per year. This was a high fee, driven up by competition between the NASN channel and ESPN. ESPN inherited the rights from NASN which it bought in 2006 and rebranded as ESPN America in 2009 (*TV Sports Markets* 14:18).

ESPN extended its deal for three years, from 2011 to 2013, covering Europe and the Middle East, for about \$3m per year.

Sport1 will show at least 60 live games per season with the original US commentary. Sport1 US is distributed by Sky, Kabel Deutschland, Unitymedia, Kabel BW and Entertain in Germany, by UPC Austria and A1 TV in Austria and upcabelcom in Switzerland.

TV Sports Markets understands that Sport1 is in advanced talks with the AMI agency to secure National Hockey League rights. The agency is thought to

have been looking for about \$2.5m per year for the rights, but would have to settle for closer to \$1.5m per year, one expert said. This year's NHL season is not being broadcast in Germany.

AMI and the Medge Consulting agency jointly acquired the NHL rights across Europe, the Middle East and Africa from 2011-12 to 2015-16, in a deal worth between \$20m and \$22m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 15:6). ■

Silva needs Fox for Pro League sale

MP & Silva is conducting talks with broadcasters in Belgium, with a view to launching a tender for the domestic league rights in the coming weeks, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

Last month, the agency became media adviser to the Belgian Pro League in a six-season deal, from 2014-15 to 2019-20, guaranteeing an average of €75m (\$104.2m) per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:4).

MP & Silva invited broadcasters, notably pay-television operators Belgacom, Telenet and BeTV, for discussions about the tender.

The initial proposal was made up of five packages. The first two were for live rights, and the other three were for highlights, clips and online rights.

The first package includes five games per weekend, and is open to exclusive and non-exclusive bids. The second package includes three games per weekend, and is only open to exclusive bids.

In the current deal, Telenet holds rights to the best matches, while Belgacom has rights to the least attractive matches, which usually kick off at the same time. This means it has a lower opportunity to attract viewers as well as high production costs (*TV Sports Markets* 15:11).

The change is to avoid one operator having all the best matches, as at present, and to reduce the difference in the value of the packages.

Telenet and Belgacom currently pay a combined €55.2m per year for all live rights. BeTV sublicensed rights to some

games from Telenet. For the next cycle, Belgacom, Telenet and BeTV have said they only want non-exclusive rights.

The three operators had a joint offer for the rights rejected by the league last month. Now, MP & Silva is trying to get a profit for the rights from the parties it bid against. One local expert said the agency would be "praying" for one of Fox Sports or Al Jazeera to bid.

A full tender is expected to be launched in early or mid-April. ■

Masters holds its value

The Augusta National Golf Club secured a small increase in the value of the media rights to the US Masters in Germany and Austria in a renewal with Sky Deutschland last week.

The deal is worth about €300,000 (\$415,000) per year, and covers two years, from 2014 to 2015. It is a marginal increase on the previous deal which ran from 2011 to 2013.

The deal was agreed in direct talks between the Augusta National Golf Club, the rights-holder, and Sky. There was no tender.

Sky faced no competition for the rights. It is the dominant pay-television broadcaster in Germany and the rights are more suited to pay-television due to the number of hours of programming. Free-to-air broadcasters are not willing to provide hours of golf coverage or to match the rights fee paid by Sky. It would also not make sense for another broadcaster to get the rights to just the US Masters as Sky has the rights to all other golf tied up.

Sky will show eight hours of live coverage each day of the tournament, which runs for four days, this year from Thursday, April 10 to Sunday, April 13.

Despite Sky's strong position, the club secured an increase by pointing to Sky's subscriber base, which has grown since the last time a deal was agreed, and improved production of the event.

Sky needs the rights for its wealthier subscribers, which expect it to show the major golf tournaments. ■

FOOTBALL

NOS holds on to highlights as Fox looks long term

By Robin Jellis

Last week's renewal by NOS of the highlights rights to the Dutch football league, the Eredivisie, was a surprise. Fox International Channels had been widely expected to retain the rights for its free-to-air general entertainment channel Fox.

The new deal covers three seasons, from 2014-15 to 2016-17, and is worth just over €21m (\$29.2m) per year, a similar amount to the current one-year deal.

The rights were sold by Eredivisie Media and Marketing, a company set up by the league's clubs to operate its pay-television channel, Eredivisie Live. In August 2012, Fox International Channels acquired a 51-per-cent stake in the channel and later rebranded it Fox Sports Eredivisie (*TV Sports Markets* 16:15).

FIC's subsequent decision to renew with NOS for just the 2013-14 season fuelled the belief that the Fox channel was being lined up to replace it to help cross-promote Fox Sports Eredivisie.

However, Fox, which launched in August 2013, still has a very low market share and is a project for the long term, according to a source close to the deal. EMM favoured a deal with NOS due to the exposure the broadcaster generates for the league and for sponsors, as well as the rights fee it pays. Fox is likely to have a larger market share when the rights come up for sale again in three years' time.

The channel has no significant sports content. It shows entertainment programmes and sports news.

The fee did not increase because there was little competition for the rights. NOS is suffering cuts to its sports-rights budget while a shrinking advertising market has hit commercial broadcasters RTL and SBS.

RTL and SBS were bidding against NOS, but their offers are thought to have been about half the value of the NOS bid. Experts say that RTL and SBS would not be able to refinance any more than €15m per year from advertising.

There was no tender for the rights, but EMM held talks with all interested parties.

Keeping hold of the Eredivisie highlights is important to NOS, which in the last year has boosted its football portfolio with an €18m deal for European Qualifier rights from 2014-15 to 2017-18, and an €18m deal for Euro 2016 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:23).

One local expert said that it was "vital" for the broadcaster to hold on to top sport, football in particular. NOS now has the 2014 Fifa World Cup, Euro 2016, the European Qualifiers, and the Eredivisie highlights. The expert said that given the budget cuts the broadcaster has faced, its football portfolio was "remarkable."

