

OLYMPIC GAMES

IOC and NBCU take leap of faith as US scramble for sport intensifies

By Frank Dunne

The International Olympic Committee has robustly defended last week's long-term deal with US media group NBCUniversal on the three key areas in which it has come under scrutiny.

The \$7.65bn (€5.5bn) deal for the rights to six editions of the Games between 2021 and 2032 has been questioned by a number of independent experts on the following grounds:

- the IOC had no need, and no good reason, to lock itself into such a long-term deal at time when the US sports-rights market is exploding – in doing so it may have undersold its product
- it settled for a relatively modest increase in fee at a time when other rights-holders are securing deals worth multiples of existing contract values
- it closed a multi-billion-dollar deal for its assets without opening up the bidding to competition in a fair and

transparent procedure.

Timo Lumme, the IOC managing director of television and marketing, defended the deal on all three counts this week. He told *TV Sports Markets* that:

- (1) NBCU was providing long-term financial security but the financial component was only one element of the deal – another factor driving the deal was the quality of the IOC's long-term relationship with the broadcaster;
- (2) When comparing the six Games covered by the deal with the rights value of the six Games leading up to it, the IOC would be earning \$1.4bn more, an amount it was happy with; and
- (3) Selling without an open tender process was "totally defensible," and the IOC had always been open to offers from other players.

Lumme's arguments were endorsed by
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EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS

Uefa exceeds its own expectations

By Frank Dunne

Uefa is on course to earn well over €900m (\$1.25bn) from the sale of its European Qualifiers media rights from 2014-15 to 2017-18, according to research conducted by *TV Sports Markets* with local media sources over the last 12 months.

Uefa, and its sales agency for national team competitions, CAA Eleven, are close to completing the first sales cycle for the centralised rights, which cover the

qualification matches for Euro 2016 and the 2018 Fifa World Cup played by European nations (see table, page 4).


Evaluating the success of the cycle depends on which benchmark it is measured against. Possible benchmarks include:

- the amount of money which Uefa committed to its member federations

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IMG set to challenge Pitch for European club rugby

The bidding for the rights for the competitions of European Professional Club Rugby, the new European governing body for club rugby, is set to be a battle between incumbent rights-holders Pitch International and the IMG Media agency.

EPCR this week issued a tender for the international rights and the rights in Italy. The rights cover the European Rugby Champions Cup and the European Rugby Challenge Cup, which will replace the Heineken Cup and Amlin Cup from next season, 2014-15. The rights to the qualifying competition for the Challenge Cup are also included.

The body is selling the rights in two separate packages. The first is for worldwide rights, excluding the UK, Ireland, France, Monaco, Andorra and Italy, for four seasons from 2014-15 to 2017-18. The second package is for rights in Italy alone for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Sky Italia held the rights in Italy to the old competitions until the 2014-15 season and the deal has been renegotiated to cover the new tournaments.

Parties can bid for one or both packages. In the latter case, parties are invited to offer an additional premium. Parties cannot bid for the rights to just the first- or second-tier competition – they must bid for all rights. The deadline for bids is May 27. Wasserman Media Group is managing the sales process.

The international rights were held by Pitch, in a deal from 2010-11 to 2013-14, worth about €1.6m (\$2.2m) per year. IMG is expected to bid strongly.

In the last issue of *TV Sports Markets* it was reported that IMG's contract with Rugby World Cup Ltd may prevent the agency from bidding for rights to other rugby competitions. This is not the case. Restrictions only apply to competitions not sanctioned by the International Rugby Board, the sport's world governing body. But it is understood that

senior figures at the IRB, which runs the Rugby World Cup, would not be happy if IMG acquired the EPCR rights. ■

Silva sets sights on motorsport

The MP & Silva agency said that its deal earlier this month for the FIM Superbike World Championship in Latin America, excluding Brazil, and the Caribbean, was part of a strategy to expand into the region and into motorsports generally.

Founding partner Carlo Pozzali told *TV Sports Markets*: "We've had a strong presence in the region for nine years thanks to properties like Serie A, the Milan Channel and the World Baseball Classic. As soon as the news broke that we had acquired the rights we got calls from a number of pan-regional channels."

He said that pan-regional broadcasters like ESPN, Fox, Sky Mexico and DirecTV would be a natural fit for Superbikes, but said it was likely that the agency would sell the rights territory by territory.

The five-year buyout deal, from 2014 to 2018, was agreed with the series' commercial rights-holder Dorna Sports.

Unlike the MotoGP championship, which visits Argentina each season, the Superbike championship does not have a race in the region. Pozzali said that a lot of work had to be done to improve the visibility of the sport in the region. "But we know the market better than anyone," he said, "so we are well-placed to do this job. We own the rights but Dorna will be an active partner promoting the brand."

The deal follows other recent motorsport deals for the agency including agreements for Formula E globally and Formula One in the Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Europe. "We are well-known for football but have been adding new sports. Motorsport is a growth opportunity for us," Pozzali said.

Dorna declined to comment on why it had sold on the rights rather than sell them itself. There have been concerns within the motorsports community that the agency has not given the series the same level of backing as MotoGP since it took over responsibility for the series

from the Infront Sports & Media agency in 2012. Dorna and Infront are both owned by private equity firm Bridgepoint Capital. ■

Sport1 picks up Fiba World Cup

German sports broadcaster Sport1 last month picked up rights to the Fiba World Cup, which takes place in August, in a deal worth about €150,000 (\$210,000). Sport1 will also provide some airtime for Fiba sponsors.

The rights were sold by Fiba, the International Basketball Federation. The deal was agreed in direct talks with Sport1 after Fiba had spoken to a number of broadcasters.

Sport1 faced little competition. Public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF were not interested as the German national team has not qualified. ARD showed matches from the 2013 EuroBasket, in which Germany participated.

The World Cup rights would have been substantially more valuable if Germany had been competing in the tournament. The rights to the 2010 edition, then called the World Championship, were much higher in value due to Germany's involvement.

The World Cup complements the broadcaster's other basketball rights. It holds Euroleague rights from 2013-14 to 2015-16 for about €200,000 per year; NBA rights from 2013-14 to 2014-15 for about \$1.3m per year; and rights to the domestic league, the Beko Basketball Bundesliga, from 2012-13 to 2013-14, for about €500,000 per year.

Sport1 was Fiba's preferred broadcaster due to its commitment to basketball. Fiba also wanted to generate some free-to-air coverage. Sport1 will show at least 18 games on its main free-to-air channel, including the final and matches of the top teams, including Spain and holders US.

