

FOOTBALL 1

Telefónica's entry into La Liga rights market establishes 2016 battle lines

By Richard Welbirg

Telefónica's acquisition of all rights to two Primera Liga clubs, and its bid to acquire the rights to Spanish giant Barcelona, are aimed at strengthening the telco's position ahead of changes in the domestic broadcast market.

The deals give the Spanish company a strong hand in discussions with the Mediapro agency over next season's domestic rights, and improve its position ahead of the league's impending switch to collective selling in 2016-17.

They underline Telefónica's determination to be a major player in the domestic sports-rights market, following big deals last year for Formula One motor racing and motor cycling's MotoGP championship.

Telefónica will pay Celta Vigo and Real Sociedad about €23m (\$26.7m) and €26m respectively for their media rights in the 2015-16 season. Both clubs

earned €22m this season – Sociedad from Mediapro and Celta from pay-television platform Canal Plus. Telefónica is now in head-to-head competition with Mediapro for the two clubs yet to sell their rights for 2015-16: Barcelona and Espanyol.

Next season is the last in which Spanish clubs will sell their rights individually. Thereafter, rights will be sold collectively by the Liga de Fútbol Profesional, the association which administers the Primera and Segunda divisions.

The emergence of an aggressive Telefónica, which last year took over Canal Plus from publisher Prisa, is good news for the LFP. When the collective rights come to market it will now have a well-funded telco going up against Mediapro, which is expected to be working with Qatari sports broadcaster beIN Sports.

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PAY-TELEVISION

BeIN global strategy: whatever works

By Robin Jellis

BeIN Media Group's recent rights deals in Canada, as well as negotiations in Spain and Turkey, demonstrate the company's ability to adapt to market conditions in expanding its pay-television operation beyond its core market of the Middle East and North Africa.

The developments show that beIN will continue to grow opportunistically, by adopting different business models and


ownership structures depending on the characteristics of each market. It will not always simply launch wholly-owned premium sports channels, as it has done in France and the US.

BeIN's recent Uefa Champions League and Europa League deals in Canada were agreed together with the Bell media group (see separate story, page 5). Due to

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FASTRACK

NEWS IN BRIEF

Open sharing deal unlikely as Sky digs in on exclusivity

A sharing arrangement for the domestic rights to golf's British Open between a free-to-air and a pay-television broadcaster looks unlikely.

The rights in a new cycle, expected to cover the five years from 2017 to 2021, are under negotiation.

Currently, public-service broadcaster the BBC holds exclusive rights in a five-year deal, from 2012 to 2016, worth about £9m (€11.8m/\$13.6m) per year. It also pays more than £2m per year in production costs (*TV Sports Markets* 18:22).

Pay-television broadcaster BSkyB is understood to be bidding strongly to prise exclusive rights from the BBC. The BBC wants to retain its rights, but feels the existing fee is already high.

The BBC and Sky currently share rights to the US Masters in a three-year deal, from 2015 to 2017, worth about \$14m per year but Sky is said to be reluctant to agree another sharing deal. One source said: "They want all of it or none of it." Sky would struggle to attract additional subscribers for its coverage if some of the competition was shown free-to-air.

It looks as though commercial rights-holder, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club (R&A) must decide between securing a bigger rights fee from selling exclusively to Sky, but face a drop in audience, or maintaining its rights fee from selling to the BBC, and retain a wide viewership.

One golf expert said it would be a "brave" decision to move coverage entirely to pay-television, especially at a time when golf participation figures in the UK are decreasing.

The R&A is being advised by the IMG Events & Media agency.

The British Open is a Category B event in UK listed-events legislation, meaning that at least highlights or delayed coverage must be provided by a free-to-air broadcaster. There is no obligation for live rights to be shown free-to-air. ■

Serie A renews with Rai

Italy's Serie A secured €16.8m (\$19.5m) per season for free-to-air highlights, internet and mobile highlights and clip rights for the next rights cycle, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, in deals agreed just before Christmas.

State broadcaster Rai renewed its deal for free-to-air highlights for €12.3m per season. Former state telco Telecom Italia acquired mobile and internet rights for €4.5m per season.

The deals bring the league's total domestic and international rights income for the next cycle to €1.148bn per season, with several small packages of league rights, plus the rights to the Coppa Italia, still to be sold.

Both deals represent drops in value compared to the current three-year cycle, from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

At present, the league earns €14.7m per season from highlights rights in two separate deals. Rai pays €11.5m per season for the flagship Sunday early evening highlights. Sky Italia's small free-to-air channel Cielo pays €3.2m per season for a 6pm to 6.15pm slot on Sundays.

Rai's €12.3m per season in the next cycle reflects a greater level of exclusivity. The 6pm package was not made available this time. Rai's slot is on Sundays just after matches have been played. In Rai's previous deal, for the two seasons from 2010-11 to 2011-12, it paid €24.55m per season.

Telecom's €4.5m-per-season deal for mobile and internet rights compares with the €8.4m per season paid in the current cycle, by Vodafone and Telecom's mobile division Tim. ■

Sky pays more for ECB extension

UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB is thought to be paying an increase of at least 15 per cent for the rights to English cricket in its extension with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

In 2012, Sky agreed to pay between £60m (€78m/\$91m) and £65m per year for ECB rights for four years, from

2014 to 2017. That deal included an option in Sky's favour to renew at about £75m per season for 2018 and 2019. Sky had until December 2014 to exercise the option.

Sky is thought to have wanted to renegotiate the deal on improved terms if the ECB would renew until 2022 but the ECB refused. The broadcaster is aware that it got the rights at a very good price, having agreed the deal four months before BT Sport emerged as a rival. Cricket is a strategic target for BT.

The deal covers exclusive live rights to England's home fixtures, county matches, women's and age-grade cricket. The extension covers series against Pakistan and India in 2018 and the Ashes against Australia in 2019. ■

Netball could help Ten with sale

Australian commercial network Ten last month acquired free-to-air rights to the Netball World Cup – to be hosted in Sydney this summer – for a nominal fee.

It is thought tournament organiser NWC2015 prioritised free-to-air exposure over a rights fee. Ten can expect good ratings if the Australian national team, the reigning champions, lives up to expectations and reaches at least the semi-finals.

Pay-television network Fox Sports acquired pay-television rights to all 44 World Cup games in a deal worth less than A\$1m (€710,000/\$820,000).

Ten lacks the finances to compete aggressively for top sport – it is the least affluent of Australia's three major commercial networks. But it is currently on the market and requires live sport to maintain ratings as it seeks a buyer.

Local news reports suggest the two most likely outcomes of the sale process are that pay-television operator Foxtel and US media company Discovery succeed with a joint bid, or that Bruce Gordon, owner of regional network WIN Television and Ten's largest shareholder, increases his holding to a controlling stake. ■

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Telefónica's entry into La Liga rights market bodes well for league

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As one Spanish football expert put it this week, “until now there has been competition between one fairly small player [Mediapro], and a big player with massive financial problems [Prisa]. The league has grounds to be very optimistic about the future.”

Vodafone-owned cable operator Ono and pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport are also potential bidders.

In the 2014-15 season, the 20 Primera Liga clubs earned a combined €722m selling their rights either to Mediapro or Canal Plus. LFP president Javier Tebas said late last year that the league hoped to earn €1bn in the first year of collective selling, with up to €400m coming from international rights sales. By 2020-21 it aims to generate between €1.35bn and €1.4bn per season.

The ‘professional sport law’ which will enable the change has been agreed by the clubs, the relevant government departments and Spain’s competition regulator, the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia (CNMC). It is awaiting the final approval of the Council of Ministers, Spain’s cabinet, which is expected before the end of January.

Catalan connection

Most experts believe Telefónica will struggle to beat Mediapro to a deal with Barcelona. The agency is likely to have offered the club the same terms it agreed with Real Madrid for the 2015-16 season, thought to be about €150m. Telefónica would have to bid at least that amount.

In practice, it would probably have to bid considerably more to overcome the strength of the relationship between the two. Mediapro, which holds Barcelona’s rights in the current cycle, shares the club’s Catalan culture and has worked closely with the club for years across a range of commercial ventures. The agency also designed and built the club museum.

The delay in renewing their agreement is thought to be due to political upheaval at the club – president Josep Maria Bartomeu recently called early elections to “relieve tension” – rather than Telefónica’s involvement.

Politics

Spanish football insiders say political as well as financial factors helped Telefónica close deals for rights to matches of Celta Vigo and Real Sociedad, and would likely help them acquire Espanyol rights.

Real Sociedad has a fractious relationship with Mediapro. In 2012, the club terminated its contract with the agency after winning a case for late payments, only for Mediapro to successfully countersue.

Celta Vigo signed with Canal Plus in the current cycle to ensure a similar fee as local rival Deportivo La Coruña, which is partnered with Mediapro.