The highlights cover television and online rights. The deal also includes live radio rights to all matches. NOS will show highlights on the Nederland 1 channel. It will show highlights at 10.30pm on Fridays and Saturdays, and at 7pm on Sundays. It gets about 1.6m viewers on Saturdays and about 3m on Sundays. One expert said that FIC would have struggled to get 1m viewers had it shown the rights on the Fox channel.

No Champions League

NOS chief executive Jan de Jong last week told local media that the renewal of Eredivisie highlights rights meant that it will not renew its rights to the Uefa Champions League.

NOS currently pays between €14m and €15m per year for free-to-air rights. Pay-television broadcaster Sport1 pays between €4m and €5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 15:22).

RTL and SBS are expected to bid for the free-to-air rights, while Sport1 is expected to bid to renew its pay-television rights. FIC could bid for both free-to-air and pay-television rights.

A large part of the remaining budget available to NOS will be spent on news, which it considers to be a key part of its public-service remit.

IMG deal close

The IMG Media agency is understood to be close to finalising a deal to renew its international rights to the Eredivisie.

It is thought that the new deal will be for four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18,

and be worth between €12m and €13m per season. This would be a substantial increase on the €6m per season which it pays at present, in a deal ending after the 2013-14 season.

The agency had an exclusive renegotiation period in its deal with the Eredivisie. It would have been aware that if the rights had been tendered it would have had to go head to head with the MP & Silva agency and that the price might have ended up being far higher.

Earlier this month, IMG agreed a four-year deal with UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB worth about £200,000 (€238,000/\$333,000) per season. In the last issue of *TV Sports Markets* it was reported that the deal was for three years and had been handled by FIC. ■

FOOTBALL

Romanian league sells domestic rights to start-up company

By Robin Jellis

The Romanian football league last week agreed a five-year deal with start-up company Intel Sky Broadcasting that enabled the league to maintain its current media-rights income.

ISB is thought to be paying the league €34.1m (\$47.4m) per year. There was no tender for the rights.

The league, the Liga Profesionistă de Fotbal, currently earns €101m across three years, from 2011-12 to 2013-14, or €33.7m per year, in deals with cable operators RCS-RDS and Romtelecom, and commercial broadcaster Antena.

ISB is also expected to pay the league 20 per cent of the advertising revenues it generates around match broadcasts.

Local experts believe it is a good outcome for the league, which had been destined for a fee cut with the incumbent rights-holders looking to pay between 20 and 30 per cent less. The economic recession has hit the advertising market.

Romtelecom is also facing costs of more than €5m to fund a rebranding. German telco Deutsche Telekom is the largest shareholder in Greek telco OTE,

majority owner of Romtelecom, and has chosen to rebrand the Romanian operator. It will become Romania Telecom or Telecom Romania, while the company's mobile operations will be branded T-Mobile.

The league has also suffered from declining audience figures with two of the most popular Romanian teams no longer in the top division. Rapid Bucharest and CS Craiova play in the second tier.

However, it is a risky deal with a new, mysterious player. ISB was formed in late 2013 and is based in Malta. Local media reports said the company had initially intended to purchase domestic rights to the Ukrainian Premier League, but had not done so due to the recent political unrest. The Romanian league declined to comment on the deal this week.

Local experts believe that ISB is overpaying. "Nobody understands why they are paying so much – under no circumstances can they get their money back," one said. To confirm the deal, ISB must provide the league with a bank guarantee by May 15.

ISB last week acquired regional free-to-air channels Look TV and Transilvania Live from owner Árpád Pászány, a Romanian businessman and chairman of football club CFR Cluj. The deal is worth about €8m. ISB is expected to rebrand Transilvania Live as Look Plus, and intends to obtain a licence to transform the two channels into pay-television channels.

ISB has also agreed a deal for rights to a new league cup competition, which will be introduced for the 2015-16 season, worth an additional €1m per year.

As some league fixtures will clash and the two channels ISB has acquired will not be able to show all matches, the company is expected to agree a sublicensing deal for some matches.

European Qualifiers

RCS-RDS beat competition from rival cable operator Romtelecom to acquire the rights to third-party European Qualifiers in a deal with the CAA Eleven agency.

The deal is thought to be worth about €500,000 across four years. There was also interest from Eurosport and commercial broadcaster Pro TV, although neither is thought to have bid.

CAA Eleven is understood to have been expecting a higher rights fee, due to the strong fee paid by RCS-RDS and Romtelecom for Uefa Champions League rights from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

Matches of the Romanian national team will be shown by public-service broadcaster TVR following the European Broadcasting Union's deal in April last year. TVR is thought to pay between €200,000 and €250,000 per match, or between €4m and €5m across the four years.

As part of its deal for third-party qualifying matches, RCS-RDS will have the rights to show delayed coverage of Romania matches after 1am local time. ■

MOTORSPORT

Formula E: White elephant or smart investment for TV?

By Elisha Chauhan and Christian Sylt

The history of motorsport is littered with failed series that sounded good on paper but couldn't pay their way. For some experts, Formula E – the first fully-electric motorsport championship – is destined to be the latest.

Not surprisingly, the championship organisers, the agency selling the media rights to the series, and the broadcasters who have bought into it all passionately disagree.

This month's one-year deal with UK commercial broadcaster ITV followed deals last year with Japanese commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV Asahi and with Fox International Channels in over 80 territories around the world.

The support of Fox is fundamental to the chances of the series surviving. The broadcaster has a three-year deal plus a three-year option on the series. The distribution of its channels means the series will be in 50m homes in Latin America from day one. Fox will broadcast a two-hour programme across the region for every race, and will have 10 people travelling with the series for pre- and post-race analysis.

Fox Latin America president Carlos Martinez this week told *TV Sports*

Markets that Fox was "betting on Formula E to be hugely successful."

He said: "When we heard about the series, we thought it was interesting for two main reasons. First, we thought this new series is completely innovative, and our company is innovative too, so we are always seeking opportunities for these products – not only sports properties. Second, we were looking for products that we could develop internationally. We have two divisions, one in Asia and one in Latin America, and Formula E fits perfectly to develop the product at an international level."