"Basketball is one of the core sports on our free-TV channel Sport1," Matthias Kirschenhofer, general counsel for Constantin Medien, the majority owner of Sport1, said this week. ■ www.sport1.de

OLYMPIC GAMES

IOC long-term deal with NBCU gives Bach strong platform

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the IOC's former marketing and television director Michael Payne, who said that the way the deal had been handled by IOC president Thomas Bach was "nothing short of brilliant."

Leap in the dark

Sports-rights deals lasting upwards of 10 years have become common in the US. Antitrust regulation is much lighter than in Europe and Asia and broadcasters are increasingly looking to tie up key assets on a long-term basis. Rights for major global events such as the Olympics and the Fifa World Cup have also traditionally been sold many years in advance.

However, no major sports rights deal has ever represented such a leap in the dark for both rights-holder and broadcaster as the new NBCU-IOC deal. The contract does not even begin for another seven years and will end in 18 years.

Nobody can accurately predict the market value of rights so far ahead, nor the level of US inflation, nor the value of the dollar, so the risk for the IOC is that it could end up having massively undersold its rights. Few experts believe, on the other hand, that NBCU has overpaid, given the profit it has made on the Games. The company paid \$775m for the rights to this year's Sochi Games, for example, and brought in over \$1.1bn in advertising.

"The short answer is that you basically can't [predict so far ahead]," Lumme said. "You have to make a judgement call." He said that the IOC was balancing financial certainty and "trust in a partnership which has delivered significant benefits."

NBC began broadcasting the Olympics in 1964 with the Tokyo Games and has done so ever since, with a brief interlude from 1992 to 1998 when the CBS network held the US rights to the winter Games.

"We know they will deliver well and continue to build the brand of the Olympics," Lumme said. "You balance

out a whole basket of factors including what your perspective is on the market place. But the driving factor is what a relationship can actually bring to you."

On top of its rights fee, NBCU has committed to spend \$100m promoting the Games between 2015 and 2020.

Payne, who sold the television rights to the Games from 1989 until the 2010-2012 cycle, said that the long-term nature of the deal was of positive significance for the IOC. "It is a very strong statement about the strength of the Olympic brand and the Games as a business proposition from its biggest single investor."

He pointed out that the deal gave Bach a strong platform to push through his "ambitious" programme for reform for the Games and the IOC. It also provided very good news for the IOC when it is heading into a period in which it could face heavy criticism around the 2016 Games in Brazil and a dwindling number of candidates for the 2022 winter Games.

'Apples with apples'

The deal is thought to be broken down as follows: \$2.5bn for 2022 and 2024; \$2.55bn for 2026 and 2028; and \$2.6bn for 2030 and 2032. On the basis of an average fee per Games, it represents a 16-per-cent increase on the 2014-2020 deal with NBCU, which was worth \$4.38bn. Compared with other increases in the US market, that looks modest.

Lumme argued that a more meaningful comparison was the six Games of the new deal with the previous six Games, which were sold in two lots, 2010-2012 and 2014-2020. In the 2010-2012 deal, NBCU paid just over \$2bn.

"Comparing apples with apples, six Games with six Games, there is \$1.4bn more in cash," he said. This represents a 20-per-cent increase. "Make no mistake: we are very happy with the financial component and the security and stability that comes with it."

Payne said that in arriving at a valuation, the IOC had both a very clear idea of what NBCU could earn from the deal and also of what kind of valuation the other US networks put on the Games. In the last tender, NBCU's valuation was substantially higher than

the second-highest bid, from Rupert Murdoch's Fox, of \$3.4bn.

"People say that the IOC may have left value on the table, but what does that mean? If NBC makes several hundred million dollars profit is that a mistake? You have to allow your partner to make a profit. And if for the Games at the end of the contract, NBC's profits are substantially more than that, you could argue that it would be a great platform on which to open the bidding for 2036 and beyond."

He said that the rights fees were currently at the "upper level" achievable and that advertisers were already paying a premium to be associated with the Games. He added that it was wrong to expect the Games to deliver the kind of fee increases that were possible with season-long competitions such as Formula One, the top European football leagues, and the major US sports leagues. "There is only so much revenue you can squeeze out of the market for a two-week sports event," he said.

Lumme confirmed that regardless of how the media markets develop in the future, the contract does not allow for renegotiation of the rights fee.

"A deal is a deal," he said. "We have agreed a deal through to 2032. We know what the numbers are and obviously we are happy with them. That's the commitment you make when you tie the knot for that length of time."

No tender process

The lack of a tender can be questioned on both a good governance and a commercial level. The IOC should arguably be putting a multi-billion-dollar contract on the market in a transparent tender. And opening the bidding to as many competitors as possible is usually the best way of ensuring that you get the highest possible price for the rights.

Lumme rejected both criticisms. He said that in the past there had been precedents for both ways of selling. The last two rounds of sales, in 2004 and 2011, were both open tenders, for example. In 1995 and this time the IOC decided to go without a tender process.

"A tender is not a magic ingredient," he said. "It merely reflects what the market

place is, and bear in mind that we are open for business on a daily basis. Broadcasters are always able to talk to us. I think we have got a good track record of going back to the market regularly to find out what the other players feel about our product and our property.”

None of the major rival networks has so far complained about the process. Fox, at least, is thought unlikely to. One source said “there were no gasps of disappointment in the hallways” when the NBCU deal was announced.

No link to hosting

The deal has sparked speculation that the US could receive favoured treatment if it bids to host future Games. The US Olympic Committee is expected to publish a shortlist of two to three candidate cities for the summer Games of 2024 next month. The US is also thought likely to launch a bid for a winter Games during the lifetime of the NBCU contract. Having one or two Games on home soil would hugely increase the revenues which NBCU could earn from the Games.

Lumme ruled out there being any link between the broadcast deal and the IOC’s hosting decision.

“They are two completely separate processes,” he said. “Both the IOC and the US Olympic Committee have gone on record on this. One has nothing to do with the other. If you look at the history of television rights negotiations you will see that they have always been separate processes.” ■

[www. For the full interview with Timo Lumme visit our website.](#)

EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS

Uefa will fall short of its guarantees but not by level feared

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when the rights were centralised in 2011

- the initial expectations of experts – including those within Uefa – of the potential value of the centralised rights
- the income in the current cycle, the last in which the rights were sold directly by federations
- the money offered by rival agencies IMG Media and Sportfive when Uefa first tendered the rights.

Comparisons

The hardest comparison to make is with the amount Uefa has guaranteed to its member federations for the qualifier rights because Uefa has never confirmed the figure.

