

HORSE RACING

UK rights market on verge of shake-up as bookies ponder in-house channel bids

By Robin Jellis

The coming months will be critical to the fortunes of UK horse racing. Racecourse Media Group, which distributes media rights on behalf of 34 UK racecourses, will agree two major deals, while in the background proposed legislation looks set to shake up the finances of the sport.

The most valuable of the two RMG deals is the provision of broadcast content to bookmakers. RMG will also sell free-to-air television rights in the UK. Both may result in considerable changes to the way the rights are distributed.

The racecourses, which are the shareholders of RMG, pool their media rights. RMG sells the rights on their behalf and distributes the revenue.

The biggest media-rights revenue

stream for the courses is income from the bookmakers. At present, the main broadcast coverage provided to betting shops is via the Turf TV channel and its larger rival Satellite Information Services.

Turf TV, part-owned by the 34 RMG racecourses, is distributed to nearly all bookmakers in the UK and Ireland. It generates about £80m (€110m/\$126m) per year. Turf TV's contract ends in April 2018, and the rights for a new cycle were tendered in April by RMG. But the structure of any future deals could be radically different.

UK free-to-air television rights are currently held by commercial broadcaster Channel 4 in a four-year deal with RMG.

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FOOTBALL

Pay-TV merger could end calcio rights boom

By Frank Dunne, Richard Welbirg and Robin Jellis

The competitive dynamics of a booming sports media-rights market explain why Italian football is enjoying solid growth, despite still having largely failed to resolve problems such as crowd violence, match-fixing and poor-quality stadiums.

But things will change for the worse, at least on the domestic front, should Italy's two main pay-television platforms, Sky and Mediaset Premium, succeed in merger talks. An antitrust investigation into the next cycle of live rights deals with Sky and Mediaset is a further problem for the league.

For now, all indicators are positive. The top league, Serie A, is set to record an increase in the value of its domestic and international media rights of about 20 per cent in the next cycle, to €1.2bn (\$1.68bn) per season.


The league's director general, Marco Brunelli, this week told *TV Sports Markets* that the growth in value of the league's rights over the last five years had been "remarkable," especially in the context of an economic crisis.

The domestic live rights to the second-

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FASTRACK 1

NEWS IN BRIEF

Furious NC Plus to get a second bite at the cherry

The award of the domestic live rights to Poland's top football league, the Ekstraklasa, is likely to come down to a straight shootout between the incumbent rights-holder, pay-television platform NC Plus, and Eleven, the new channel operated by Andrea Radrizzani.

One local industry source said that NC Plus may bid jointly with pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport, but others say joint bids are not permitted under the tender rules.

The league and its adviser, the MP & Silva agency, are said by local sources to have proposed a final round of bids after months of negotiations failed to produce an offer which the league considered satisfactory. It is also thought to be in response to threats of legal action from NC Plus over the way the tender process has been handled.

Last Friday, NC Plus sent a letter to the league alleging that MP & Silva was sharing confidential information about its bids with Radrizzani, one of the founders of MP & Silva and a major shareholder.

The broadcaster said it had "serious concerns about the legality and validity of the process" and would be "forced to initiate a legal proceeding" against the league and the agency if its concerns were not addressed.

In September, MP & Silva agreed an advisory deal with the league for six seasons, from 2015-16 to 2020-21, guaranteeing average income of about PLN150m (€37.5m/\$40.5m) per season. NC Plus paid PLN100m for live rights in the 2014-15 season. ■

Seven dives into the pool

Australian commercial broadcaster Seven is thought to have paid about \$400,000 (€350,000) for the 2015 and 2017 World Championships run by Fina, the global governing body of aquatic sports. Fina, and its marketing agent Dentsu, had failed to agree a deal

covering the 2013 event in the country.

Seven faced no competition for the rights. The fee is thought to be about half what Dentsu had sought in initial negotiations. Seven has committed to showing all swimming events and the appearances of every Australian competitor.

The World Championships in 2009 and 2011 were shown by commercial broadcaster Ten. The 2013 World Championships came at a time when public interest in Australian swimming was declining following the retirement of a 'golden generation' of top swimmers, including Ian Thorpe and Grant Hackett. At the time, Ten was also shifting its focus to entertainment programming.