Martinez said that when Fox proposed Formula E to its advertisers, they were "really curious" about it because many companies and governments in Latin America were focusing their efforts on creating a greener environment. So far, Fox has seven advertisers lined up for the series, mainly from Mexico, Argentina and Brazil.

Martinez added: "You need to take a risk when you see a good product and decide to support it. This series is reliable when you look at the concept and the costs involved."

The MP & Silva agency has a long-term arrangement with the championship promoter to sell the global media rights. The agency's chief executive, Peter Hutton, said that it got involved because it had been "excited" by the concept.

"Recognised drivers and city-centre racing are good ingredients to deliver a great atmosphere. We like the people running Formula E, who bring enthusiasm and energy to back an environmentally friendly and sponsorship-friendly idea," Hutton said.

He said that MP & Silva was creating an ambitious global strategy to maximise visibility. "We work very closely with the organisers to make sure that the first TV deals are the right ones for the sport. We don't want to take fees that offer little exposure as we start a worldwide brand." The agency is close to announcing several new broadcast deals, he added.

Doubts

The level of backing which Fox is giving the series has surprised some seasoned motorsports observers. Neil Duncanson,

chief executive of production house North One Sport, a former producer of Formula One and other motorsport series, said that it was “a huge risk” for Fox because there was no way of knowing if the series was going to be successful.

“I’m guessing Fox is looking at the deal as a way to get in on the ground floor,” he said. “If it works, it would be one of the cleverest moves ever. If it doesn’t, it will be a colossal white elephant. But you need to take chances because there are not many great sports properties out there to be had on a global basis. So I can see why they have done it.”

The Formula E car has a top speed of 150mph and it is supported by some of the most famous names in motorsport. Formula One team McLaren is making the 300bhp electric motors, Michelin will provide the tyres, Renault is the technical partner and another Formula One team, Williams, is supplying the batteries.

Duncanson warned, however, that a focus on the technology would be a “smokescreen” for the real issues.

“You need to be careful not to get blinded by the technology, because while it’s interesting, it’s not the real reason why motor racing fans will tune in to watch the series. What they are looking for is the best drivers, races, location and excitement. The whole success of Formula E will depend on that.”

He said that other recent challenger series had failed for this reason. “The A1 Grand Prix and Premier League Racing crashed and burned because the racing wasn’t good enough and the drivers weren’t interesting enough, not because all the cars were basically the same. There’s a valuable lesson for Formula E there, but I really wish them well.”

A number of motorsports experts said that generating enough commercial revenue to cover running costs would be a major challenge for the series. It is the reason why most fail. Choosing to run the races in city centres will massively push up running costs and the organisers will almost certainly be banking on the host cities, national governments and environmental agencies being prepared to support it financially.

One experienced motorsports executive questioned the basic concept of

the series: “Hybrid and electric cars are all very well, but you have only got to look at the sales of electric cars to know they are a disaster,” he said. “The cars are going to be quiet, and they are all uniform. People think that having the same chassis makes racing exciting, but it does exactly the opposite. Basically, whatever happens in qualifying races will dictate the outcome of the main race, because it will be difficult to overtake. People have come up with these ideas before, and they have all failed.”

“You need to take a risk when you see a good product and decide to support it.”

*Carlos Martinez, president,
Fox Latin America*

He added that the cost of having street circuits was “astronomical” compared to operating on a normal track. “It sounds so easy to drive around on streets, but they have cameras, drains, kerbs and the cost of building a street circuit is far more than people imagine it to be.”

Another expert countered, however, that street circuits were “a lot more interesting than the sort of anonymous race circuits that are being built today.”

Global ambitions

Formula E features 10 races in locations such as Los Angeles, Miami, Monaco and London which will host the finale in June next year. Alejandro Agag, the chief executive of the series, said that it was important to have appeal across the globe. Its 10 teams come from all corners of the world including China, France, Germany, India, Japan and the US.

The series has some high-profile backers. One of the British teams is run by Sir Richard Branson, ex-Formula One champion Alain Prost is behind the French team and Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio is also an owner.

“We wanted the teams to be spread out,” Agag said. “We said we want a team

from Japan so we started looking for a Japanese team. We found three and we chose one. Then we said we want a team from India, we want a team from China. The main markets all have teams.”

He said that the Fox deal would provide about a third of the total television audience of the series. He expects China to contribute a further third of the global audience. Japan would provide about 10 per cent and a further seven per cent would come from the UK.

ITV deal

UK pay-television operators BSkyB and BT Sport are also thought to have looked at the series before ITV picked up the rights for its ITV4 channel, which will show all races live. It is thought to have paid either a very low rights fee or none at all.

Agag said that the deal with ITV was only for one year because Formula E didn’t want to commit too long in such a competitive market. “We have other interested parties on the pay side, but we wanted it to be free to air,” he said. “So we want to give priority to that but then be able to re-evaluate it.”

Hutton said that ITV’s free-to-air exposure was “a natural advantage” to showcase the events in the UK, but that the agency might still look to combine live coverage on ITV4 with a highlights deal on pay-television.

ITV will show every race live on ITV4, will provide live online streaming of every race, and highlights on its flagship channel ITV1. The broadcaster also has the option to put live races on ITV1.

For ITV4 the series boosts a motorsport portfolio which also includes MotoGP highlights, live British Touring Car Championship rounds, highlights of British Superbikes, and BRDC Formula 4 highlights, as well as some one-off events.

The broadcaster told *TV Sports Markets*: “We are excited about this new motorsport format and believe that open-wheel racing with electric cars in iconic locations will prove exciting and popular with our viewers. We very much hope that this is the start of a long-standing relationship.” ■

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FORMULA ONE

Latin America deal confirms trend of big rights fee increases

Continued from page 1 ►

broadcasting in the booming Latin American market. Mediapro will launch a 24-hour Formula One channel which it will distribute throughout the region on cable and satellite platforms.

Fox Latin America, part of Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox is, like all Murdoch companies, aggressive. It was prepared to increase its rights fee to renew the deal. It made a number of renewal proposals in over a year of negotiations.