CAA Eleven has also sold the rights to the Euro 2016 finals in joint deals in many territories – and enjoying big increases on the value of Euro 2012 – which will make the final amount allocated to qualifiers more difficult to pinpoint.

Informed sources say that the figure guaranteed to federations was close to €1.1bn. However, Uefa is said to have told IMG and Sportfive during negotiations that the total was between €1.2bn and €1.3bn. The higher figure, some insiders claim, could have been part of Uefa’s negotiating tactics to get the agencies to increase their bids.

European Qualifiers rights deals in selected territories, 2014-15 to 2017-18					
Europe	Buyer - 1st and 2nd party rights	Fee (€m)	Buyer - 3rd party rights	Fee (€m)	Total (€m)
30 European Territories ¹	EBU	90	N/A		90
Belgium	Part of EBU deal		Telenet ²	1	1
Czech Republic Hungary Slovakia	Part of EBU deal		Chello Central Europe	1.5	1.5
Denmark Norway Sweden	SBS Discovery Media				75
France	TF1	135	N/A		135
Germany	RTL	110	N/A		110
Italy	Rai	70	N/A		70
Netherlands	NOS	18	Sport1	4	22
Poland ³	PolSAT				32
Portugal	Part of EBU deal		Sport TV	0.5	0.5
Romania	Part of EBU deal		RCS-RDS	0.5	0.5
Spain	TVE	38	Movistar	7	45
Turkey	Saran Media	25	N/A		25
UK	ITV	97.5	BSkyB ⁴	36.5	134
Ukraine	NTU	11	N/A		11
				Total	€752.5m
Americas	Buyer - all rights			Fee (\$m)	
Brazil	Globo (SporTV)			12	
Canada	Rogers Sportsnet			3	
Latin America	DirecTV			15	
US	Fox Sports			30	
				Total	\$60m
Asia and Mena	Buyer - all rights			Fee (\$m)	
Indian subcontinent	Sony			10	
Indonesia	RTI			9	
Malaysia and Brunei	Astro			8	
Middle East and North Africa	Abu Dhabi Media			85	
Myanmar	Forever Group			3	
Thailand, Cambodia, Laos	GMM			14	
Vietnam	Viettel Group			2	
				Total	\$131m
				OVERALL TOTAL	€890m

Source: TV Sports Markets

Footnotes: ¹EBU deal covers: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium (French), Belgium (Flemish), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland. ²Deal includes rights in Flemish-speaking Belgium only. Rights in French-speaking Belgium remain unsold. ³Includes rights to Euro 2016. ⁴Includes rights in Republic of Ireland.

A shortfall of about €200m would almost certainly be considered a qualified success for Uefa president Michel Platini. His view is that any shortfall should be considered as the necessary start-up costs of a new venture that will yield greater rewards from the second cycle onwards. Informed sources say that the €900m sales have

exceeded Uefa’s own expectations.

However, if the actual total committed is €1.2bn or €1.3bn, the shortfall would be between €300m and €400m. Uefa would have no trouble covering this from its cash reserves and the additional commercial income from the expansion of Euro 2016 from 16 to 24 teams, but the difference

would invite greater scrutiny of the strategy.

In Uefa's defence, the governing body could point out that when compared with the old individual selling system the outcome has been an unqualified success. The income is about 50 per cent higher than the €600m or so earned by federations themselves in the current four-year cycle, the last in which the rights were sold by agencies. From this, the agencies would have taken commission of about 15 per cent.

Much of the additional value can be put down to the creation of the Week of Football, which will give the qualifier matches a more coherent calendar with better timeslots for broadcasters.

One expert said this week Platini's primary objective had been to raise the profile of national teams compared to that of clubs and that he had done so. The real impact of that shift would be felt when the first Week of Football gets under way in September. So even if the shortfall was at the higher end of the range, Uefa would absorb it if this goal was met.

Ultimately, the governing body is responsible to its member federations, and as each was provided with a minimum guarantee at a premium to the prevailing market value of the rights, they are likely to be untroubled by the shortfall.

A more important question for Uefa and the federations is how the revenue model is determined for the following four-year cycle. It is understood that Uefa has told federations that it will not be guaranteeing income next time around.

One well-placed source said that this suggested that Uefa was not confident of increasing its revenues further.

Rival bids

CAA Eleven was appointed by Uefa amid controversy, after the governing body turned down rival bids for the rights from IMG Media and Sportfive. The two agencies made several bids over a period of about 18 months in proposals with different structures and for different rights.

Initially, bids were for the qualifiers alone plus some marketing rights. In later rounds of talks, the unsold rights to Euro 2016 were added. In all proposals the agencies were prepared to put up a minimum guarantee, something which CAA Eleven was not required to do.

Neither IMG nor Sportfive prepared to come close to underwriting the amount Uefa had committed to its member federations for the qualifiers alone. It is understood that in the two agencies' projections for income for the qualifiers alone, €900m was at the very top end.

Had the agencies met Uefa's asking price, and enjoyed a similar success rate to CAA Eleven, they would have lost between €200m and €400m. As one agency source put it, "a loss on that scale might be seen as a qualified success by a governing body who can point to the future, but it would be a disaster for an agency."

He said that if they had picked up the contract at the levels the agencies were

proposing, sales of €900m would have been good for Sportfive in terms of "keeping its business alive" and would have been worthwhile for IMG in terms of having such a big property on its books. It would not have been profitable for either as a standalone deal but would have been justifiable in terms of forming a long-term relationship with Uefa and hoping to make money on a better deal next time round.

CAA Eleven has also been selling the rights to partially centralised sponsorship packages. Not all federations committed their sponsorship rights. These are likely to push the total commercial revenue for the qualifiers this cycle to over €1bn.

It is thought that the level of income brought in so far has already triggered an automatic renewal of CAA Eleven's contract for the following four years.

Final deals

Deals have now been concluded, at least in principle, in all but five or six markets. As *TV Sports Markets* went to press, informed sources in Japan claimed that the MP & Silva agency had outbid advertising firm Dentsu and at least one other major local player to land the rights for the qualifiers in a deal worth about \$30m. The information could not be verified and has been excluded from this round-up.

The estimate used for total revenues is based on those deals confirmed so far. Neither Uefa nor CAA Eleven had responded to questions on the figures as *TV Sports Markets* went to press. ■

SKIING

German federation gets small increase in international income

By Robin Jellis

The German Ski Association, the Deutscher Skiverband (DSV), secured a small increase in the value of its media rights outside Germany in a renewal with the Infront Sports & Media agency this week.