Espanyol’s rights are also held by Canal Plus. The club believed it would have been treated as a poor relation to city rival Barcelona had it signed with Mediapro.

Telefónica took 100-per-cent ownership of Canal Plus in July 2014, although the deal is awaiting the results of a CNMC antitrust investigation.

Why now?

Mediapro agreed deals for the majority of the 42 Primera and Segunda division clubs last summer without competition, and was expected to complete deals with the remaining clubs (*TV Sports Markets* 18:14).

There are two possible reasons for Telefónica’s decision to enter the market for club rights so late in the day. One is that holding these rights ensures Telefónica’s presence in discussions about the structure and implementation of the collective selling regime.

Second, it felt the need to secure its position in the Spanish broadcast market after losing out to Mediapro in the bidding for Uefa Champions League rights in September last year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:18).

Without a top football competition – the Primera Liga or the Champions League – Canal Plus will shed subscribers.

The Champions League is expected to be broadcast on a channel to be launched by Mediapro and the beIN Media Group

later this year.

It is not yet clear how Mediapro will exploit the rights of its Liga clubs in 2015-16. It cannot show all games exclusively on its digital-terrestrial pay-television channel Gol T without breaking antitrust rules.

At least some games must be sold to domestic players, with beIN, Telefónica and Ono the likely buyers.

There is no real value in Telefónica’s acquisitions from a broadcast perspective. But it does force Mediapro into discussions with the broadcaster if the agency wants to be able to sell a complete domestic package, or remain the exclusive international distributor of the Primera and Segunda Liga, giving the telco a modicum of leverage.

It is likely the two parties will agree some form of rights-sharing agreement, as Mediapro did with media company Prisa, former owner of Canal Plus, between 2012-13 and 2014-15.

Prisa paid Mediapro €251m per season over the period for pay-television rights to the agency’s 32 first and second division clubs. Under the deal, Canal Plus broadcasts one exclusive first-choice match per week. The remaining eight matches are simulcast by Canal Plus and Gol T. Mediapro is the exclusive international distributor of the complete Spanish Liga package.

International puzzle

Most of Mediapro’s international deals expire at the end of the current season. It was anticipated that Mediapro would seek one-season extensions with existing partners covering the 2015-16 season.

Broadcasters in Europe and Latin America have told *TV Sports Markets* that in informal discussions ahead of tenders later this year, it was unclear whether Mediapro would be able to sell rights for just one season, or offer a four-season package – including the 2015-16 season and an additional three-season cycle which would fall under the new sales regime.

Mediapro is the strong favourite if the LFP tenders its international rights from 2016-17. The rights are a core property to the agency and it would bid aggressively to retain them. It also has the advantage of years of experience selling the rights around the world. ■

PAY-TELEVISION

BeIN shows flexibility in ownership models around the world

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broadcasting restrictions, beIN was only able to launch by entering into a partnership with a Canadian company.

The deals are evidence that beIN is prepared to work in partnership with other companies for either strategic reasons or when it is a regulatory necessity in a certain market.

In Asia, beIN initially entered into a joint venture with the MP & Silva agency to launch premium channels, before deciding to buy the agency's 50-per-cent stake in order to have complete control of the strategic direction of the channels (*TV Sports Markets* 18:5).

In Spain, a market in which beIN has not yet launched its channels, it worked with the Mediapro agency on its acquisition of Champions League rights in September last year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:18). A roll-out of the beIN Sports channels is almost certain in 2015, but it has not yet been decided in what guise.

It is highly unlikely that beIN would launch a purely football channel, like Mediapro's Gol T pay-television channel. BeIN has not yet ruled out the possibility of rebranding Gol T but may launch its beIN Sports multi-sports channels alongside Gol T.

BeIN's parent company, Al Jazeera, is also reported to be preparing a bid for five new licences for free-to-air digital-terrestrial channels in the country.

In Latin America, beIN also bid for Champions League and Europa League rights, ahead of plans – it is thought – to roll out its channels across the region (*TV Sports Markets* 18:15).

Taking control

In Turkey and Australia, the strategy is different again: taking control of an existing pay-television platform. In Australia, beIN acquired the Irish-owned Setanta Sports Australia pay-

television operation last October, rebranding it beIN Sports the following month.

In Turkey, media reports claim beIN has secured a majority shareholding in leading pay-television operator Digiturk, acquiring a 53-per-cent stake in a deal worth \$820m (€707m).

TV Sports Markets understands that no deal has yet been agreed, although there is serious interest from beIN, and a deal is likely to be completed in the near future.

The deal has been complicated due to Digiturk's current ownership structure. Media group Çukurova Holding had held a 53-per-cent stake, with private equity group Providence holding the remaining 47 per cent.

Çukurova's stake was seized by Turkey's Savings Deposit Insurance Fund, the national body for fund management, after the media group defaulted on a payment. The body put the stake up for sale in May 2013. Any deal by beIN would have to be agreed with the body and with Çukurova.

The Doğan Holding media group and telco Türk Telekom are also reported to have bid for Çukurova's 53-per-cent stake. BeIN is thought to have been in talks over an acquisition of the stake for several months.

BeIN's Turkish plans

BeIN is understood to be keen to launch in Turkey – a market it has ear-marked as one with great potential for growth.

Turkey has a large population – 75m – with a young demographic. Football is the top sport in the country, but basketball is also very popular. It would also act as a natural bridge between the beIN businesses in Mena and Europe. One media expert said “there is high growth potential” in Turkey, and “a lot of headroom” to grow pay-television.

Digiturk is the leading pay-television operator in Turkey, with about 3m subscribers. Digiturk's main property is the Süper Lig, the top domestic football league. Its renewal to the end of the 2016-17 season was approved by the Turkish competition authority in November last year.

It is understood that beIN prefers the

notion of a straight takeover of an established operation in Turkey, rather than a roll-out of its channels from scratch for two reasons.

First, the challenge of hiring all the staff necessary to run a pay-television operation is a time-consuming exercise. In acquiring Digiturk, beIN will inherit a highly-skilled workforce of around 1,000 employees.

Second, external staff would have little knowledge of the Turkish market. Acquiring Digiturk staff who can speak the language and understand the culture will be a big advantage for beIN.

It is likely that beIN would rebrand Digiturk's Lig TV channel with its beIN Sports brand.

There is no plan yet in place for a potential acquisition of the remaining 47-per-cent stake in Digiturk, owned by Providence, if and when beIN acquire the stake owned by Çukurova.

Long-term view

The flexible, market-specific strategy adopted by beIN is akin to the kind of investments typically made by venture capitalists, rather than media groups, according to Claudio Aspesi, senior research analyst at Bernstein.

He said that beIN ran the risk of having “spectacular success in some markets and failures in others.” As a private company, however, with a long-term strategy, beIN should not be unduly worried.

“They are in a very different situation to a publicly listed company where every deal is scrutinised and a failure in one market can drag valuation down,” he said. “Also, they can afford to take a five- to 10-year view. Contrary to much reporting of their activities, these guys are really clever investors.”

He added that investing in distribution platforms could prove to be a smart move in the long term. “Right now the question is whether you invest in content or distribution assets and the markets are favouring content. Distribution assets are out of favour with investors, which could make it a good time to find value if you're buying.” ■

[www. Digiturk secures Süper Lig](#)

HANDBALL

Sky beats Sport1 and Sportsman in last-minute deal

By Robin Jellis

The Pitch International agency secured a late rights deal in the critical German market for the 2015 men's Handball World Championship – the last major market where a deal was outstanding.

Negotiations over a deal were protracted due to a dispute over the availability of public-service channels ARD and ZDF outside Germany. ARD/ZDF have historically shown the tournament.

BeIN Media Group, the global rights-holder of the World Championships, was not happy the channels are widely available in large parts of the Middle East and North Africa via the HotBird satellite – diluting the value of the rights in what are core territories for beIN.

BeIN asked ARD/ZDF to encrypt its channels on the satellite, which the broadcasters refused to do – despite doing this for the 2014 Fifa World Cup.

Other German free-to-air channels are also available on the satellite, limiting a deal to a pay-television broadcaster.

Sky Deutschland acquired rights to the men's tournament in 2015 in Germany and Austria, for a fee of about €250,000 (\$290,000). It is expected to pay another €500,000 to produce its coverage.

This is substantially less than the rights fee of just under €4m paid by ARD/ZDF for the four events between 2011 and 2013 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:21).

Sky beat rival bids from sports broadcaster Sport1, bidding for its pay-television channel Sport1 Plus, and the Sportsman Media Group, which was bidding for its Laola1.tv online streaming service. Both offered about €100,000.

Sky will show a minimum of 21 matches on its channels, with all other matches streamed for free on its website.