Fox is also focused on the bottom line, so being outbid by a new player is not entirely surprising. That it should have been outbid by Mediapro, rather than, say, expansionist Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera or the acquisitive MP & Silva agency, was something of a surprise though. As one agency director put it this week, "the deal carries a fair degree of risk, and that is not something you associate with Mediapro."

Gerard Romy, founding partner and managing director of Mediapro, countered that the deal was very much a reflection of the company's DNA and

fitted perfectly with its wider business interests (see box).

In its current deal, Fox pays just over \$8m per season for the rights in 24 territories. Venezuela was carved out of the deal. FOM secured deals in the territory with multiple broadcasters thought to be worth between \$1.5m and \$2m per season. Venezuela is covered by the Mediapro deal.

The decision to create a channel rather than sell on the rights will be watched very closely by sports rights-holders. It is being seen by some observers as an attempt to break the stranglehold on the Latin American market enjoyed by three main buyers: Fox, satellite operator DirecTV, and pan-regional sports broadcaster ESPN. The three rarely compete against each other for top sports rights and frequently share rights they acquire. It is an arrangement that many sellers believe depresses the value of their content.

Spanish surprise

The level of increase in FOM's recent deal in Spain – about double the existing deals – was arguably more surprising than that in the Americas, given the country's economic crisis.

Telco Telefónica has secured exclusive rights to the championship across all platforms for two years, 2016 and 2017, for about €70m per season. This is about double the value of FOM's deals with Mediapro and Telefónica for the 2014 and

2015 seasons. Mediapro pays about €32m per season for free-to-air rights. Telefónica pays about €3m per season for pay-television rights to all races.

The telco acquired the rights to boost its IPTV pay-television service Movistar TV. As with the rights to motorcycling's MotoGP, a non-exclusive deal signed last month proved to be just a stepping stone to securing the rights exclusively (see separate story, page 1).

Asian talks

Fox is facing a major challenge to hang on to its remaining pan-regional Formula One deal, in Asia, where FOM has a strong bargaining position. It has had a high level of interest from local broadcasters, which would give it the option of selling market by market. Agencies, including IMG Media, are also understood to be looking at the rights in certain strategic markets.

Fox's first task is to convince FOM to sell the rights on a pan-regional basis. However, it would then be up against MP & Silva. The agency has already shown its determination to add Formula One to its growing portfolio, with a deal worth between \$40m and \$50m per season covering the Middle East and North Africa region, plus Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. Having the rights in Asia, where it already holds the rights to a lot of top football, would have strategic value for the agency.

Fox inherited the rights from ESPN

Mediapro: Formula One channel plan reflects the company's DNA

Spanish media group Mediapro said this week that its planned Formula One channel in Latin America – to be launched in 2015 – reflected its role as production house and channel distributor, as much as rights trader.

Talking exclusively to *TV Sports Markets*, the agency's managing director Gerard Romy said that the company was launching a channel, rather than reselling rights, because that fitted the company's wider business model.

"Generally, with the rights we have, we manage a lot of things, like production. We don't just buy to resell. It could happen and you can make a profit, but it

is not our concept of work. For Formula One we want to produce a channel and will enjoy producing a channel – that is part of our DNA."

Rights trading accounted for 35 per cent of the company's €1.387bn (\$1.93bn) turnover in 2013, with production and other audiovisual content services accounting for the rest.

Mediapro is already heavily involved in Formula One, as the media rights-holder in Spain for over 10 years. The company produces the coverage of the championship for commercial broadcaster Antena 3.

The company's marketing division also

handles the Formula One sponsorship agreements of several major Spanish companies. "We know the product very well and have a very good track record with Formula One," Romy said.

He added that the business model behind the new deal was influenced by the creation by UK pay-television operator BSkyB of a Formula One channel.

"We always thought there was room to do something with Formula One like Sky is doing in the UK. In F1 you have a lot of things around the race. Then there are lots of practice sessions during the year, there is a lot of historical and archive material. With this volume of content it

Star Sports, the joint venture between News Corp and Disney which was dissolved in 2012, with News buying out Disney's 50-per-cent-stake.

In 2008, ESS paid \$100m for the rights across 26 territories in Asia for five years, from 2009 to 2013. The deal was then extended for a further two years, 2014 and 2015, with ESS paying an increased fee.

The 2009-13 deal represented more than a five-fold increase in rights fees on the previous deal. FOM had signed a five-year deal with ESS, 2006 to 2010, worth a total of \$18m. On the back of interest in local markets, FOM enforced a break clause in the deal to renegotiate.

Some local rights experts believe that Fox may be forced to go up to \$40m or \$50m per season to hold on to the rights. One agency executive this week said that the loss of the rights in Latin America would be a "wake-up call" for the company.

Poland plummets

The value of Formula One in Poland is thought to have suffered a cut of about 80 per cent in a deal agreed last week, mainly due to the departure from the sport of Polish driver Robert Kubica.

Commercial and pay-television broadcaster Polsat agreed a one-year deal covering 2014 for about \$1.3m per year, down from the \$7.5m per year it paid in a three-year deal from 2011 to 2013.

The deal was agreed with MP & Silva,

which acquired the rights in January. FOM held direct talks with broadcasters in Poland and Romania, but after receiving little interest included the rights in MP & Silva's deal covering Mena.

Polsat was initially not particularly keen to renew its rights, but with Fox Sports set to launch in Poland this year, it did not want to risk losing them to a rival. The rights market has stuttered in recent years, mainly due to consolidation among pay-television broadcasters, but Fox's emergence looks to be increasing competition (*TV Sports Markets* 17:23).

A serious injury to Kubica just before the start of the 2011 season meant he has not competed in the series since. One expert said, however, that although Kubica was not competing, his involvement had helped the sport gain popularity and the sport had also established a commercial base of advertisers and sponsors.

Formula One rights fees in Poland rose dramatically following Kubica's transition from Formula Three in 2006. From 2004 to 2006 the rights were worth about \$500,000 per year.

From 2008 to 2010, the rights were bought by the Turning Point agency for an average of \$4.4m per year. The agency sold the rights on to Polsat for an average of €4.5m per year.

Polsat acquired the rights directly from FOM from 2011 to 2013, beating a rival offer from Turning Point.