Seven's acquisition is directly linked to its A\$190m (€134m/\$152m) deal for the rights to the Olympic Games of 2016, 2018 and 2020 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:13).

The broadcaster believes that acquiring complementary properties will maintain public interest between the Games, and have a multiplier effect on advertising income. ■

Matchroom secures Sky increase

Boxing promoter Matchroom Sport is thought to have secured a small increase in the value of its rights in last week's renewal with UK pay-television broadcaster Sky.

Sky will continue to show 20 nights of boxing per year under the new five-year deal, which will run from summer 2016 to summer 2021. The deal covers the UK and Ireland.

Sky and Matchroom signed an initial two-year deal with the promoter in August 2012. This was then extended from June 2014 to summer 2016.

In the initial deal, Sky paid between £90,000 (€125,000/\$140,000) and £120,000 for a commonwealth title fight, £90,000-£150,000 for a British title fight, £135,000-£160,000 for a European title fight, and up to £400,000 for a world title fight featuring a strong

undercard (*TV Sports Markets* 16:8).

Fees will be about 10 per cent higher at the outset of the new deal, and will rise by five to 10 per cent each year, netting Matchroom about £4m per year on average. ■

ITN out to 'stir up' the business

ITN Productions is planning "to stir up the sports business" following its deal with the English Football League, managing director Mark Browning told *TV Sports Markets* this week.

Earlier this month the Football League and ITN finalised a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, for ITN to produce coverage of all Football League matches. ITN will replace the IMG agency.

It is the most high-profile sports production contract ITN has secured since it diversified from its core business of news production.

Browning said there were three main reasons why ITN was targeting sport. First, there are similarities between producing news and sport. Second, ITN has under-utilised resources. And third, Browning feels the UK sports production industry is under-served.

"The sports market is such a big market, there is a very large cake here," he said. ITN will target production deals for second- and third-tier sports that have large fan bases.

ITN will be paid about £1m (€1.4m/\$1.6m) per season to produce its Football League coverage. This is slightly less than IMG, which was paid about £1.2m per season.

The deal covers the Championship, League One, League Two, the League Cup and the Football League Trophy – a total of 1,813 games per season.

Browning said ITN will change the production system to be "entirely live and digitally delivered," which will allow the league to show its domestic highlights at 9pm on Saturdays, rather than 11.45pm.

[www.](#) For the full interview with Mark Browning, visit our website. ■

HORSE RACING

RMG tender could spell trouble for Turf TV and SIS

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The deal runs from 2013 to 2016 and is worth £5m per year. Free-to-air coverage provides year-round exposure of horse racing's top events.

In the background, with possibly the greatest impact on the finances of racecourses, is a government plan to change the way bookmakers are taxed.

Bookmakers currently each pay a levy of 10.75 per cent on their profits to the racecourses. This is collected by the Horserace Betting Levy Board. In the 2014-15 financial year the board distributed just over £82m to all UK racecourses.

The levy is under review and is likely to be changed. In the March Budget, chancellor George Osborne proposed a 'Racing Right' to replace the levy. The Racing Right will force bookmakers registered overseas which take bets from UK customers to pay a levy, not just UK-based bookmakers.

The proposal has widened rifts between stakeholders in the horse racing industry, who are generally favourable to the scheme, and the major bookmakers, who have serious concerns.

Bookie-owned channels

The way in which races are provided to bookmakers for in-shop coverage could be set for a radical overhaul. Instead of buying complete channels such as Turf TV and SIS, as at present, bookmakers could show coverage on their own-branded channels, built around a raw live feed from the courses.

RMG's tender was open to both channel distributors, such as Turf TV and SIS, and bookmakers "who produce – or intend to produce – their own channel or channels for their shops." A new deal is expected to run for five years, from May 2018 to April 2023.

RMG's decision to open the process to bookmakers who want to create their own

channels is a response to recent developments. A number of bookmakers now have their own in-house channels, which gives them more flexibility in acquiring media rights. At present this is often limited to adding some of their own content around the coverage provided by Turf TV and SIS, but in future could replace it completely.

The bookmakers likely to bid are: Betfred, BoyleSports, Coral, Ladbrokes, Paddy Power and William Hill. Nobody at BoyleSports was available for comment. Betfred, Coral, Ladbrokes, Paddy Power and William Hill all declined to comment.