Sky's business is usually focused on acquiring season-long content to attract subscribers, so buying rights to a two-week event is at odds with this strategy. But the broadcaster was keen to acquire the rights

to complement its coverage of the EHF Champions League, which it acquired in September (*TV Sports Markets* 18:17).

BeIN acquired global rights to the men's and women's World Championships in 2015 and 2017 from the International Handball Federation, the sport's global governing body, in January last year. The deal is worth CHF100m (€87m/\$101m) (*TV Sports Markets* 18:1).

BeIN will provide coverage on its beIN Sports channels in territories where it operates. It appointed Pitch to sell on the rights in all other territories.

Return on investment

A like-with-like comparison with the previous cycle, when the rights were sold by the Ufa Sports agency, is not possible for two reasons.

First, beIN has placed an internal allocation on the value of the rights in the territories in which it operates. The rights are of strategic value across Mena, as Qatar is hosting the 2015 men's event, while handball is popular in France.

Second, not all deals cover both men's and women's events in 2015 and 2017 – some, like the Sky Deutschland deal, cover just the 2015 men's competition.

Pitch is understood to have increased rights fees in most territories, although the fee has fallen quite dramatically in Germany. The agency secured a good increase in Scandinavia, a key market, after agreeing a consortium deal in November.

There is understood to have been a strong increase in Poland, in a deal with public-service broadcaster TVP. There has also been an uplift across the Americas, in a deal with pay-television broadcaster TyC Sports, and a rise of about 100 per cent in Brazil in a deal with Globosat.

Distribution and exposure

Broadcast coverage of the men's 2015 Handball World Championship is expected to be available in more territories than ever before.

Pitch and beIN are understood to be hopeful of securing deals in 180 territories for the men's tournament, which runs from January 15 to February 1. Previous rights-holder Ufa had deals in 150 territories for the men's World Championships in 2013.

Pitch is also working with the IHF to live stream matches for free in so-called dark markets, where no linear broadcast deal has been agreed. Coverage would be available on the beIN Sports website.

However, in many of the new deals pay-television broadcasters have replaced free-to-air broadcasters, which is expected to lead to a reduction in cumulative global audiences. There are also still no deals in the Baltics, Finland, Ukraine, the Netherlands, Serbia, Italy or Greece. ■

FOOTBALL 2

Value of Uefa rights stays strong in Europe and Canada

By Robin Jellis

Uefa has agreed a raft of Champions League and Europa League rights deals, securing fee increases in each territory, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

European football's governing body finalised deals for both competitions in the Netherlands, Romania and Canada, as well as Europa League deals in Austria and Germany. It also sold free-to-air Champions League rights in Ireland.

It secured a particularly strong increase in Canada, where rights to both the Champions League and Europa League were bought jointly by media group Bell and beIN Media Group.

The deals were agreed on behalf of Uefa by Team Marketing, the body's sales agent for its club competitions. All deals are for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

Netherlands

In the Netherlands, Uefa will earn a total of €22m (\$26m) per season for its Champions League rights, up 52 per cent on the €14.5m per season it earns in existing deals.

Commercial broadcaster SBS agreed to pay close to €16m per season for free-to-air Champions League rights. This is up by around 45 per cent on the €11m per season paid in the existing deal by public-service broadcaster NOS. NOS is also thought to have spent an additional

€4m per season on producing its coverage. SBS is expected to spend a similar additional amount on production.

SBS will show the first-pick match live on Tuesdays and Wednesdays through to the final, as in the current deal with NOS. The deal also includes highlights on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, as well as live rights to the Super Cup.

NOS has shown the Champions League since its inception in the 1992-93 season but did not bid this time. Its sports rights budget has been cut, and it has bought several expensive rights in the past year, including: Uefa Euro 2016; Dutch national team matches in qualifying for Euro 2016 and the 2018 Fifa World Cup; and highlights to the top-tier domestic football league, the Eredivisie, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. Its total outlay for the rights is about €99m.

The Champions League fee increased mainly due to competition between the two main commercial broadcasters: SBS and RTL. SBS was keen to acquire the rights to improve its market share – RTL is the leading commercial broadcaster. SBS also wanted to associate itself with the 'premium' Champions League brand. One insider added that SBS may have bid strongly as it feared a potential NOS bid, despite reports.

After the first round of bidding the offers were at similar levels. SBS upped its bid. RTL chose not to.

The pay-television rights were renewed by Sport1 for about €6m per season, up 71 per cent on the €3.5m per season in the existing deal. The incumbent rights-holder beat a bid from main rival Fox Sports Eredivisie. Sport1 will have live and highlights rights to all matches, as in the current deal.

Uefa is expected to earn additional revenue from a clips rights deal, similar to the one it has with Rupert Murdoch's newspaper group News UK for the UK. A separate deal for clips rights would be only the second agreed by Uefa in the next cycle. Local media reports said the nu.nl website, owned by media group Sanoma, which also owns SBS, was the favourite to get the rights. Uefa is in advanced negotiations over a deal.

Europa League rights in the Netherlands will be worth a total of €6m

per season, up 20 per cent on the €5m per season Uefa earns in the current cycle.

RTL renewed its live free-to-air rights to the first- and second-pick matches for €4m per season, up from €3.5m per season at present. The fee is still seen as relatively low considering the success of Dutch clubs in recent times. AZ reached the quarter-finals last season, while both Ajax and Feyenoord have qualified for the knockout phase this season.

Fox agreed a deal worth €2m per season for live pay-television rights, up from €1.5m per season in the current deal. The fee increased because Fox will show more matches than at present. In the current deal it shows all matches live other than the first- and second-pick games, which are shown by RTL. In the new deal, Fox will also show these games on a non-exclusive basis.

Romania

In Romania, telco Telekom Romania acquired Champions League and Europa League rights, as did commercial broadcaster Pro TV, in separate deals.

Telekom Romania was established in September 2014 as a merger of Romtelecom and mobile phone company Cosmote Romania. German telco Deutsche Telekom is the largest shareholder in Greek telco OTE, the majority owner of Telekom Romania.

The total Champions League rights fee in Romania will be €13m per season, up 16 per cent on the €11.2m per season the rights command in the existing deal.

Telekom Romania will pay just over €10m per season of this fee for pay-television live and highlights rights. This is a similar fee to that paid by pay-television broadcaster RCS-RDS and Romtelecom in the existing deal – each pays €5m per season in a jointly agreed deal. The two share rights to all Champions League and Europa League matches.

Telekom Romania was prepared to pay a slight overall increase to have pay-television rights exclusively. It will show coverage on its Dolce Sport channels. It is looking to improve subscriber numbers – it is thought to have about 1.1m, while RCS-RDS's Digi Sport channels have about 3m.

The free-to-air rights will move to Pro

TV in the new cycle, from public-service broadcaster TVR. TVR pays about €1.2m per season at present for the second-pick game each Tuesday. Pro TV will pay just under €3m per season for the first-pick game each Tuesday. TVR did not bid in the new cycle as it is in financial difficulty.

Uefa is thought to have been keen to move its free-to-air coverage from TVR to another broadcaster due to the low ratings its matches received on the public-service broadcaster. It was often showing matches of little or no interest to Romanian people.

The Europa League rights will be worth a total of just under €3.5m per season in separate deals with Telekom Romania and Pro TV.

This is up from a total of about €3m per season in current deals with RCS-RDS, Romtelecom and Pro TV.

Canada

In Canada, Uefa earned an increase of about 150 per cent for its Champions League rights and around 300 per cent for its Europa League rights.

Bell and beIN jointly won Champions League rights in a deal worth about \$5m per season, up from the \$2m per season telco Rogers Communications pays at present.

Bell and beIN also jointly acquired Europa League rights in a deal worth around \$800,000 per season, up from the \$200,000 per season Rogers pays in the current cycle.

Bell and beIN will have rights to all matches to both competitions, with the split between the two broadcasters expected to be roughly 50:50.

Bell and beIN won the rights to both competitions in a second round of bidding. Rogers was only slightly behind a Bell/beIN bid in the first round.

Losing the rights is a serious blow for Rogers' premium subscription channel Sportsnet World. Alongside the English Premier League, the Champions League is a core property of the channel.

Rogers pays C\$436m (€315m/\$365m) per season for the National Hockey League rights from 2014-15, which some Canadian sources suggest limits its ability to compete for other sports rights.

Germany

In Germany, Uefa secured an increase in the total value of its Europa League rights from about €20m per season in existing deals to about €22.5m per season.

German sports broadcaster Sport1 acquired free-to-air live rights to first-pick matches on Thursdays for about €9m per season. This is thought to be down slightly on the fee of just over €10m per season commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1 pays currently. Sport1 was chosen ahead of Sat.1 after trumping its offer in two rounds of bidding.

Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland increased its fee for pay-television rights from just under €10m per season to €13.5m per season, despite the fact it faced no competition for the rights. Sky's deal covers live and highlights rights to all matches.

Austria

The total Europa League rights fee in Austria has increased about 40 per cent, from €2.5m per season in existing deals to €3.5m per season.

The free-to-air rights were acquired by

commercial broadcaster Puls 4 in a deal worth €2m per season. The rights were previously held by public-service broadcaster ORF. Puls 4 won the rights in the first round of bidding.

Puls 4 beat a joint offer from ORF and commercial broadcaster ATV. Puls 4 is thought to have been motivated to acquire the rights after losing Champions League rights to ORF in December 2013 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:23).

The pay-television rights were renewed by incumbent rights-holder Sky in a deal worth about €1.5m per season. ■

FOOTBALL 3

One down, two to go: Uefa tackles problem markets

By Frank Dunne

Uefa is understood to be close to a breakthrough in Russia for the rights to its European Qualifiers but still faces big challenges in Germany, where third-party rights remain unsold, and Singapore, where it has not sold any rights.

The three are the only remaining markets of substantial value. The deals cover the qualifier matches of European federations for Euro 2016 and the 2018 Fifa World Cup.

In Russia, Uefa and its sales agency CAA Eleven are understood to be close to a joint deal with state-owned broadcasters VGTRK and Channel One. A stop-gap deal had been agreed with VGTRK in September ahead of the opening round of Euro 2016 qualifiers, but the broadcaster was a long way off meeting Uefa's asking price for the whole cycle.

In Germany, talks for the third-party rights – covering the matches not featuring Germany – have been protracted and difficult.

The governing body is thought to have initially asked for €20m to €25m. Pay-television platform Sky Deutschland held off making a bid until it had closed its deals for the Uefa Champions League and Europa League. The broadcaster acquired Champions League rights in December

2013 and Europa League rights just before Christmas (see separate story, page 5).

Sky is now expected to return to talks with Uefa, but is said to value the rights well below the asking price.

Uefa is also in talks with sports broadcasters Sport1 and Eurosport. Experts say that Sky remains the favourite to acquire the rights but would probably have to match the €15m its sister company Sky Italia paid to secure them in Italy.

In Singapore, Uefa is stymied by the country's cross-carriage regulation which has had a massive deflationary effect on the value of top sports rights (*TV Sports Markets* 16:17).

The qualifiers are not covered by the regulation but the country's two principal pay-television platforms, StarHub and SingTel, are only interested in taking them as part of a wider deal including Euro 2016, which is covered by the rule.

Euro 2012 was the first sports property to be affected by the regulation, which was introduced in March 2010. StarHub thought it had acquired exclusive rights in an \$8m deal with the Sportfive agency but was forced to create a channel for the competition which was also distributed by SingTel. The fee was about the same as the broadcaster had paid for Euro 2008.

With the removal of the incentive to pay an exclusivity premium, trying to secure an increase on the 2012 value is proving extremely difficult.

Billion-dollar threshold

Uefa is set to earn marginally more than €1bn across the four-year period once all qualifier deals have been completed. This

is over 50 per cent up on the €680m the rights generated over the four seasons from 2010-11 to 2013-14, prior to their centralisation. It is still below the estimated €1.1bn-€1.2bn that Uefa committed to paying its member federations for the rights. ■

FOOTBALL 4

MP & Silva must work hard to turn profit in Japan

By Richard Welbirg

MP & Silva has paid a significant increase for the rights in Japan to Euro 2016 in a deal finalised last month. The agency now faces a challenge to turn a profit on the deal.

The agency acquired the rights to the competition as part of wider deal which also covers the European qualifiers for Euro 2016 and the 2018 Fifa World Cup. That deal, brokered by Uefa's sales agency CAA Eleven, was agreed in principle in July last year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:15).

MP & Silva paid \$40m (€34.5m) overall, with Euro 2016 accounting for about 90 per cent of the value, or \$36m. It outbid Japanese advertising agency Dentsu. A second advertising agency, Hakuhodo, held talks with CAA Eleven but is not thought to have bid.

The MP & Silva fee is almost double the \$20m Dentsu paid by for the 2012 tournament. Dentsu outbid agencies Sportfive, IMG Events & Media and

Infront Sports & Media.

Local experts say MP & Silva will struggle to recoup its outlay for three reasons: a lack of competition in the pay-television market; the difficulties of securing a good deal from the free-to-air broadcast market; and the depreciation of the yen against the dollar.

Pay-television broadcaster Wowow is the most likely buyer of the Euro 2016 rights. It is the long-term broadcaster of the European Championships in Japan. However, local sources say that the broadcaster will be looking to reduce its rights fee because it is facing higher production costs as a result of Uefa's expansion of the tournament from 16 to 24 teams, and 31 to 51 matches.

The broadcaster is not expected to face too much competition. Pay-television operator Sky PerfecTV, which would have some interest in the tournament, is unlikely to bid against Wowow, as it carries the channel on its platforms.

MP & Silva is not as well placed as Dentsu to secure value from the free-to-air market. In Uefa's Euro 2016 contracts outside Europe, whoever acquires the rights is obliged to ensure that at least 12 matches are broadcast on free-to-air television, including the opening match, the final and the later knock-out stages.

For 2012, Dentsu sold the free-to-air rights to commercial channel TBS. As an advertising agency – by far the biggest in Japan – Dentsu is able to pay broadcasters well for airtime which it then sells on to its advertising clients at a profit.

MP & Silva must also contend with movement in the value of the yen. The Japanese currency's depreciation against the dollar – it fell 33.5 per cent between September 2012 and November 2014 and is continuing to slide – has reduced the ability of Japanese firms to pay dollar contracts while earning in yen from advertisers and subscribers.

• Uefa agreed a joint deal for Euro 2016 in late November in Denmark with commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 and public-service broadcaster DR. The deal is thought to be worth about €16m, an increase of about 25-30 per cent on the value of Euro 2012, which was also shared by the two broadcasters. ■

CYCLING

ARD back in the saddle with cut-price Tour deal

By Robin Jellis

German public-service broadcaster ARD will return to broadcasting the Tour de France cycle race in 2015 after agreeing a two-year deal worth just under €2.5m (\$2.9m) per year earlier this month.

ARD last showed the Tour in 2011, together with fellow public-service broadcaster ZDF, when both were part of a pan-regional deal with the European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters. That deal was worth €32.5m per year from 2009 to 2011 (*TV Sports Markets* 15:6).

ARD is not part of the current EBU deal, from 2012 to 2015, which is worth just under €30m per year. ARD and ZDF pulled out due to falling audiences and continuing doping scandals in cycling, causing a drop in the EBU rights fee.

ARD's interest in showing the Tour once again was driven by the success of German riders in recent times. In the 2014 Tour, seven of the race's 21 stages were won by Germans. Marcel Kittel won four stages, Tony Martin won two stages and André Greipel won one stage.

The broadcaster also feels the sport has worked hard to stamp out doping, with fewer incidents in recent times. One example is the MPCC, the *Mouvement pour un Cyclisme Crédible*, a union of teams, created in 2007, to encourage doping-free cycling.

There have also been changes at the Union Cycliste Internationale, cycling's world governing body. Notably, Brian Cookson replaced Pat McQuaid as president in September 2013. Since taking over, Cookson has introduced stronger anti-doping rules.

It is understood there are also cultural reasons behind the deal. France and Germany have a strong relationship, and the Tour de France acts as a showpiece of French culture.

The deal covers the 2015 and 2016 editions of the Tour, and was agreed with the race's commercial rights-holder, Amaury Sport Organisation. There was no tender for the rights, but there is thought to have been interest from commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1.

ARD has only committed to a two-year deal, although ASO is thought to have pushed for a longer contract duration.

Contrary to media reports, *TV Sports Markets* understands that ARD does not have a clause in its contract allowing it to terminate the agreement if a fresh doping scandal breaks out during the lifetime of the deal.

Since ARD/ZDF stopped showing the Tour, the race has been shown exclusively in Germany by sports broadcaster Eurosport. Eurosport is a guarantor of the EBU deal with ASO and shows the Tour across Europe.

Fee decline

The rights fee ARD will pay in the new deal is dramatically lower than the fee the Tour was able to command from the German market in the past for two reasons.

First, the new deal is solely with ARD, whereas the EBU contributions in the past came jointly from ARD and ZDF.

Second, ASO did not feel a need to negotiate aggressively on the value of the rights. Securing any fee from the German market, on top of the EBU deal, is a bonus. When the new EBU deal, from 2016 to 2019, was agreed in September 2013, ARD felt doping persisted and that the Lance Armstrong affair was fresh in the memory (*TV Sports Markets* 17:17).