Romanian decrease

The value in Romania fell slightly, as the rights switched from cable operator RCS-RDS to rival Romtelecom, due to the impact of the recession.

The new deal, from 2014 to 2015, is understood to be worth about \$1.4m per year, down from the \$1.5m per year that RCS-RDS paid from 2011 to 2013.

The value has decreased due to declining audience figures and a poor advertising market, which means sports rights values are stagnant or falling. RCS-RDS made an offer of about \$750,000 per year directly to FOM before it sold the rights to MP & Silva. When the agency came to the market, Romtelecom faced no competition.

The rights are thought to be non-exclusive, meaning that MP & Silva could agree a deal with another broadcaster. Regional channel Look TV is seen as a potential buyer.

MP & Silva has agreed short-term deals in both Poland and Romania as it hopes to come back to the market and agree more lucrative deals when conditions may have changed.

In Bulgaria, MP & Silva's rights begin from the 2015 season. In the current deals, from 2012 to 2014, telco Bulsatcom shows live coverage and public-service broadcaster BNT shows delayed coverage. The deals are worth about \$350,000 per season in total. ■

makes sense to create a channel."

Mediapro is not obliged to create a channel but Romy said that this had been the concept which the company had negotiated upon from the outset. He believed that the commitment to an increase in the volume of coverage, compared to what Fox Latin America currently shows, was a factor in Mediapro landing the rights. "People will get to see a lot more than just two hours on Saturday and two hours on Sunday," he said.

The biggest challenge facing the company will be to secure a level of distribution across cable and satellite platforms that at least matches the distribution in the region of Fox Latin America, the current rights-holder.

F1 not a gamble

Romy dismissed the suggestion that the investment in Formula One was a big gamble for Mediapro. The company already has a strong base in the region, with divisions in Argentina and Brazil. It has years of experience of distributing Spanish language entertainment channels, through its US operation. The company sold three of those channels for a reported \$102m in January through its US channel division, Media World.

Through its relationship with Formula One sponsors the company believes that there are Spanish companies with a huge appetite to use Formula One as a platform to target Latin America. "We have the opportunity to sell a lot of

advertising inside this channel," he said. "A lot of sponsors are looking for more than just advertising spots."

Romy said that the digitalisation of the market across the region and the increased demand for HD content would make the channel a very attractive proposition for pay-television platforms. But this would not be the only way the rights would be exploited.

"We can operate at 360 degrees, with new media, such as the internet, and we are going to sublicense a lot of highlights, and maybe the live rights to the grands prix in Latin America to free-to-air channels." ■

[www. For the full interview with Gerard Romy visit our website.](#)

TV SPAIN

Motorsports rights blitz puts pressure on Prisa over sale

Continued from page 1 ►

series, Dorna, are said to be complicated and to also involve Italian media group Mediaset, whose Telecinco channel is the current free-to-air rights-holder in Spain.

A like-for-like comparison with the €30m per season which Mediaset currently pays for the rights is not yet available, but the new agreement is likely to be worth far more to Dorna, possibly as much as double. The final fee is likely to be linked to the degree of exclusivity Telefónica wishes to retain. Dorna is thought to want to link the level of exclusivity to the subscriber numbers the company has when the contract begins.

Telefónica operates the IPTV pay-television service Movistar TV, which currently has only 600,000 subscribers. The company is acquiring premium sports content in an effort to increase that

number. Having exclusive, rather than non-exclusive, MotoGP and Formula One rights will aid that effort.

The exclusivity that the telco hopes to secure in each deal, and the big rights fees being paid, underline the extent to which it has stepped up its premium sport acquisitions strategy.

Many media insiders in Spain view the big spending as part of a game that the telco is playing with media company Prisa over its 56-per-cent stake in the Canal Plus pay-television platform.

Telefónica – or at least the company's media division – badly wants the stake and debt-ridden Prisa is desperate to sell. But the two sides are a long way apart on price – maybe upwards of €100m.

The message that the rights deals send to Prisa, insiders say, is that Telefónica has the financial muscle to buy all the top sports rights for Movistar TV. This is also a warning to other potential buyers of Canal Plus.

If Telefónica secures the Prisa stake, adding to the 22 per cent it already holds and giving it full control over the platform, it could use both Canal Plus and Movistar TV as platforms for its sports

content. At that point, it would have limited competition in Spain for pay-television rights and would not need to spend as heavily to acquire them.

Telefónica and Mediaset, which holds the remaining 22 per cent, each had an option to acquire the Prisa stake which expired on March 12. The two broadcasters still have a matching-rights clause allowing them to match the bid of any third party.

Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera is said to have told Prisa that it is ready to make an offer, but only on the condition that Prisa withdraws its matching-rights clause in the Telefónica and Mediaset agreements – something that looks difficult legally and unlikely to happen. With Mediaset yet to have shown an interest, Telefónica remains the favourite to pick up the stake.

Telefónica's aggressive rights strategy raises the possibility of the clubs in the country's top football league, La Liga, enjoying a greater level of competition for their rights when they next come to the market. One pay-television expert said this week that if Telefónica was serious about establishing a pay-television operation in Spain it would have to have Liga rights. ■

SKATING

SBS interest is strong but cannot dislodge EBU

By Kevin McCullagh

Agency and broadcaster competition for incumbent rights-holder the European Broadcasting Union was not strong enough to push up the rights fee that the EBU paid when renewing its deal with the International Skating Union last week.

The EBU, the consortium of European public-service broadcasters, acquired rights for the 2015-16 to 2018-19 period. It is understood to be paying a fee close to the €16m (\$22.2m), plus production costs, that it pays in the current deal, from 2011-12 to 2014-15. Production commitments in both the current and new deal are thought to account for about another €2m.

Falling audiences for figure skating are said to be hitting the value of ISU rights. Figure skating traditionally accounted for about 80 per cent of the value of ISU rights. Huge interest in speed skating in the Netherlands helped prop up the rights fee.

Other factors affecting the fee included a weak Russian market, because of declining interest from non-EBU broadcasters and the depreciation of the Russian rouble. The ISU has also been slow in adapting its events for television, experts say, although is now beginning to do so.