The new deal is for five years, from 2016-17 to 2020-21, and is worth about

€6.5m (\$9m) per year. This is an increase of between five and 10 per cent on the value of Infront's current deal, from 2011-12 to 2015-16, worth about €6m per year. There is also a share of revenues above the guarantee.

The rights were not tendered as Infront agreed the renewal in an exclusive renegotiating period. A similar clause has been included in the new contract. It is understood that there is also a matching offer clause in both the current and new contracts.

Infront was happy to pay a decent increase in rights value to prevent the DSV from tendering the rights. Infront

markets the international rights to all Fis World Cup events, apart from those of the Austrian Ski Federation, the Österreichischer Skiverband (OSV). These are held by the European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters.

It is understood that the DSV's domestic rights-holders ARD and ZDF, the public-service broadcasters, cover production costs to all events they broadcast. The DSV and Infront split the production costs for other, smaller events.

The biggest markets for the rights are Austria, Switzerland and the Nordics. Bruno Marty, executive director of winter

sports for Infront, told *TV Sports Markets* that alpine skiing was particularly strong in Central Europe, while cross country was strongest in the Nordics.

One media rights expert suggested there may also be some value in the Russian and Polish markets, although this would be much less than Austria, Switzerland and the Nordics. He also said that there was little value outside Europe, other than in Japan and the US, and even that was limited.

'Collective sale works'

Infront's strategy is to "achieve maximum exposure" for Fis World Cup events on a worldwide basis, according to Marty.

"The collective marketing approach for the Fis World Cup portfolio has proven very successful in the past, guaranteeing high and continuous exposure to the national skiing federations," he said.

"Broadcasters benefit from receiving all

rights from one single source. We will therefore seek to continue this proven concept in the coming years."

Stefan Schwarzbach, managing director of DSV Marketing, said the association was "highly pleased" to extend its deal with Infront.

"The partnership with Infront has developed so well in respect of content over the past years that we did not hesitate to make plans for the coming years at this early stage," he told *TV Sports Markets*.

"Seven years is a long time [for Infront to hold the rights]. Of course this was an aspect that was discussed with Infront intensively as nobody can predict precisely how broadcasting rights will develop in the coming years.

"On the other hand, we are sure that TV will still be the dominating media during this period and this offers a substantial amount of planning security for our association. Looking at the deal as

a whole we are more than happy with the agreed arrangement."

The deal includes rights to about 25 Fis World Cup events held in Germany each year, across alpine skiing, ski jumping, cross country, Nordic combined, freestyle skiing and snowboarding. The contract includes two of the four events in the Four Hills ski jumping series, which is understood to account for around 30 per cent of the total value of the deal. The other two Four Hills events are in Austria, and the rights are held by the OSV.

ARD and ZDF's current domestic deal is for five years, from 2011-12 to 2015-16, and is worth about €8m per year in rights fee and production costs.

From 2007-08 to 2010-11, Infront held global rights, including Germany, to DSV events in a deal worth €57m. This broke down into €14m per year in the first three years, and €15m in the final year (*TV Sports Markets* 11:10). ■

ICE HOCKEY

NHL deal cements Sport1 grip on US sport in Germany

By Robin Jellis

Sport1's deal last week for the rights to the National Hockey League means the sports broadcaster now has exclusive rights to each of the four top North American sports leagues.

The NHL deal is worth about \$500,000 (€360,000) per year, and is for two seasons, 2014-15 and 2015-16. The deal covers Germany, Austria and Switzerland. There was no tender for the rights. Sport1 faced no competition.

The deal was agreed with the Advisers Media International and Medge Consulting agencies, which are selling the rights in Europe, the Middle East and Africa on behalf of the NHL.

Sport1 also has rights to baseball's MLB, basketball's NBA and American football's NFL.

The broadcaster's NBA rights are worth about \$1.3m per year, from 2013-14 to 2014-15. Its MLB rights are

worth about \$500,000 per year, from 2014 to 2016 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:6). Its NFL rights are thought to be worth around \$700,000 per year. The English-language NFL rights are sold directly by the league, the local-language rights are sold by the IMG Media agency.

Despite the lack of competition for the NHL, the value of the rights was propped up by Sport1's desire to complete its set of US sports rights. There is also interest in German, Austrian and Swiss NHL players.

"The National Hockey League is the best hockey league in the world," Matthias Kirschenhofer, general counsel for Constantin Medien, majority owner of Sport1, told *TV Sports Markets*.

Kirschenhofer also pointed to the fact that Sport1 shows other ice hockey rights. It broadcasts the International Ice Hockey Federation World Championships and the Deutschland Cup, the annual tournament arranged by the German ice hockey federation, the Deutscher Eishockey-Bund.

Sport1 launched its pay-television American sports channel, Sport1 US, in August last year after buying out ESPN's rights in Germany, Austria and Switzerland (*TV Sports Markets* 17:15).

The broadcaster will show at least 60 live games per season with original English

commentary on its Sport1 US channel. Viewers tend to prefer the original commentary. It plans to show around 70 live games in total, including all seven possible games of the Stanley Cup final. The deal does not include the Stanley Cup play-offs for the current 2013-14 season.

The channel has been a success, one local expert said. "They get decent distribution fees and there is interest from cable operators in the channel," he said. "They have competition from Eurosport and Sportdigital, but US sport reaches out to a very special target group and that helps them."

AMI/Medge struggles

The deal with Sport1 is a bonus for the AMI and Medge agencies which sold the rights. The NHL rights were unsold in Germany, Austria and Switzerland in the 2013-14 season. In previous years the league was shown on ESPN America, the broadcaster's US sports channel.

AMI and Medge hold the NHL rights across Europe, the Middle East and Africa, in a five-year deal from 2011-12 to 2015-16, worth about \$20m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 15:13).

Their biggest deal is in the Nordics with multi-territory commercial and pay-

television broadcaster Modern Times Group, worth about \$9m per year. Ice hockey is particularly popular in Finland and Sweden.

They have, however, struggled in deals across Central and Eastern Europe, with many broadcasters said to be balking at the asking price. Most independent experts believe that the agencies are losing money on the deal. AMI and Medge this week declined to comment when contacted by *TV Sports Markets*.

AMI/Medge have a deal with pan-regional pay-television broadcaster Arena Sport in the Balkans, covering Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia. Arena's rights are non-exclusive in Slovenia – the rights are shared with free-to-air sports broadcaster Sport TV. The deals cover 2011-12 to 2015-16. The rights are thought to be worth between \$1.5m and \$2m per year.