ARD and ZDF were two of the biggest guarantors of previous EBU deals. The two jointly contributed about €6m per year to the 2009-2011 deal. This was down from a contribution of about €8m per year in the previous four-year agreement, running from 2005 to 2008, which was worth a total of just over €20m per year.

The fee fell due to the retirement of German star Jan Ullrich, as well as numerous high-profile doping scandals which damaged the sport's reputation. ■

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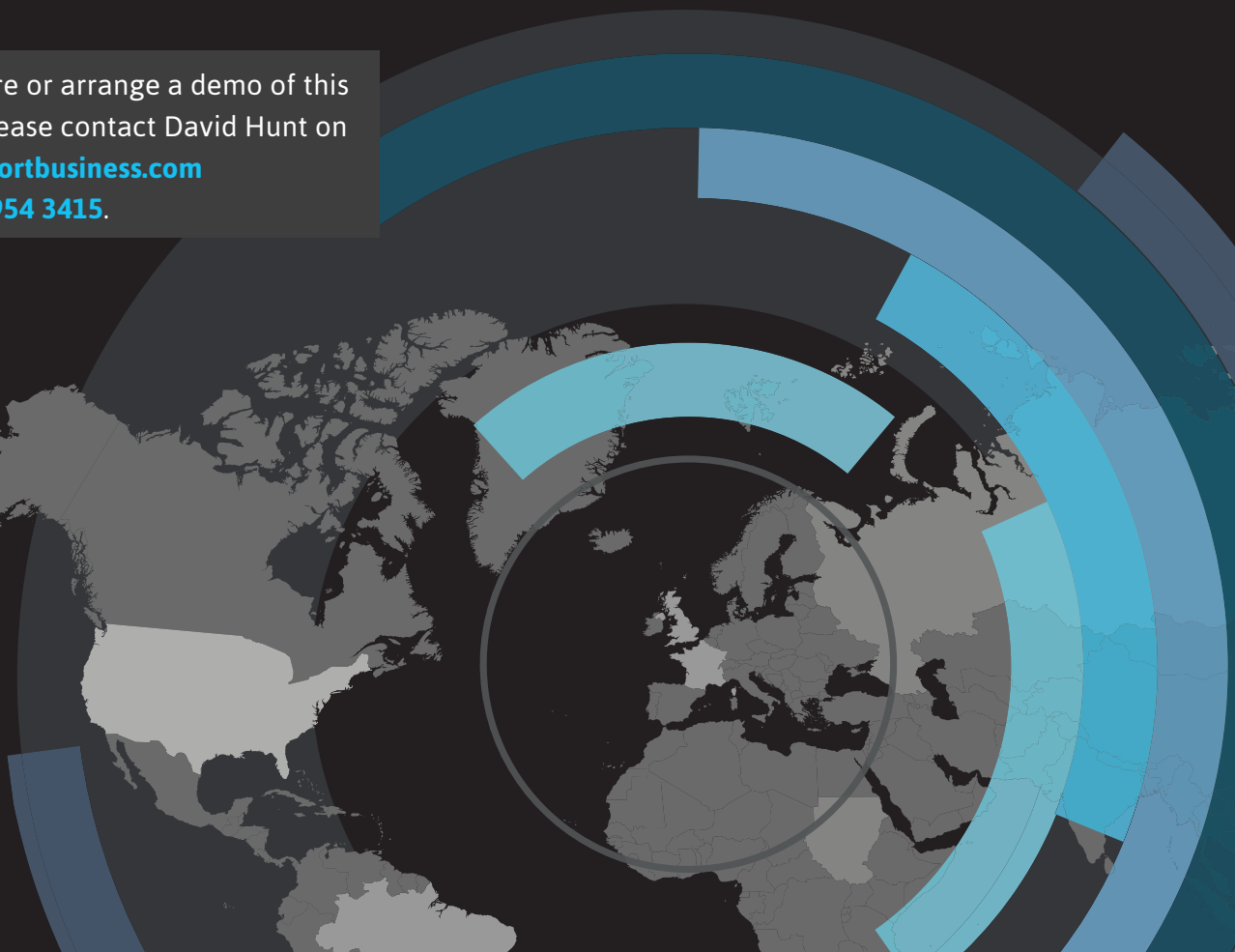
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 11 to January 14

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: Fifa events, Euro 2016, Champions and Europa League, and more

- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster DirecTV acquired exclusive rights in 22 Caribbean territories for events operated by Fifa, the sport's global governing body. The deal, which covers all media platforms, will run for eight years, from 2015 to 2022. It includes the 2018 and 2022 World Cup, the 2015 and 2019 Women's World Cup plus the Confederations Cup, U-20 World Cup and U-17 World Cup.
- **Football:** The MP & Silva agency struck an exclusive deal to distribute rights in Japan for the Uefa Euro 2016 national team football tournament (page 7).
- **Football:** German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland acquired rights for the Uefa Europa League European club competition. Sports broadcaster Sport1 also struck a deal to show 17 games per season. Both deals are for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The Team Marketing agency brokered the agreements on behalf of Uefa (page 5).
- **Football:** Dutch commercial broadcaster SBS acquired rights for the Uefa Champions League European club tournament for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The rights cover television and online platforms (page 5).
- **Football:** Dutch commercial broadcaster RTL extended a deal for the Europa League for three years, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The deal includes live coverage and highlights plus online streaming rights through its RTL XL platform (page 5).
- **Football:** Austrian commercial broadcaster Puls 4 and online service Sportnet.at acquired rights for the Europa League in three-year deals, running from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Puls 4 secured television rights while Sportnet.at acquired online and mobile rights (page 5).
- **Football:** Irish public-service broadcaster RTÉ retained rights to the Champions League in a three-year deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The deal covers television and online coverage of Wednesday night matches. The rights will be exploited on the RTÉ2 channel and online service RTÉ Player.
- **Football:** Champions League and Europa League rights in Canada were awarded to pay-television sports broadcaster TSN, French-language sister channel RDS and beIN Media Group. The deals are for three years, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 5).
- **Football:** BeIN Media Group acquired exclusive rights in France for the Bundesliga, the German top tier. The deal will run for two years, from 2015-16 to 2016-17. The deal was first reported by *TV Sports Markets* on November 28.
- **Football:** Bamba TV, a new free-to-air television platform in Kenya, acquired rights for Italy's Serie A. Under the deal with MP & Silva, Bamba TV will broadcast live coverage of one match per week. The length of the deal was not disclosed.
- **Football:** Algerian state broadcaster ENTV acquired rights for the 2015 African Cup of Nations national team tournament in a sublicensing deal with beIN Media Group. The deal includes coverage of 12 matches, including the opening game, Algeria's three group matches and all games from the quarter-final stage onwards.
- **Football:** Indian pay-television channel Sony Six acquired live rights for the 2015 Africa Cup of Nations across multiple south Asian markets.
- **Football:** Telco Telefónica acquired rights in Spain for top-tier Liga clubs Celta Vigo and Real Sociedad for the duration of the 2015-16 season (page 1).

SINCE LAST TIME

- Chinese conglomerate Dalian Wanda is close to a deal to acquire the Infront Sports & Media agency from private equity company Bridgepoint. The €1bn (\$1.24bn) deal is expected to be announced early this year.
- UK pay-television operator BSkyB increased its stake in German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland by more than five per cent, from 90.04 to 95.8 per cent of share capital and voting rights, between November 28 and January 7.
- American football league the NFL boosted its online video offering by agreeing a partnership with social media website Facebook. Short video clips on the website will be immediately followed by adverts from telco Verizon Wireless on NFL fans' Facebook news feeds. Facebook and the NFL will share advertising revenue.
- New Zealand-based digital free-to-air channel Sommet Sports is exploring a crowd-funding initiative in order to resurrect the platform following its collapse in December, 18 months after launching. Sommet director Andrew Reeves invited interested parties to contact the company regarding the initiative.

- Norwegian commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 is close to finalising a deal to take over the Norwegian arm of pay-television broadcaster C More. The deal would include C More's rights for the Tippeliga, the top division of football in the country.