The EBU broadcasters which have traditionally contributed most to acquire ISU rights have been those from France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Russia, the UK, plus pan-European pay-television broadcaster Eurosport.

The Infront Sports & Media, IMG Media and MP & Silva agencies are thought to have showed interest in acquiring the rights, although it's not clear if any bid.

The strongest competition is understood to have come from commercial broadcaster SBS in the Netherlands, where speed skating is a major sport and interest was piqued by the national team's performance at the Sochi Winter Olympics. The Dutch team won 23 of the 36 available medals.

SBS's interest is thought to have pushed Dutch public-service broadcaster NOS to increase its contribution to the EBU bid.

The EBU has acquired more rights, and committed to providing more ancillary services, in the new deal.

It has for the first time acquired rights outside its broadcast footprint in Europe, where it will act as an agency for the ISU and sell on the rights. The ex-Europe rights exclude the major ice skating markets of China, Japan, Korea, US and Canada, which the ISU will continue to sell itself.

Other services being provided by the EBU include running the ISU Skating Channel online video platform. ■

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from March 13 to March 26

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: World Cup, Champions League, Copa del Rey, Eredivisie and more

- **Football:** Mexican cinema chain Cinepolis acquired rights for 30 matches of the 2014 Fifa World Cup in a sublicensing deal with media company Grupo Televisa. The games include the opening match, Mexico's three group-stage matches against Cameroon, Brazil and Croatia, both semi-finals and the final.
- **Football:** Global Eagle Entertainment, a provider of satellite-based wireless internet solutions, agreed a deal with Uefa to show club competitions operated by the sport's European governing body on cruise ships. Coverage of the Champions League and Europa League tournaments will be available through the PrimeTelly satellite-television channel.
- **Football:** Dutch public-service broadcaster NOS renewed a deal for highlights of the Eredivisie, the top division of football in the Netherlands (page 3).
- **Football:** German commercial broadcaster Servus TV acquired rights for the 2014 final of Spain's Copa del Rey between Real Madrid and Barcelona on April 16 in a deal with the Sportsman Media Group agency. Sportsman acquired the rights for the final from the Mediapro agency
- in a three-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, in March 2012.
- **Football:** Uefa awarded rights in Sweden for the 2017 Women's Euro international tournament to public-service broadcaster SVT and pay-television and commercial broadcaster TV4. The broadcasters will share coverage of a total of 31 matches.
- **Football:** Regional pay-television broadcaster Comcast SportsNet Houston acquired rights for games featuring National Women's Soccer League franchise the Houston Dash. CSN Houston will show 11 of the team's 12 home games live this year.

SINCE LAST TIME

- BeIN Sports submitted a complaint to the Autorité de la Concurrence, the French competition authority, after pay-television rival Canal Plus was awarded Top 14 rights by France's Ligue Nationale de Rugby, the body that operates the rugby union club competition. Canal Plus was awarded the rights over five years, from 2014-15 to 2018-19, in January, days after the LNR postponed a rights tender after it became the target of legal action by the same broadcaster.
- US pay-television broadcaster Tennis Channel resumed a carriage dispute with pay-television provider Comcast by asking US media regulator the Federal Communications Commission to revisit the case. In February, the Supreme Court rejected Tennis Channel's complaint against Comcast's decision to carry the network on a premium sports tier.
- The IMG Worldwide agency denied reports that it had held talks to buy out Brazilian entrepreneur Eike Batista's stake in their Brazilian sports and entertainment joint venture, IMX.
- The International Association of Athletics Federations said the global television audience for the 2014 World Indoor Championships in Sopot, Poland, increased by more than 300 per cent in comparison with the 2010 event in Doha, Qatar.
- division of pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport are also reported to have complained to the league about the early launch.
- England's Premier League secured a High Court victory against the First National Wine Bar in Liverpool for infringing copyright by showing live coverage of games via pay-television broadcaster Al Jazeera, which does not have live UK rights. The wine bar was ordered to pay £65,000 (£77,000/\$108,000) to the Premier League in costs.
- The Real Madrid v Barcelona match in the Spanish Liga on March 23 was the first football game to be broadcast globally using 4K technology. The Mediapro agency said that the technology would be used regularly for Liga broadcasts from the start of the 2014-15 season.
- French Ligue 1 club Paris Saint-Germain launched a Spanish-language version of its in-house channel, PSG TV. The club, which already offers its channel in French and English, said that it wants to tap into the market of more than 500m Spanish speakers worldwide with the channel, which offers match highlights plus news summaries and interviews.
- The Ghana Television Consortium of broadcasters accused free-to-air broadcaster TV3 of illegally marketing commercial rights surrounding the 2014 Fifa World Cup. The consortium acquired media rights for three Fifa tournaments in 2014 from world governing body Fifa and the African Broadcasting Union group of broadcasters. The Optimum Media Prime agency, the consortium's exclusive marketing partner, complained to TV3, Fifa and the ABU that the broadcaster was seeking commercial deals in relation to the World Cup even though it does not have rights for the tournament.

FOOTBALL

- Frédéric Thiriez, president of the Ligue de Football Professionnel, the French football league, criticised Canal Plus after the pay-television broadcaster complained to the Autorité de la Concurrence, the country's competition authority, about the earlier-than-expected launch of a rights tender. The league launched a domestic sales process for the next cycle of rights to Ligue 1 and Ligue 2, the top two divisions in the country, covering four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, on March 6 – two years earlier than expected by Canal Plus. Telco Orange and the French

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- The USA Today Sports Media Group agreed a strategic partnership with internet video technology provider NeuLion. The companies will collaborate on production and syndication of content across NeuLion's sports network of more than 170 college sports digital properties.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from March 13 to March 26**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****Action sports, American football, baseball, basketball, boxing and more**