The agencies have a deal with pay-television channel Hockey Channel in Ukraine, from 2011-12 to 2015-16, worth around \$200,000 per year. There is also a deal in place with pay-television broadcaster SuperSport covering sub-Saharan Africa.

It is understood that AMI/Medge have struggled across Central and Eastern Europe due to the impact of the economic downturn, which has led to declining sports budgets for many broadcasters.

In Russia, the value of the rights is understood to have fallen from around \$1.5m per year to less than \$500,000 per year. This was also fuelled by strong interest in the domestic league, the Kontinental Hockey League.

One source suggested, however, that AMI would have been able to increase the value of the NHL by selling it with more lucrative rights, such as the English Premier League, in some markets. AMI holds Premier League rights in the current cycle in Czech Republic and Slovakia in a deal worth €2m per year.

AMI agreed a deal with pay-television broadcaster Nova Sport for NHL rights covering both territories, which experts estimate to be worth around \$300,000 per year. This is thought to be about five times less than what AMI had hoped for.

The high asking price for the rights is

also understood to have dissuaded Fox International Channels from acquiring rights across the region. Fox had initially been keen to add the rights to its collection of US sports content.

AMI's expertise is across Central and Eastern Europe. Medge's expertise is in the Nordics. The Nordics and Russia are by far the biggest ice hockey markets in Europe, followed by Czech Republic, Germany and Switzerland. ■ [www](#)

FOOTBALL

All signs positive as soccer continues inexorable US rise

By Andy Fry

The top US football league, Major League Soccer, and the country's national football association, US Soccer, enjoyed a five-fold increase in the value of their domestic media rights at the end of a long and complex set of negotiations with broadcasters ESPN, Fox and Univision Deportes.

The two organisations agreed eight-year deals, from 2015 to 2022, worth a combined \$90m (€65m) per season. The rights cover MLS and the home games of the USA men's and women's national teams.

It is thought that ESPN and Fox are contributing \$75m, with ESPN paying slightly more than half of that, and Univision paying about \$15m for Spanish-language rights.

The total compares with annual income of \$19m in the three-year deals with ESPN, Univision and NBCUniversal which expire this season. That deal represented only a modest increase on the \$17m per season which ESPN, Fox and Univision paid in a five-year deal from 2007 to 2011.

There are a number of factors for the big increase this time, which can be divided into changes to the way the rights have been sold and sporting/administrative factors.

Changes to the rights strategy of the two bodies include:

- a much increased inventory, including 'out of area' matches, previously shown on

the league's own media platforms

- the creation of a much richer suite of digital rights for broadcasters

- the addition of some international rights to the ESPN package.

Sporting/administrative changes include:

- increased investment in players by MLS franchises

- an expansion of the number of MLS teams from 19 to 24 by 2020

- the creation of a new MLS calendar with regular, fixed timeslots.

Scott Guglielmino, responsible for ESPN's football rights acquisitions, told *TV Sports Markets*: "This is a forward-looking agreement. MLS is at the precipice of reaching a much larger mass – they've done all the right things up to this point and are primed for sustained growth. We believe soccer is an ascendant sport in the US and that a vibrant league and national team are integral to the continued growth of the sport in the country."

Fox Sports 1 general manager and chief operating officer David Nathanson offered a similar view. "For us, this is a bet on the future. In a few years we'll look back and see what a good deal this was. If you take all factors into account, MLS is experiencing growth," he said this week.

Underlying the changes there are broader trends, such as the growth of interest in football generally in the US, for MLS and for both the men's and women's national teams, and the increasing competition between US media players for attractive sports content.

US rights analyst Neal Pilson said that interest in the national team's participation in this summer's FIFA World Cup in Brazil was "huge" and this had fed into the big increase. "At a general level, there is so much network competition in the US now that all sports rights are rising in value," he added. "Sport is a very efficient way to reach a young male audience and it is one of the few genres that is resistant to time-shift technology."

Nathanson confirmed that national team fixtures, whose English-language coverage will be shared between Fox and ESPN, were a key component of the new deal. "There's no question it was a big attraction to us. In our view, the progress of the league and of the national soccer team are inextricably linked."

Rights changes

From 2015, ESPN will have rights to 'out-of-market' matches for the first time. These are MLS games played on Saturday that are available to view outside the local area. They are currently only in the league's MLS Live and MLS Direct Kick packages, which are available on-demand on cable television. Next season they will be delivered via online service ESPN3. The package covers 200 games each season.

The benefit for the league is likely to be in much greater take-up. ESPN3 does not require a cable subscription; any US-based MLS fan who wants the package will have access to it. The package will be available via multiple internet-based services.

The exact details of the contract regarding these games, including the platforms on which they can be offered, any blackout restrictions, the availability of match archives and pricing models will be discussed in the coming months.

All three broadcasters have broader content and enhanced flexibility in how they can use their digital platforms to show matches than in the past (see panel).

ESPN's rights are further enriched by the inclusion of some international rights for the first time. The rights will be held by ESPN International, a division of ESPN that partly or wholly owns 24 television networks in 61 territories outside the US.

At present all global rights outside the US are handled by the MP & Silva agency. In 2012, the agency extended a four-year deal by one season, 2014, bringing the international cycle into line with the domestic cycle.

ESPN's Guglielmino declined to comment on the value of the deal but said that in addition to the network's existing football rights, "the collection of rights we acquired, including the rights to the out-of-market matches, remaining as a partner for US Soccer matches, expanded highlights and digital rights will help boost our ESPN FC franchise."

ESPN FC is the broadcaster's digital football platform, providing rolling coverage of world football. It was re-branded from ESPN SoccerNet in 2012.

The loser in the current round of negotiations was NBC, which is coming to the end of its three-year deal. NBC was

ESPN, Fox, Univision: How the rights are shared

ESPN Networks

- Minimum of 34 exclusive regular season games on Sundays at 5pm Eastern Time, primarily on ESPN2.
- ESPN3 will carry the matches in the MLS out-of-market package.
- ESPN Radio and ESPN Deportes Radio networks have the rights to broadcast MLS matches.
- Digital rights across all platforms and devices for the games it televises.

Fox Sports

- Minimum of 34 exclusive regular season games on Sundays at 7pm (ET), primarily on Fox Sports 1.
- Digital rights across all platforms and devices for the games it televises, including its Fox Sports Go mobile app and FoxSportsGo.com for desktops.
- Digital highlights rights for MLS's out-of-market package via Fox Sports digital platforms.
- Fox Sports Radio network has the opportunity to broadcast MLS matches.

ESPN/Fox shared rights

- ESPN and Fox Sports will share MLS Cup Play-off matches except for two Univision games.
- MLS Cup and MLS All-Star Game will alternate each year between ESPN and Fox Sports 1.
- Equal split of all national team matches.