RMG will not sell exclusive rights to one bookmaker. It wants race coverage to be distributed as widely as possible, plus an exclusive deal could potentially be deemed anti-competitive.

The deadline for bids was Friday, May 22. The winner of the rights must broadcast live, and cover production costs of, all races at RMG racecourses.

It is likely that only the big bookmakers would want to acquire just the raw feed. Smaller independent bookmakers will still require a channel, such as Turf TV or SIS, as they do not have their own production facilities. But revenues for Turf TV and SIS would be badly hit in this scenario, as the big six bookmakers represent about 80 per cent of the market.

Turf TV and SIS

In 2014, the 34 racecourses operated by RMG received £74.4m in media rights fees. Racecourses are paid on a sliding scale. Kempton earns the most due to the regularity of its events. Ascot, Cheltenham and Newmarket all earn in excess of £1m per year.

Turf TV delivered license fees to the racecourses of £49.8m in 2014, an increase of 10 per cent from £45.1m in 2013. RMG has a host of business interests, of which Turf TV is the most lucrative.

Turf TV is operated by Amalgamated Racing, a joint venture owned 50:50 by Racecourse Media Services (the 34 racecourses whose media rights are distributed by RMG) and media company Timeweave. Timeweave is owned by billionaire businessman Joe Lewis, who also owns Premier League football team Tottenham Hotspur.

Bookmakers pay an average of £8,000 per shop per year to carry Turf TV. Bigger bookmaker brands with more licensed betting offices would pay slightly less: between £7,500 and £8,000 per shop per year. Smaller independent bookmakers would pay between £8,000 and £8,500 per shop per year. Close to 10,000 betting shops in the UK carry Turf TV.

Of the revenue generated by Turf TV a large dividend – about £8m last year – is paid to Timeweave.

SIS is also distributed to bookmakers in the UK and Ireland. It shows greyhound racing as well as horse racing. Some of the major bookmakers, such as Ladbrokes and William Hill, have a stake in SIS.

It has a deal to show events from the 15 racecourses operated by Arena Racing Company. This deal is thought to end in 2017. Rights in a new deal are also at risk of being sold directly to bookmakers.

SIS also has deals with the 10 remaining UK racecourses that sell their rights independently. It pays £25m per year for greyhound racing rights, and €20m per year for Irish horse racing.

SIS costs between £17,000 and £20,000 per shop per year to carry, and has deals with nearly all bookmakers in the UK. Bigger bookmakers get a small discount for bulk buying. This represents revenue of up to £200m per year.

Ascot could go it alone

In the current free-to-air broadcast deal, Channel 4 pays about £5m per year to RMG from 2013 to 2016. Channel 4 also covers production costs, thought to be a similar amount. It shows 90 days of racing each year.

RMG is in talks with broadcasters over a new free-to-air deal from 2017 onward. Talks are at an early stage, and there is no formal tender process. A new deal will be agreed within 12 months. RMG is open to selling rights for individual events to different broadcasters.

Major events such as Ascot, Cheltenham, Epsom and the Grand National at Aintree – which command the bulk of the rights value – could be sold separately from other events. These races have a much broader appeal than the hardcore horse racing audience.

The Grand National alone is worth

between £3m and £4m each year, according to one expert, as it can attract an audience of about 9m. "It's a big sporting moment that draws big audiences which only football can normally command," he said.

Bookmakers are keen to sponsor coverage, making the rights attractive to commercial broadcasters.

Public-service broadcaster the BBC is thought to be interested in regaining rights it recently held, but is not expected to bid aggressively. Both Aintree and Ascot are thought to be open to agreeing separate deals with broadcasters. Ascot is unhappy its audience has fallen significantly since Channel 4 took over the contract.

Commercial broadcaster ITV is also expected to be interested in the rights. It needs content which appeals to male viewers having lost Uefa Champions League rights to pay-television broadcaster BT Sport in November 2013 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:21).

There is a question mark over how keen Channel 4 would be to continue its coverage if the best events were shown by other broadcasters. The removal of any events included in the existing contract would reduce the Channel 4 rights fee.