- **Action Sports:** The NBC Sports Group, part of US media company NBCUniversal, extended a rights deal with media company Red Bull Media House for the Red Bull Signature Series. The deal will run for three years, from 2014 to 2016, and includes 20 hours of coverage per year of sports such as snowboarding, free-skiing, surfing, motocross, off-road truck racing, mountain biking and BMX cycling.
- **American Football:** NFL franchise the Jacksonville Jaguars agreed a multi-year local rights deal with regional independent pay-television broadcaster WJXT-TV Channel 4 in the US. WJXT-TV will show the Jaguars' pre-season games that are not available on national television as well as pre-game shows during the regular season.
- **Baseball:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 acquired multi-platform rights for Major League Baseball in a three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016. Sport1 will exploit the rights on its US-focused pay-television channel Sport1 US, which is available in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Sport1 US will broadcast live coverage of at least 60 games per season with original US commentary, including the All-Star Game, post-season fixtures and the World Series (page 2).
- **Baseball:** Asia-focused sports broadcaster One World Sports extended a North American rights deal for games featuring the Yomiuri Giants, Japan's most popular team. One World Sports acquired the rights in a sublicensing deal with Japanese commercial broadcaster Nippon Television Network Corporation, which has the worldwide rights to the team's games in the Nippon Professional Baseball league, the sport's top division in the country. The deal will run until the end of the 2014 season and covers television, online and mobile platforms.
- **Basketball:** Spurs Sports & Entertainment, which operates NBA franchise the San Antonio Spurs, sealed a multi-year extension to its local rights deal with CBS-affiliated television channel KENS-TV. KENS-TV will broadcast up to 14 San Antonio Spurs games per season.
- **Boxing:** Pay-television broadcaster ESPN acquired exclusive rights in the US, Latin America, Canada, the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand for the World Boxing Confederation heavyweight world title fight between Bernabe Stiverne and Chris Arreola on May 8. In the US, the coverage will be available on ESPN's main channel, Spanish language channel ESPN Deportes and online service WatchESPN.
- **Boxing:** UK pay-television channel BoxNation acquired rights for the welterweight world title unification clash between Floyd Mayweather Jr and Marcos Maidana in Las Vegas on May 3. The rights include the undercard fight between British welterweight Amir Khan and Luis Collazo.
- **Boxing:** German sports broadcaster Sportdigital acquired live rights for the World Boxing Council heavyweight title fight on March 22 between Odlanier Solis and Tony Thompson in Istanbul, Turkey.
- **Commonwealth Games:** Canadian public-service broadcaster CBC agreed a rights deal for the Glasgow 2014 Games. CBC will provide daily coverage via television, radio and online platforms.
- **Cricket:** South African public-service broadcaster the SABC acquired rights for the 2014 International Cricket Council World Twenty20 tournament in a sublicensing deal with SuperSport, the pay-television broadcaster that operates in sub-Saharan Africa. The deal covers the opening match, four South Africa pool matches, one semi-final and the final on April 6.
- The ACC Digital Network, the channel dedicated to coverage of Atlantic Coast Conference US college sports, agreed a carriage deal on digital platform Apple TV in the US. The deal includes Campus Insiders, a magazine programme that will be exclusively shown on Apple TV.
- US pay-television broadcaster ESPN launched World of X Games, a new series featuring action sports content, on US network ABC. Shows will be broadcast on Saturdays and Sundays throughout 2014, with regular weekly programmes beginning in July.
- Canadian pay-television sports broadcaster TSN launched a new live streaming service. TSN Go will offer TSN subscribers the chance to stream live coverage of the broadcaster's programming from their smartphones, tablets and computers at no additional charge.
- Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports agreed carriage deals in Canada with telecommunications companies Bell and Rogers. Bell and Rogers subscribers will be able to watch beIN Sports Canada as a paid-for, add-on option.
- UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport offered free live coverage of the Worcester Warriors v London Wasps, Saracens v Harlequins, London Irish v Bath and Leicester Tigers v Exeter Chiefs English Premiership rugby union matches on March 21-23 via the Sky and Virgin TV platforms.
- Media group Mediaset, which owns the Telecinco and Cuatro commercial channels, linked up with media company Mandarin Productions and journalists Javier Santos and Manu Carreño to establish a new production company. Mediaset will have a 30-per-cent stake in Supersport, which will be responsible for producing sports coverage for Mediaset's channels and programming that has been sublicensed to other channels.
- The Multi Channel Network, a joint venture between the Foxtel, Austar, Premier Media Group and XYZ Networks media companies in Australia, launched a new sports division. MCN Sport, which will be led by MCN's national sports sales director Martin Medcraf, will be responsible for the advertising interests of 12 television channels, 46 websites, 41 mobile websites and 41 mobile applications.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from March 13 to March 26