FOOTBALL

- UK media regulator Ofcom is likely to force the Premier League to make more games from the top division of English football available for live domestic television coverage, according to *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper. Currently, the league makes only 154 out of 380 matches available for live transmission. This will increase to 168 in the next cycle, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, for which the rights were tendered just before Christmas (see page 13).
- LFCTV, the official pay-television channel of English Premier League football club Liverpool, returned to the Virgin Media pay-television platform after a new carriage deal was agreed.
- FASFE, a network of football supporters' clubs in Spain, submitted a complaint to the European Union over the distribution of media-rights income in Spanish football. FASFE demanded "a more balanced and sustainable" model.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 11 to January 14**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****Football: Portuguese Cup, Major League Soccer, Fifa Club World Cup and more**

- **Football:** Portuguese commercial broadcaster TVI agreed a two-year extension, from 2014-15 to 2015-16, to its rights deal for the Taça da Liga club knockout tournament. TVI struck the deal with the Portuguese Professional Football League, which operates the competition.
- **Football:** US regional pay-television sports broadcaster Yes Network acquired exclusive local rights for games featuring New York City FC, a newcomer to North American Major League Soccer in 2015. Matches will also be streamed live online via the Fox Sports Go application to authenticated Yes viewers whose operators have streaming deals in place – currently Cablevision and Time Warner Cable.
- **Football:** The Orlando City franchise struck an exclusive multi-year, English-language local rights deal with regional broadcaster WOFL-TV FOX 35 ahead of its Major League Soccer debut in 2015. The deal covers all regular-season and play-off games that are not shown by the league's national television partners.
- **Football:** Goal.com, the website operated by digital sports media company Perform, acquired exclusive rights in the UK and Ireland for the 2014 Fifa Club World Cup tournament. The deal covered the semi-finals, third-place play-off and final.
- **Football:** BeIN Media Group acquired rights in the US for two friendly games over the European winter break. The rights covered the December 30 matches between Italian Serie A club AC Milan and Spanish Liga club Real Madrid in Dubai plus Serie A's Inter Milan and French Ligue 1 club Paris Saint-Germain in Marrakech, Morocco.
- **Football:** British Eurosport, the UK division of pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport, and UK free-to-air channel Quest acquired rights for live coverage of the December 30 match between AC Milan and Real Madrid.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- US networks CBS, Fox and NBC, pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN and agencies IMG Events & Media and WME joined forces to apply for the dismissal of a legal action brought by a group of college American football and basketball players, claiming it would mean “chaos” for sports broadcasting. An October 3 lawsuit brought by the 10 college athletes alleged the networks and other parties had “profited from the broadcast and use of student athletes’ names, likenesses and images without the student athletes’ permission.”
- US satellite-television provider DirecTV renewed a multi-year distribution deal with the Walt Disney media company. DirecTV subscribers will be able to access channels such as ESPN, ESPN Goal Line, ESPN Buzzer Beater and ESPN 3, as well as college sports channels Longhorn Network, SEC Network and SEC Network Plus, through various platforms.
- US pay-television operator Time Warner Cable introduced a new \$2.75 (€2.35) monthly subscription fee for sports programming. Customers with Time Warner's internet services do not have to pay the fee.
- The North American National Lacrosse League launched NLL Live, an online subscription package that will show more than 40 games in 2015.
- US pay-television operators Buckeye CableSystem, Atlantic Broadband and Consolidated Communications opted into an existing multi-year carriage deal between the National Cable Television Cooperative and pay-television broadcaster Universal Sports Network.
- UK media regulator Ofcom said BSkyB's dominance of the UK pay-television sports-rights market could harm competition, but it was “less clear” that an obligation to share content with other broadcasters should be extended to its direct rival, telecommunications company BT.
- The WWE wrestling organisation will launch its WWE Network pay-television channel in the UK and Ireland on January 19. The service will be available on iOS and Android mobile devices, games consoles, smart television, digital media players and online. WWE Network will be available for £9.99 (€13/\$15) per month in the UK and €12.99 per month in Ireland.
- Telco and pay-television operator BT agreed a deal to offer the Sky Sports 1 and 2 channels via its YouView digital boxes for £22 (€28.70/\$33.40) per month.
- UK pay-television broadcaster Sky will dedicate a channel to the 2015 Cricket World Cup for the duration of the tournament. For six weeks from February 13, Sky Sports 2 will become Sky Sports World Cup and provide live coverage of all 49 matches from the One-Day International tournament in Australia and New Zealand.
- Pay-television broadcaster Kombat Sport will launch a channel dedicated to the Ultimate Fighting Championship mixed martial arts organisation exclusively via French pay-television operator Numericable. The UFC Premium channel will launch on January 27 priced at €9.99 (\$11.60) per month. The channel will show all UFC events in 2015 and 2016.
- Pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport expanded an existing carriage deal with cable-television operator Multimedia Polska in Poland. Under the agreement, the Eurosport 2 and Eurosport 2 HD will be available through various Multimedia Polska's packages.
- Australian pay-television horse racing broadcasters TVN and Sky Racing agreed a truce over a dispute regarding the sport's rights in the states of New South Wales and Victoria. Sky Racing, which is operated by gaming company Tabcorp, and TVN, owned by various entities in the Australian racing industry, severed ties to leave Sky unable to show all race meetings in Victoria and New South Wales. TVN agreed an interim deal to allow broadcasts to be shown in Tabcorp retail outlets and pubs and clubs across the country into the first few weeks of 2015, with a new long-term deal being discussed.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 11 to January 14

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

NFL, MLB, NBA, European basketball, bobsleigh, cricket, cycling and more

- **American Football:** Pay-television broadcaster ESPN awarded African pay-television providers SuperSport and Zuku Sport rights to the NFL's 2015 playoffs and Super Bowl championship game. SuperSport's deal covers sub-Saharan Africa. East African broadcaster Zuku Sport's agreement covers 11 East African territories.
- **Baseball:** The Chicago Cubs US Major League Baseball franchise signed new five-year local rights deals, from 2015 to 2019, with cable-television broadcaster WGN-TV and regional broadcaster WLS-TV/ABC 7. WGN-TV's deal includes 45 games per season, down from 70 under the broadcaster's previous agreement with the Cubs. WLS-TV/ABC 7 will show 25 games per season.
- **Basketball:** Pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus acquired NBA rights in 20 African territories. Two live games per week will be shown on the Canal Plus and Canal Plus Sport channels. The length of the deal, which started immediately and includes a weekly magazine programme, was not disclosed.
- **Basketball:** Turkish pay-television operator Digiturk and sports broadcaster NTV Spor agreed three-year deals, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, for rights to the TBL, the sport's top tier in Turkey. The deals were agreed with the Turkish Basketball Federation, which operates the tournament.
- **Basketball:** Italian DTT sports broadcaster Sportitalia acquired rights for the Liga ACB, the top division in Spain. The length of the deal, which started on January 11, was not disclosed.
- **Basketball:** Pay-television broadcaster DirecTV acquired exclusive rights across Latin America for the Liga de las Americas club competition in a deal struck with the International Basketball Federation. The agreement, which includes title sponsorship rights, will reportedly run for five years, from 2015 to 2019.
- **Basketball:** German telco Deutsche Telekom acquired rights for games featuring domestic top-tier Bundesliga club Bayern in the Eurocup European competition. The deal will run for the remainder of the 2014-15 season. Deutsche Telekom is providing the coverage for free via its Telekom Basketball online platform.
- **Bobsleigh:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC struck a rights deal with the British Bobsleigh & Skeleton Association. The deal includes live coverage and highlights of the European leg of the 2014-15 World Cup and the World Championships in Winterberg, Germany.
- **Cricket:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky took up a two-year extension option, from 2018 to 2019, on its existing five-year rights deal, from 2013 to 2017, with the England and Wales Cricket Board. The agreement covers exclusive live rights for all England national team Test, One-Day International and Twenty20 home fixtures plus county championship matches, women's and age grade cricket (page 2).
- **Cricket:** South African public-service broadcaster SABC acquired rights for live television coverage of all South Africa national team home matches. The deal with Cricket South Africa will run for three years, from 2014-15 to 2016-17, and includes a weekly magazine programme.
- **Cricket:** The Sporty Solutionz agency struck a deal to distribute rights for New Zealand national team matches in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and other parts of the subcontinent., excluding India. The deal with New Zealand Cricket will run for three years, from 2015 to 2017.
- **Cricket:** Pay-television broadcaster ESPN Caribbean acquired exclusive rights for live coverage of the Nagico Super50 One-Day International tournament for four years, from 2015 to 2018. Coverage will be shown on the ESPN Caribbean and ESPN 2 Caribbean channels plus the ESPN Play on-demand service. Matches will also be available to US viewers live via online and mobile service ESPN3.
- **Cycling:** German public-service broadcaster ARD acquired rights for the Tour de France in a deal with Amaury Sport Organisation, which operates the race. The agreement will run for two years, from 2015 to 2016, with ARD offering live coverage of the finale of each stage (page 8).
- **Cycling:** Australian commercial broadcaster Nine and pay-television operator Fox Sports acquired rights for events operated by Cycling Australia. The rights cover two years, from 2015 to 2016, and include live and delayed coverage plus highlights of road, track and mountain bike events including the Road National, Track National and Mountain Bike National Championships.
- **Cycling:** Pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired exclusive rights for the International Cycling Union Hour Record attempt by Movistar Team rider Alex Dowsett. The February 27 event will be broadcast in all of Eurosport's 70 markets across Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. The deal includes sublicensing rights.
- **Darts:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired live rights for the 2015 British Darts Organisation's World Professional Darts Championship.
- **Equestrianism:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Mexico struck a six-year rights deal, from 2015 to 2020, with the International Equestrian Federation. The agreement covers Mexico, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. The rights include coverage of the 2018 Equestrian Games; the European Championships in jumping, dressage and eventing in 2015, 2017 and 2019; the Nations Cup Jumping, FEI World Cup jumping, dressage and driving series; and the Classics and the World Cup vaulting finals. The IMG Events & Media agency brokered the deal on behalf of the federation.
- **Equestrianism:** The International Equestrian Federation sealed a two-year extension, from 2015 to 2016, with digital sports media company Perform. Perform will continue to provide streaming, content management and marketing services for FEI TV, the federation's official video website.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 11 to January 14**MEDIA RIGHTS 4****IHF handball World Championships, lacrosse, UFC and World Rally racing**