Univision

- Minimum of 34 exclusive regular season games on Friday evenings usually at 7pm or 11pm (ET) primarily on UniMás, the youth-oriented sport and entertainment channel.
 - Two MLS Cup Play-off matches per season, on an exclusive basis, during the knockout round.
 - MLS All-Star Game and MLS Cup, exclusively in Spanish on Univision.
 - All men's national team matches and a minimum of four women's national team matches each year.
 - Exclusive MLS matches on the Univision networks will include Second Audio Program, providing viewers the option of watching games in English. English audio will also be available for matches televised on Univision's digital platforms.
 - Univision Deportes Network, Univision's 24-hour sports network, will feature five to seven consecutive Friday double-headers in May and June that will be surrounded by two hours of MLS ancillary programming.
 - UDN will televise a weekly Sunday MLS wrap-up programme and a condensed MLS match of the week.
 - Digital rights across all platforms and mobile devices for the games it televises.
- The MLS regular season runs from March to October, with the play-offs and final in November and December.*

involved in negotiations for the new packages at an early stage, but was not willing to match the price agreed by ESPN and Fox.

Expansion

MLS executive vice president Dan Courtmanche told *TV Sports Markets* that MLS owners had been investing in new initiatives to acquire more fans and increase engagement. This included bringing in high-level players such as Clint Dempsey and Landon Donovan, which he said would increase the size of the MLS fan base.

The expansion of the league was also a key factor, with the upcoming addition of teams like New York City, Orlando City

and Atlanta. The league will be expanded to 24 teams, from the current 19, by 2020.

Courtmanche added that the way MLS was currently broadcast had not allowed it to gain traction with fans. There have been no set timeslots for games, making it hard for fans to develop regular viewing habits.

This will change from 2015 with Univision, ESPN and Fox each having set windows for games. Univision will have exclusive broadcasts on Friday evenings, while ESPN and Fox Sports 1 will broadcast their matches consecutively on Sundays.

"Consistent scheduling is important and the new agreement addresses that. Exclusive windows for our nationally broadcast games was an element we wanted to ensure," he said. ■ [www.fox.com](#)

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 1 to May 14

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: World Cup, USA national team and MLS, A-League and more

- **Football:** Swedish telecommunications company Millicom acquired exclusive mobile rights in Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Paraguay and non-exclusive mobile rights in Bolivia for the 2014 Fifa World Cup. Millicom also has non-exclusive broadband internet rights in the same countries. Millicom will exploit the mobile rights, covering live coverage of all 64 matches, through its Tigo service.
- **Football:** Pan-Nordic free-to-air and basic-tier broadcaster SBS Discovery Media acquired rights for all friendly matches featuring the Norway national team. The deal will run for four years, from 2014 to 2017. The agreement does not include Norway v Russia on May 31, which will be shown by Norwegian commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2.
- **Football:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights for the Scotland national team's friendly match against Nigeria on May 28. The BBC will broadcast the game live on its BBC Scotland channel. Coverage will also be streamed live on the BBC Sport website.
- **Football:** Danish public-service broadcaster DR acquired multi-platform rights for coverage of the Denmark U-21 national team. The one-year deal covers Denmark's home qualifying games ahead of the 2015 Uefa U-21 European Championship. DR will exploit the rights on its DR3 channel as well as via online and mobile platforms.
- **Football:** US pay-television broadcasters ESPN, Fox Sports and Univision Deportes acquired rights for North America's Major League Soccer and the US men's and women's national teams. The deals with MLS and US Soccer will run for eight years, from 2015 to 2022 (page 7).
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports, which operates in the Indian subcontinent, acquired rights for Australia's A-League and FFA Cup club tournaments for three seasons, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. The deal, which covers Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, was brokered by the World Sport Group agency on behalf of Football Federation Australia. Ten will broadcast at least 86 A-League matches and 10 FFA Cup games per season.
- **Football:** State-owned telecommunications company Copaco acquired rights for the Paraguayan national championship from national governing body the APF and immediately sublicensed non-exclusive rights to Tigo. Copaco will exploit the rights on its IPTV service, with Tigo continuing to show matches via its Tigo Sports pay-television channel. The initial agreement between Copaco and Tigo will run for one year.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Entertainment talent agency William Morris Endeavor and private equity firm Silver Lake Partners closed their deal to acquire the IMG agency. William Morris Endeavor co-chief executives Patrick Whitesell and Ari Emanuel sent a welcoming note to employees of IMG Worldwide on May 6. The buyers struck the \$2.3bn (€1.7bn) deal with the agency's parent company, Forstmann Little, in December, but the transaction was subject to customary closing conditions.
- UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB is in preliminary talks about acquiring media company 21st Century Fox's stakes in sister pay-television broadcasters Sky Deutschland in Germany and Sky Italia in Italy. The proposed €10bn (\$13.9bn) deal would combine 21st Century Fox's 39-per-cent stake in BSkyB with its 55-per-cent stake in Sky Deutschland and the wholly-owned Sky Italia.
- Kick-off times for matches during the 2015 Rugby World Cup in England and Wales were rescheduled by local organising committee England Rugby 2015 and Rugby World Cup Limited, which operates the tournament, in order to tap into a broader global television audience. All pool matches that were previously scheduled to kick-off at 5pm local time will now kick off at 4.45pm, while all quarter-finals, semi-finals and the final, at the Twickenham stadium in London, will take place one hour earlier than planned, at 4pm.
- A new public-service broadcaster, New Hellenic Radio, Internet and Television, launched officially in Greece on May 4, nearly a

year after the closure of predecessor ERT. The Greek government closed ERT in June 2013 amid the country's economic crisis. ERT had broadcast for more than 60 years and its closure almost brought down the government.