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

Golf, ice hockey, karate, mixed martial arts, MotoGP, Formula One and more

- **Golf:** Golf Channel acquired rights for the Ryder Cup international tournament in a sublicensing deal with fellow pay-television broadcaster ESPN. Golf Channel acquired rights for the 2014 tournament's match-ups on Friday, September 26 in Perthshire, Scotland. Golf Channel will show live coverage of the Friday action, before the NBC network, which is operated by media company NBCUniversal, broadcasts live coverage of the final two days, on September 27-28. The deal, which was approved by the PGA of America sanctioning body, marks the first time that an overseas edition of the tournament will be shown live in full in the US.
- **Golf:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland renewed exclusive rights for the US Masters tournament for 2014 and 2015, covering Germany and Austria. The agreement includes television, internet, IPTV and mobile rights (page 2).
- **Golf:** IPTV platform LeTV acquired rights in China for events operated by the Asian Tour in a three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016. LeTV will stream live coverage and highlights on the LeTV.com on an exclusive basis.
- **Ice Hockey:** Danish commercial broadcaster TV2 acquired rights for the Metal Ligaen and Metal Cup club competitions in Denmark in a deal with the DIU, the sport's governing body in the country. TV2 will broadcast at least 40 matches per season for the next three years, from 2014 to 2016.
- **Karate:** Spanish agency Simply Sport acquired rights for events operated by the World Karate Federation in a three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016. Simply Sport will also work alongside the governing body to market sponsorship rights and develop a social network presence. The deal covers three Karate European Senior Championships and two World Senior Championships.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** The Saran Media agency struck a deal to distribute rights in Iceland for the Ultimate Fighting Championship for nearly three years, starting immediately and running until January 2017. The deal covers 18 live fight cards, including the organisation's flagship numbered events and the new UFC Fight Nights, which are taking place throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa.
- **Motorcycling:** UK commercial broadcaster ITV acquired rights for the MotoGP world championship. The ITV4 digital-terrestrial channel will broadcast a one-hour highlights programme on Monday evenings following all 18 grand prix weekends. The deal will run until at least the end of 2014.
- **Motorsport:** Spanish agency Mediapro acquired rights across Central and Latin America and the Caribbean for the Formula One world championship (page 1).
- **Motorsport:** Spanish telco Telefónica acquired exclusive rights to Formula One for two seasons, 2016 and 2017, in a deal with Formula One Management (page 1).
- **Motorsport:** Polish pay-television operator Polsat acquired Formula One rights until at least the end of the 2014 season. Coverage of practice sessions, qualifying and the races will be shown across the Polsat Sport and Polsat Sport Extra channels (page 1).
- **Motorsport:** UK commercial broadcaster ITV acquired rights for the Formula E championship in a deal with the MP & Silva agency. ITV4 will show live coverage of all 10 rounds plus pre-race programming and highlights during the inaugural 2014 season. Coverage will also be available via the ITV.com website and the ITV Player on-demand service (page 4).
- Digital free-to-air platform Sommet Sports will launch a television channel on pay-television operator Sky New Zealand and digital-television service Freeview in April. Sommet Sports will assume channel 69 on Sky from April 14.
- Indian subcontinent pay-television broadcaster Star Sports will produce coverage of the new Pro Kabaddi league, which will be operated by the International Kabaddi Federation governing body and promoted by the Mashal Sports agency.
- Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports secured a carriage deal on new Indonesian pay-television platform K-Vision. The deal includes the beIN Sports 1 and beIN Sports 2 channels.
- Uefa, football's European governing body, launched a sales process for the multi-platform rights in Israel to European national team qualifiers ahead of the Euro 2016 and Fifa 2018 World Cup national team tournaments. Bids for the rights over four years, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, must be submitted by March 31, with the CAA Eleven agency handling the sales process.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE is in "advanced talks" to acquire rights for European qualifiers to Uefa Euro 2016 and the 2018 Fifa World Cup for about €50m (\$69m), according to *El Mundo*. The broadcaster, which is bidding against commercial broadcasters Telecinco and Antena 3, would exploit the rights on the La1 channel.
- The LNB, Brazil's basketball league, streamed live coverage of three domestic games for free via its official website as part of a partnership with digital company Eventos Ao Vivo. The league plans to increase the number of games shown on the website from the start of the 2014-15 season.
- Pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport signed up three-time Tour de France winner and double world champion Greg LeMond as a global cycling ambassador.
- The Absa Cape Epic mountain bike race in South Africa will be broadcast live outside the host country for the first time this year. Broadcasters in the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece,

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from March 13 to March 26**MEDIA RIGHTS 4****Skating, ski jumping, triathlon, volleyball, WWE wrestling and more**

- **Skating:** The European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters acquired rights for events operated by the International Skating Union for four years, from 2015-16 to 2018-19 (page 8).
- **Ski Jumping:** The European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters, extended a rights deal with the International Ski Federation for the Ski Flying Championships. The deal covers the 2018 and 2020 editions of the championships. The EBU will also serve as the governing body's service partner on various aspects of distribution, implementation, co-ordination and production, including live web streaming of both events and co-operation on new media initiatives.
- **Triathlon:** US sports broadcaster Universal Sports Network acquired rights for events operated by the International Triathlon Union for five years, from 2014 to 2018. The agreement includes exclusive television and online rights to the governing body's World Triathlon Series and its monthly magazine programme. The deal was brokered by the Lagardère Unlimited sports marketing division of conglomerate Lagardère.
- **Volleyball:** The Pitch International agency will distribute worldwide media rights for the 2014 men's World Volleyball Championship in Poland. The deal, which covers all media platforms, excludes Poland, Japan and Brazil. Pitch struck the deal with Polish pay-television broadcaster Polsat, which acquired the rights for the tournament in 2008 from the FIVB, the sport's global governing body. Pitch will also handle the technical delivery of the tournament's 103 games. *TV Sports Markets* first reported the deal on February 14 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:3).
- **Wrestling:** German commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1 acquired rights for events staged by the WWE wrestling organisation. The multi-year deal covers free-to-air television, pay-television and video-on-demand rights in Germany and Austria. WWE pay-per-view events will be shown on ProSiebenSat.1's MaxDome.de online platform, with pay-television channel ProSieben Fun showing Monday Night Raw programmes and the Maxx free-to-air channel broadcasting the SmackDown shows.
- **Wrestling:** The Fighting Spirit agency will distribute rights for the Ring Warriors magazine programme worldwide. Fighting Spirit will also collaborate with US production company Ring Warriors on developing more international events.

Hungary and Switzerland will show two-hour live feeds of the final stage on March 30. The event's website will show live coverage.

- US motorsport series AMA Pro Racing, IMSA and Nascar launched FansChoice.tv, a live streaming platform that will provide coverage of events operated by the series that are not broadcast on television.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Jesus Perezagua, president in Europe and Africa of the Fox International Channels broadcast subsidiary of media company 21st Century Fox, will stand down from his post on April 30. • Pierre Fraidenreich left his position as the head of sports rights acquisitions at French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus. • Marc Watson, who

spearheaded the launch of UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport, is to step down from his role as chief executive of the television division of telco BT. • Patrick Fisher, the director of digital at the Burda Intermedia publishing company, was appointed as the new managing director of Constantin Sport Marketing, a division of the Constantin Medien media company. Fisher will replace Thomas Deissenberger, who is stepping down at the end of March to pursue new challenges. • Lisa Hynes was appointed as the head of production company Sunset+Vine's new women's sports division. • John Hendricks, the chairman of the board of directors and director of the board of Discovery Communications, which struck a deal earlier this year to acquire a controlling stake in pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport, will retire in May.

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