- **Handball:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland acquired rights in Germany and Austria for the 2015 men's World Championships. The deal, which includes IPTV and mobile rights, covers all 88 games during the event in Qatar, with about 50 games made available for free via the Sky.de website. Sky will show all games featuring the Germany and Austria national teams plus at least 15 group games and all matches from the quarter-finals onwards (page 5).
 - **Handball:** Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE acquired rights for the 2015 men's World Championships. TVE will exploit the rights on the Teledporte and La 1 channels.
 - **Handball:** French commercial broadcaster TF1 agreed a rights deal for the 2015 men's World Championships in a sublicensing agreement with beIN Media Group. TF1 will co-broadcast the semi-finals and final of the tournament with beIN Sports if France reaches the latter stages of the competition.
 - **Handball:** UK pay-television broadcaster BSkyB acquired rights for the 2015 men's World Championships. Sky will show live television coverage of one game per day, with other matches shown via the Sky Sports red button digital service.
 - **Handball:** Algerian state broadcaster ENTV acquired rights for the 2015 men's World Championships in a sublicensing deal with beIN Media Group.
 - **Lacrosse:** North America's National Lacrosse League agreed rights deals for the 2015 season with US pay-television sports broadcasters Universal Sports Network and ESPN. Universal Sports Network will show the game of the week during the regular season, with 18 games per campaign also available live through the UniversalSports.com website. The ESPN3 and WatchESPN online streaming services will broadcast 21 games live in 2015.
 - **Lacrosse:** Canadian pay-television broadcaster TSN acquired rights for the 2015 North American National Lacrosse League. The deal covers the league's 81-game regular season plus the Champion's Cup playoffs and final. TSN's channels will broadcast 12 regular-season games and selected post-season games, including the Champion's Cup final, with the remaining games available to TSN subscribers through online streaming platform TSN Go.
 - **Mixed Martial Arts:** The Ultimate Fighting Championship awarded rights in Canada to pay-television broadcasters TSN, RDS and Fight Network. The length of the multi-year rights deals, which started immediately, were not disclosed. TSN and French-language RDS will show major live events, preliminary cards of pay-per-view showpieces, domestic Fight Night events and the Ultimate Fighter reality television series. Fight Network will broadcast international Fight Night events plus preliminary fights for domestic non-pay-per-view cards.
 - **Motor Racing:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 extended a rights deal for the World Rally Championship. The two-year agreement, from 2015 to 2016, covers Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The deal was struck with the championship's commercial rights-holder, WRC Promoter, and includes non-exclusive and platform-neutral rights. Sport1 will show live coverage of all 13 events per season on a free-to-air basis plus highlights on Fridays and Saturdays and a round-up show on Sundays.
- Online television service Lightbox linked up with digital sports broadcaster Coliseum Sports Media to establish a new joint venture in New Zealand called Lightbox Sport. The platform will provide coverage of Coliseum's sports content including golf, English Premier League football and French Top 14 rugby union.
 - Sling TV, a subsidiary of US pay-television provider Dish Network, will launch a live, over-the-top television service in the first quarter of 2015, offering customers access to content from companies including ESPN.
 - World Rugby, rugby union's global governing body, lifted an embargo on the Fijian broadcast feed for the Sevens World Series after the country's government agreed to exempt World Rugby events 'Television (Cross-Carriage of Designated Events) Decree' under which free-to-air broadcaster Fiji TV, the series' exclusive rights-holder, would have had to share coverage with other broadcasters.
 - Satellite-television provider DirecTV relaunched its video-on-demand streaming service in Latin America following a successful trial during the 2014 Fifa World Cup national football team tournament.
 - The Confederation of African Football fined the Egyptian Football Association \$2m (€1.7m) for violating a rights agreement during the qualifying competition for the 2014 Fifa World Cup. In October 2013, pay-television broadcaster beIN Media Group, which had the rights, threatened to sue the country's state broadcaster, Egyptian Television Network, after it showed a World Cup qualifier featuring the national team. The fine will be deducted from the association's share of media-rights revenue from future qualifying competitions after Caf rejected the national body's request to extend the deadline for settling its dispute with beIN Media Group.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The Team Marketing agency launched tenders for rights to football's Uefa Champions League European club tournament in several territories. The rights cover three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and include four editions of the annual Super Cup match. Bids must be in by February 9 for Malta; March 3 for Macau, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam; March 4 for Singapore and March 5 for South Korea.
- The CAA Eleven agency launched tenders for rights to football's Uefa 2015 Euro U-21 Championship national team tournament in several European countries. Bids must be in by January 29 for the UK and Italy, and February 6 for Germany, Serbia and Portugal.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 11 to January 14

MEDIA RIGHTS 5

European Games, Netball World Cup, Olympic Games, tennis and more

- **Multi-sport:** Italian pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia agreed a rights deal for the 2015 European Games in Baku, Azerbaijan. Sky Italia will show live coverage and highlights across its sports channels and its Sky Go on-demand service.
 - **Multi-sport:** Canadian pay-television broadcasters TLN and Univision Canada acquired Spanish-language rights for the 2015 Pan American Games. The deal was struck with the Toronto 2015 Games organising committee.
 - **Netball:** Australian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports and commercial broadcaster Ten acquired rights for the 2015 Netball World Cup, which will take place in Australia. (page 2).
 - **Olympic Games:** The International Olympic Committee awarded exclusive rights for the 2016 summer Olympics to Cuban state broadcaster Instituto Cubano de Radio y Televisión.
 - **Skiing:** The Ski Classics cross-country series secured broadcast coverage in Russia for the first time through a rights deal with pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus. The deal will run until at least the end of the 2014-15 season.
 - **Ski Mountaineering:** The Infront Sports & Media agency reached an agreement to serve as a rights distribution and production partner of the International Ski Mountaineering Federation. Infront will produce and distribute 10-minute highlights of the federation's 2015 World Cup and a magazine programme for the 2015 World Championships.
 - **Squash:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport agreed a multi-year rights agreement with the Professional Squash Association. The deal covers all PSA World Series tournaments, including live coverage of the World Championship and extended highlights of the PSA World Tour. The deal, which includes marketing rights, was brokered by the Broadreach Media consultancy.
 - **Squash:** SNTV sealed a deal to provide coverage of PSA events to the sports video news agency's broadcast and digital partners worldwide. The agreement will run for the duration of 2015 and include the Tournament of Champions and the Squash World Championship.
 - **Surfing:** US sports broadcaster Universal Sports Network reached a rights deal with the Association of Surfing Professionals to provide live or same-day coverage of its final events in 2014.
 - **Tennis:** The Liv Sports digital division of Indian media group Multi Screen Media acquired mobile and internet rights for the 2015 Australian Open. Live and on-demand coverage will be shown via the LivSports.in website.
 - **US College Sport:** The IMG College division of the IMG Media & Events agency agreed a 10-year rights extension, from 2016-17 to 2025-26, to its multimedia rights partnership with East Carolina University.
 - **Volleyball:** German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF agreed a three-year rights extension, from 2014-15 to 2016-17, to continue showing the top-tier Bundesliga. The deal, which includes the men's second tier and the top two women's divisions, was brokered by SportA, the agency that acquires rights on behalf of ARD and ZDF.
 - **Volleyball:** The Sportsman Media Group agency agreed a five-year deal, from 2014 to 2018, with event organiser Eventcourt for global rights for the Women's Top Volley International club tournament.
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- Football's English Premier League launched two separate invitations to tender for UK domestic rights for three years, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. The rights are split into five packages of 28 matches and two packages of 14 matches, with one of the packages including up to 10 live games on Friday nights. No single buyer will be allowed to acquire more than 126 matches. The tender includes a separate free-to-air highlights package and a separate sales process will take place for two other packages – a 'near-live' long-form package of 212 games and an internet-based clips package. The rights are expected to be awarded in February.
 - UK commercial broadcaster Channel 5 is reportedly set to dislodge public-service broadcaster the BBC as the rights-holder for English Football League highlights. The next rights cycle, which also includes the English League Cup knockout tournament, is expected to run for three years, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
 - The Ligue Nationale de Rugby, which operates the French professional rugby union league, opened tenders for rights to the top-tier Top 14 and second-tier Pro D2. The Top 14 rights will cover four seasons, from 2015-16 to 2018-19, and include the final of the 2014-15 season. The Pro D2 rights will cover five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20. Bids must be in by January 19. Six Top 14 packages are available, including two official broadcaster packages, each comprising one exclusive regular season game per day. Companies that acquire the official broadcaster packages will be able to bid for four other premium packages. The first premium package comprises the first-choice game every match day during the regular season, including exclusive coverage of seven matches. Package two features second-choice games during the regular season and the post-season plus a weekly magazine programme every Sunday. Package three contains co-broadcast rights to nine regular-season matches plus post-season fixtures, multiplex coverage of the final day of the campaign and a weekly magazine programme every Saturday. Package four offers coverage of three matches per game day – the fifth- to seventh-choice matches – during the regular season. Rights to the Top 14 final will be offered separately, with the league proposing free-to-air coverage. Free-to-air broadcasters are able to bid for non-exclusive rights for eight Pro D2 regular-season games, one semi-final and the final per season.
 - Digital rights for the Indian Premier League Twenty20 cricket tournament will be put on the market next month. The Board of Control for Cricket in India, which organises the competition, will offer the rights over four years, from 2015 to 2018. Broadcast rights in "specific territories outside India" are also available. The rights auction will take place in the first week of February.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 11 to January 14