Free-to-air coverage of horse racing is vital for the sport as it encourages people to bet on races, which in turn generates money for the racecourses via the levy. One horse racing expert said that without free-to-air coverage the sport's revenues "would fall off a cliff."

The BBC lost the rights the last time they were sold. In the past, free-to-air coverage was split between the BBC and Channel 4, with the BBC only showing the blue-chip events. Channel 4 was not happy that it provided horse racing with year-round coverage but the BBC showed the best events.

The BBC last held rights from 2010 to 2012, when it paid about £7.5m per year. Channel 4 was paid £1m per year for its coverage from 2010 to 2012.

From 2007 to 2009, the BBC paid about £9m per year, while Channel 4 was paid about £800,000 per year via the levy (*TV Sports Markets* 13:14). At its peak, in the mid-2000s, the BBC paid about £10m per year.

International rights

International non-betting broadcast rights to RMG racecourses were worth £2.7m in 2014, a 19-per-cent increase from 2013, when the rights were worth about £2.3m.

The rights are sold by the Pitch International agency under a four-year deal, from 2013 to 2016. The deal covers rights outside the UK and Ireland. Talks to extend the deal are advanced.

Rights in the Middle East are not included as RMG has a deal with state-owned broadcaster Dubai Sports from 2013 to 2016. One source estimated this deal to be worth about £2m per year.

BBC Worldwide, the commercial arm of the BBC, distributed the non-betting international rights to 30 racecourses, including Aintree and Epsom, in a three-year deal from 2010 to 2012. It was paid on a commission basis. ■

[www.](#) For additional information on the horse racing industry, visit our website.

FOOTBALL

Brunelli: Serie A media rights growth is 'remarkable'

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tier Serie B have just increased by a factor of three, and the domestic and international rights to the domestic cup competition, the Coppa Italia, are set to increase four-fold.

Last week, the 20 Serie A clubs voted on an ambitious plan to increase exposure of the league at home and abroad to reach new, younger audiences no longer catered to by linear television.

Domestically, almost all of the growth can be put down to competition between Sky and Mediaset over the last decade.

But talks have been going on for some months between the platform's respective owners, Rupert Murdoch and Silvio Berlusconi, about a possible merger. It is thought more likely that Sky would absorb Mediaset Premium, rather than the other way around. There is no certainty that competition regulators would allow such a merger, even with strict conditions, but lawyers on both

sides believe it could go through.

Brunelli said: "Anywhere there is a big increase in value, it is always driven by the level of competition in the market. You can have the best product in the world with the best production, but the value will only go up where you have more than one bidder."

The impact of a merger would arguably be felt more by the league's adviser, the Infront Sports & Media agency, than by the clubs. The agency has guaranteed the clubs a minimum of €1bn per season from 2018-19 to 2020-21. It would have to pay the clubs out of its own finances if there was a shortfall.

A merged Sky/Mediaset Premium, under the control of Murdoch, would look to force down what it pays for live rights to Serie A and relations between Sky and Infront are not good.

Infront Italy president Marco Bogarelli last week told media, however, he was confident a telco would soon emerge as a new player in Italy's sports-rights market.

Serie A growth

Bidding for the international rights to the Coppa Italia and Supercoppa have gone to a second round. The rights are expected to bring in at least €20m per season. This is the last package of value the league has to sell for the next three-season cycle, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

It also has some non-exclusive highlights and local media rights to sell, which should bring in a further few million euros per season.

Last week, Mediaset picked up the last package of exclusive domestic rights, paying €3.1m per season for ancillary rights, such as pitch-side interviews and footage in changing rooms.

On the basis of deals done so far, the league is heading for total income of €1.2bn per season. This is up by about 20 per cent on the €985m per season the league earns in the current cycle.

Brunelli said: "Before we embarked upon the first collective sale of rights, they were worth €730m per season. The real trend to look at is the value today versus the value in 2009-10. And in these five years we have seen probably the worst economic crisis in the history of Italy. It's a remarkable result."

Serie A media rights income, 2015-2018

Package	Winner	Fee per year (€m)
Pay-TV live rights, all 20 teams	Sky	572
Pay-TV live rights, eight teams	Mediaset	373
Pay-TV interviews	Mediaset	3.1
Free-to-air highlights	Rai	12.3
Mobile/internet	Telecom Italia	4.5
International	MP & Silva	185.7
Coppa Italia live domestic	Rai	22.0
Coppa Italia digital clips	Telecom Italia	0.5
Total		1173.1

Source: TV Sports Markets

He added that for international rights, Serie A was now the second most valuable football league in the world after England's Premier League.