FOOTBALL

- Domestic television audiences for the English Premier League increased year-on-year across the league's live and highlights coverage, according to analysis by SportBusiness Intelligence, the research and consultancy division of the SportBusiness Group, parent company of *TV Sports Markets*. For the league's live coverage, BSkyB recorded its second best season ever, while telecommunications company BT posted viewing figures well in excess of those achieved by previous Premier League pay-television broadcasters ESPN and Setanta. Audiences for public-service broadcaster the BBC's flagship *Match of the Day* highlights programme were up on the previous season by just under three per cent.
- Infront Sports & Media and Italy's Lega Serie A formalised their agreement confirming the agency as the league's exclusive adviser for the national and international media rights to all its properties, including the top division of Italian football. The contract secures Infront's role until the end of the 2017-18 season, with the possibility of extending the agreement for a further three-year cycle until 2020-21. The deal will guarantee the league total income of at least €5.94bn (\$8.26bn) over six years, if the extension is triggered.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 1 to May 14**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****Baseball, basketball, Commonwealth Games, cycling, ice hockey and more**

- **Baseball:** US pay-television channel CBS Sports Network struck a deal with Minor League Baseball to show coverage of the 'game of the week' until the end of the 2014 season. The deal was brokered by the JMI Sports agency.
- **Baseball:** Northern Ireland broadcast live coverage of the opening three days of action in Northern Ireland on the BBC 2 NI channel from May 9. The deal included daily highlights of the remaining stages on the BBC Sport NI website.
- **Baseball:** rights for the 2014 Men's World Championship in a sublicensing deal with pan-Nordic pay-television broadcaster C More. Free-to-air channel TV2 Zebra will broadcast Norway's games plus the semi-finals and final. The remaining games will be shown by pay-television channels TV2 Sportskanalen and TV2 Sumo.
- **Basketball:** US pay-television sports broadcasters ESPN, Fox Sports and the Big Ten Network acquired rights for the Gavitt Tipoff Games collegiate event. Big East Conference home games will be shown by Fox Sports 1. Big Ten Conference home games will be broadcast by ESPN or Big Ten Network. The Gavitt Tipoff Games will begin in 2015-16. The lengths of the deals were not disclosed.
- **Cycling:** The BBC acquired rights for the 2014 RideLondon Women's Grand Prix. The broadcaster will show a one-hour programme to cover the event.
- **Ice Hockey:** The Infront Sports & Media agency reached a deal for Mir TV to broadcast the 2014 Men's World Championship in six markets of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Infront did not specify the six territories included in the Mir TV deal, but said they include Georgia and Armenia.
- **Commonwealth Games:** South African public-service broadcaster SABC acquired free-to-air rights for the Glasgow 2014 Games. SABC will broadcast at least 100 hours of coverage plus extensive news and highlights on its SABC 2 channel.
- **Golf:** Fox Sports agreed a multi-year, multi-platform rights deal for the Franklin Templeton Shootout tournament, beginning with this year's event on December 11-13 in Florida, US. Fox Sports will show at least 10 hours of live coverage.
- **Ice Hockey:** Sport1 US, the US-sports-focused pay-television channel that is operated by German sports broadcaster Sport1, acquired rights for the NHL for two seasons (page 6).
- **Cycling:** The BBC Northern Ireland division of UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights for the 2014 Giro d'Italia from the IMG Media agency. BBC
- **Horse Racing:** Media consultancy Henry Birtles Associates struck a deal to distribute international television rights for the Breeders' Cup World Championships on an exclusive basis in a multi-year agreement.
- **Kabaddi:** Indian pay-television broadcaster Star Sports acquired rights for the Pro-Kabaddi League. Star Sports will broadcast the new eight-city league live from July 26.
- **Ice Hockey:** Norwegian commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 acquired
- The PZPN, football's governing body in Poland, amended its partnership with the Sportfive agency. The new agreement will run until 2018. The deal, which comprises rights for Poland national team matches and the Polish Cup club competition, was redrawn to take into account the new centralised rights strategy of football's European governing body, Uefa.
- German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland said that it was close to completing an Ultra HD breakthrough after providing the first broadcast of a football match live over satellite in the format. Bayern Munich's 5-2 win over Werder Bremen on April 26 in the Bundesliga was filmed by six 4K cameras combined with four HD cameras, which were 'upconverted' to Ultra HD and delivered on several Ultra HD televisions at Sky's headquarters in Unterföhring.
- Top-tier Primeira Liga football club Sporting Portugal will launch its own channel in July. Production company World Channels was appointed to produce the channel after the club whittled down an eight-strong shortlist of candidates. The channel will begin broadcasting via pay-television services.
- UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB will offer refunds to viewers who experienced problems in trying to access coverage of the final day of the Premier League football season on its Now TV internet streaming service. Some fans who paid £9.99 (£12.20/\$16.90) for a day pass to watch the games on May 11 via Now TV found messages saying that the service was unavailable. Subscribers also experienced problems accessing coverage on mobile and tablet streaming service Sky Go.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- US telecommunications company AT&T is in "active talks" to acquire satellite television provider DirecTV, according to the Reuters news agency. A bid of about \$95 (€68) per share would value DirecTV at more than \$48bn.
- Canadian pay-television sports broadcaster TSN will expand its service from two to five national channels. The new feeds will be branded TSN1, TSN2, TSN3, TSN4 and TSN5. All TSN feeds will also be available to subscribers online and through mobile devices via the broadcaster's TSN Go live streaming service.
- UK pay-television operator Virgin Media extended a deal to carry BSkyB's pay-television channels, including the Sky Sports channels. The deal will run for at least five years, from 2014-15 to 2018-19, and is an extension of an existing three-year agreement between the two companies.
- BT cited the performance of its BT Sport pay-television service as one of the main reasons behind a year-on-year increase in pre-tax profit during the three months to March 31, 2014. BT reported