- The Ultimate Fighting Championship is in talks with German commercial broadcasters RTL and ProSiebenSat.1 after a five-year ban on the mixed martial arts series being shown on television was overturned. The Administrative Court in Munich, Germany ruled that the Bavarian State Media Authority's ban was "illegitimate."
- Polish telecommunications company Polsat is close to sealing a new rights deal for the second tier of football in the country. The deal, which will begin with the 2015-16 season and run for more than one year, will be worth "far more" to the clubs, according to Maciej Sawicki, secretary general of the country's football association, which operates the division.
- Football Federation Australia is considering cutting short its rights deals with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports and free-to-air broadcaster SBS. Both deals run for four seasons, from 2013-14 to 2016-17. The governing body is concerned about low ratings for A-League matches on SBS and believes it could gain more value from a deal with free-to-air commercial networks.
- The AFL Commission, the organisation responsible for negotiating rights for the Australian Football League, the top division of Aussie rules in the country, postponed talks over the next rights cycle due to uncertainty surrounding the future of commercial broadcaster Ten, a likely bidder.
- Cricket Australia launched its Cricket.com.au platform, which offers extended highlights of national team matches, archive footage and behind-the-scenes videos, on digital media player Apple TV.
- World Rugby, the global governing body of rugby union, launched a new video syndication platform as part of a revamp of its digital output.
- The Professional Squash Association released a revamped SquashTV platform as part of a relaunch of its digital platforms. SquashTV, available on the association's new website, will stream live coverage of more than 300 games per year, including contests from the Women's World Tour from later this year.
- North American basketball league the NBA and media company Red Bull Media House signed up as content partners for electronics company Samsung's new virtual reality video platform.
- Formula One Management, which operates the motor racing series, will launch official channels on video-sharing service YouTube and social networking website Facebook in the near future, but neither platform will show clips of races.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Sports media industry veteran Peter Hutton was appointed chief executive of pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport. Hutton, the former co-chief executive of the MP & Silva agency, will succeed Jean-Thierry Augustin, who was appointed by Eurosport's parent company, media and entertainment business Discovery Communications, to the newly-created role of president of sports strategy and development at Discovery Networks International. Hutton will join Eurosport on March 1.
 - Daniel Cohen, the senior vice-president of the Bloomberg Sports division of news, data and financial analysis company Bloomberg, was appointed senior vice-president for the Americas at MP & Silva.
 - Dick Ebersol, the former chairman of the NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal, was appointed as a special adviser for the International Olympic Committee's new Olympic channel project.
 - Dmitry Chernyshenko, who served as chief executive of the Sochi 2014 winter Olympic and Paralympic Games organising committee, was appointed by Russian media group Gazprom Media Holding as its new chief executive.
 - Mari Haugli was appointed to lead the W sportsmedia agency's new office in Oslo, Norway.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- Sports marketing company Octapixx Live established a new subsidiary, Protocol Sports Marketing, which will focus on marketing boxing properties to media platforms on a global basis.
- Eurosport will expand its television coverage of the 2015 European Rally Championship motor racing series by broadcasting a 13-minute preview show the day before each round. The show will be in addition to a highlights programme broadcast at the end of each full race day as well as the Inside ERC magazine programme.
- Coverage of the 2015 Dakar Rally will be shown in 190 countries by 70 broadcasters according to Amaury Sport Organisation, the organiser of the motor racing event.

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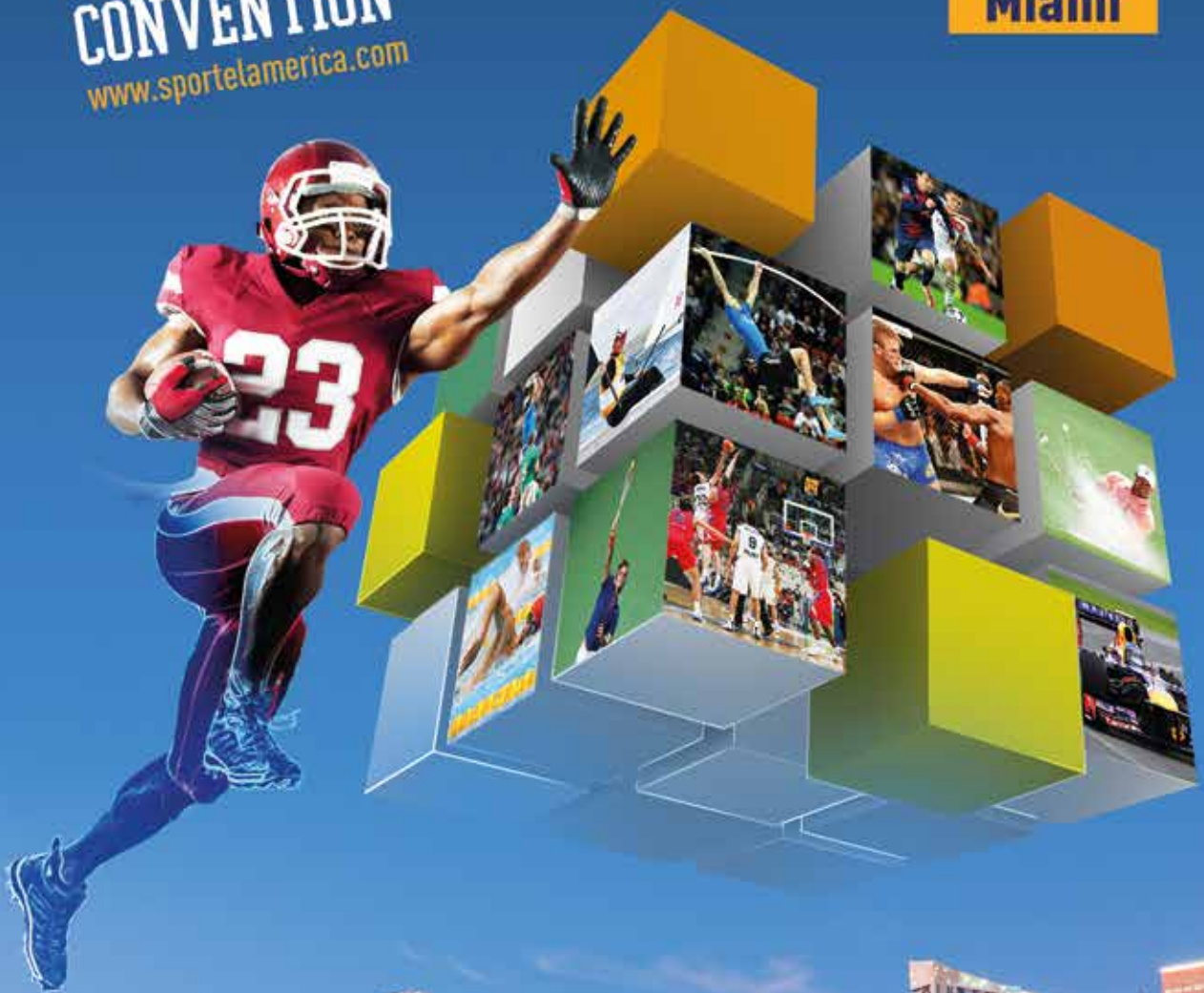
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