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MEDIA RIGHTS 3

Rallycross, Olympic Games, rugby union, skiing, snooker and more

- **Motorsport:** Sport1 acquired rights for the ADAC 24 hour Race Nürburgring touring car and GT endurance event in a three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016. Sport1's deal with production company Wige Media includes television, online and mobile rights in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.
- **Motorsport:** French digital-terrestrial-television channel L'Équipe 21 acquired rights for the 2014 season of the World Rallycross Championship.
- **Multi-sport:** International sports broadcaster ESPN agreed a rights deal for the 2015 Special Olympics, which will take place in Los Angeles, US. The agreement covers all media platforms in the US, Mexico, Spanish-speaking Latin America, the Caribbean, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. ESPN, the Games' organising committee and Special Olympics International will collaborate to find regional media partners to broadcast the Games worldwide. In Los Angeles, regional broadcaster KABC-TV will provide coverage of the event.
- **Olympic Games:** US media company NBCUniversal extended its rights deal for the summer, winter and Youth Games for 12 years, from 2021 to 2032 (page 1).
- **Rugby Union:** The IEC in Sports agency struck rights distribution deals with the Asian Rugby Football Union and the J Sports media company. IEC in Sports renewed a deal with the ARFU to distribute rights for the Asian 5 Nations tournament. The length of the agreement was not disclosed. The agency will also distribute rights on a worldwide basis for two Test matches featuring the Japan national team, against Samoa on May 30 and Italy on June 21. The agreement was signed with J Sports, the Japan Rugby Football Union's global media rights-holder. The rights exclude Japan for both games and Italy for the June 21 game.
- **Skiing:** Infront Sports & Media retained the international media rights to all World Cup events staged in Germany by Fis, the sport's global governing body (page 5).
- **Skiing:** The NBC Sports Group division of NBCUniversal reached an agreement with the US Ski and Snowboard Association to broadcast the Fis 2015 Alpine World Championships in Vail/Beaver Creek. The NBC network, pay-television broadcaster NBC Sports Network and Universal Sports Network, a subsidiary of NBC, will show more than 25 hours of the championships, including live coverage of every event. NBC Sports Live Extra, NBC Sports' live streaming service, Universal Sports Network and the USSA Network on video-sharing website YouTube will also show live coverage online.
- **Snooker:** World Snooker agreed an expanded five-year rights deal, from 2014 to 2018, with UK commercial broadcaster ITV. The deal comprises the Champion of Champions tournament and a new World Grand Prix event. ITV provided live coverage of the inaugural 2013 Champions of Champions event on digital channel ITV4.
- **Sport Climbing:** The International Federation of Sport Climbing struck a deal with Red Bull Media House for the media company to provide live online coverage of its 2014 World Cup Boulder Series on May 17. Red Bull Media House will stream live coverage of the semi-finals and finals of the event in Innsbruck, Austria. The semi-finals will be streamed live via the federation's website, IFSC-climbing.org and YouTube. The finals will be streamed via Red Bull's dedicated IFSC microsite and embedded into the IFSC-climbing.org homepage.

adjusted profit before tax of £747m (€911m/\$1.3bn) in the fiscal fourth quarter – an increase of 17 per cent on the £639m achieved in the corresponding period last year. Year-on-year net revenue fell by one per cent to £4.7bn in the quarter but consumer revenue increased by nine per cent to £1.1bn.

- Spanish media company Prisa accepted an offer from telecommunications company Telefónica to acquire a majority stake in pay-television operator Canal Plus. The telco offered €725m (\$1bn) to acquire Prisa's 56-per-cent stake in Canal Plus with the aim of increasing its stake in the sports broadcaster from 22 per cent to 78 per cent.
- Swedish communications technology company Ericsson completed its takeover of UK-based media services firm Red Bee Media. Ericsson acquired Red Bee from Creative Broadcast Services Holdings – an entity controlled by Macquarie Advanced Investment Partners. Through the takeover, Ericsson has gained 1,500 employees as well as media services and operations facilities in the UK, France, Germany, Spain and Australia.
- Nordic pay-television broadcaster C More Entertainment will close sports-focused commercial channel Canal 9 in Norway. C More's administrative director in Norway, Steinar Brændeland, told the Kampanje news website that the channel is being closed due to poor ratings for non-sports programmes.
- Action sports and lifestyle channel EDGESport, which is owned by the IMG agency, secured a long-term carriage deal with European media company M7 Group. EDGESport will be carried via M7-owned DTH platforms CanalDigitaal in the Netherlands, TV Vlaanderen in Flanders and Skylink in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In addition, the channel will be available to subscribers of Online.nl, M7's new IPTV platform in the Netherlands.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- US sports broadcaster ESPN will try to link up with another media company to bid for the next cycle of rights for football's English Premier League, according to president John Skipper. Skipper expects talks for the next rights cycle, beginning with the 2016-17 season, to start next spring.
- The Team Marketing agency launched an invitation to tender for the rights in all Latin American countries, with the exception of

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 1 to May 14

- Brazil, to the Uefa Champions League, Super Cup and Europa League tournaments. The platform-neutral rights will cover three seasons of the Champions League and Europa League, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and four editions of the annual Super Cup, from 2015 to 2018. Bids must be submitted by June 2.
- Leading Superligaen club Brøndby confirmed it would join the other 11 top-tier Danish football clubs in entering a six-year collective rights deal. A tender for the rights covering six years, from 2015-16 to 2020-21, is expected to be launched shortly. It will include rights for the second-tier Ligaen and the DBU Pokalen cup competition. Brøndby had previously said it would not participate in the Superligaen's collective rights agreement when the current deal expires in July 2015.
 - US college sports conference the Ivy League appointed the Lagardère Unlimited agency to aid its search for a new rights deal. Pay-television broadcaster NBC Sports Network currently has the rights to the Ivy League under a two-year covering the 2012-13 and 2013-14 seasons.
 - White label smart television portal provider NetRange will launch an application that will provide coverage of major events operated by the International Table Tennis Federation. The app will be available initially on NetRange portals following an agreement with the Total Sports Asia agency. The app will provide coverage of the next two World Table Tennis Championships plus highlights from previous World Championship events as well as the World Junior Table Tennis Championships.
 - Online television channel Fantasy Sports Television Network entered into a content partnership with the Bloomberg Sports division of the Bloomberg news agency. Under the deal, the channel will broadcast a daily 30-minute programme dedicated to fantasy sports and sports analytics. The programme, which will cover sports such as American football, baseball, basketball and football, will launch later this year.
 - International sports broadcaster ESPN will be responsible for providing audiences in the Caribbean with tailored coverage of the 2016 Rio de Janeiro summer Olympic Games, according to the Caribbean Association of National Olympic Committees. ESPN is expected to make available about 200 hours of live Caribbean-focused coverage during the event.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The lack of a German broadcast platform for the Diamond League athletics series is a "major disadvantage" for the sport in Germany, according to Helmut Digel, a German member of the International Association of Athletics Federations' council. Digel said that the rights offered to the market by the league marketing partner IMG Media "were not too expensive."
- Spanish media company AS and Russian online sports media platform Championat.com struck deals with Euroleague Basketball to become the tournament's official online platforms in their respective countries. The services will include video highlights of the Euroleague plus other content.
- The IMG agency's Corporate Films and Commercials division, part of its IMG Productions division, is to be rebranded as Evoke Films. IMG said that the rebrand, created by the OPX agency, would create a distinction between Evoke Films' specialist offering and IMG's other sports production arms. Evoke Films will continue to deliver creative films for brands connected to sport.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Géraldine Filiol was appointed as the new deputy managing director for international communications, marketing and external relations at pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport. Filiol replaces Heather Bowler, who is leaving Eurosport after seven years to become senior vice-president of communications at the Women's Tennis Association. Filiol steps into the new role after having worked for Eurosport for 19 years – most recently as deputy managing director for rights acquisitions. • Michał Jarocki has replaced Tomasz Smokowski as the director of sport at Polish pay-television platform NC Plus, the pay-television platform.

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