Expansion plans

Last Friday, Serie A clubs voted unanimously to back a strategy outlined by Infront to increase the value of the league's domestic and international rights. This will involve:

- the creation of a league-run IPTV service offering three live Serie A matches per week on internet and mobile platforms
- investment in state-of-the-art video tracking technology to create standalone products based on data and statistics and to enrich the feed for the IPTV service
- playing matches from the later rounds of the Coppa Italia in key overseas markets
- organising friendly tours to Asia and other key markets
- ensuring the top clubs are scheduled to play weekend matches at 12.30pm, to maximise prime time audiences in Asia
- continuing to play the Supercoppa in strategic foreign cities, such as Doha, Qatar
- the creation of a new presenting sponsor rights category, alongside the title sponsorship held by Telecom Italia, in markets outside Italy.

Market test

The IPTV rights to three matches per week had originally been offered to the market by the league as part of its wider tender for live rights, with a base price of €109m per season.

'Strong brand' drives growth for Serie A overseas

The value of Serie A rights in Latin America and Greece increased in renewals with incumbent rights-holders earlier this month.

The Latin American arm of global channel syndicator Fox International Channels will pay about \$30m (€26m) per season for rights to Italy's top football league over three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

This is an increase of about 20 per cent on the \$25m per season FIC pays from 2012-13 to 2014-15. That was a 100-per-cent increase on the \$12.5m per season paid by pay-television broadcaster ESPN in a two-season deal from 2010-11 to 2011-12 (*TV Sports Markets* 16:3).

In Greece, pay-television broadcaster OTE will pay about €3.5m per season for Serie A over the same period, 2015-16 to 2017-18. This is up by just under 60 per cent on the €2.2m per season it pays in the current deal, 2012-13 to 2014-15.

Both deals were agreed with the MP & Silva agency, which sells the league's international rights. From 2015-16 to 2017-18, MP & Silva will pay the league an average of €185.7m per season, up from €117m per season from 2012-13 to 2014-15 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:20).

Roberto Dalmiglio, the agency's chief operating officer, this week told *TV Sports Markets* the strength of the Serie A brand was one of the main factors driving the rights-fee increases.

"I strongly believe that Serie A, in spite of the fact there are structural weaknesses, is still a very strong brand," Dalmiglio said. "The brand and the awareness of Serie A is still extremely big. It is absolutely considered to be a top property by major broadcasters, especially in places like Greece and Latin America," he added.

In both new deals, MP & Silva was happy to renew with a trusted partner.

In Latin America, Fox has agreed a sublicensing deal with ESPN. ESPN will show half of the content and cover half of the fee. The two will alternate first-pick matches each week. The

agreement will maximise coverage of Serie A across the region.

Fox needed Serie A exclusively in its current deal because the league was a key property in supporting the launch of its Brazilian channel in February 2012. But with a deal for the German Bundesliga beginning from 2015-16, Fox lacked the space in its schedule to fully exploit both leagues.

In Greece, it is understood that Serie A was bundled with other properties sold by MP & Silva. In total, OTE is expected to pay about €3.8m per season for Serie A, Italy's Lega Basket, Italian volleyball's SuperLega, the German Handball Bundesliga and the EHF handball Champions League. Only the Serie A deal has been signed off so far.

OTE will hold the rights to all 380 Serie A matches per season, more than in the current deal.

MP & Silva held talks with OTE's main rival Nova. Nova is thought to have been interested, but did not bid aggressively. Earlier this month Nova extended its deal for the top domestic league, the Greek Superleague, until 2018-19 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:9).

OTE views the top European football leagues as its key content. It also holds rights to the English Premier League, the Spanish Liga and the Bundesliga.

OTE first acquired Serie A rights in June 2009, buying rights to matches of nine clubs in the 2009-10 season in a deal with the Sportfive agency worth €680,000 (*TV Sports Markets* 13:12).

The only other Serie A deal in place from 2015-16 onward is in the UK with pay-television broadcaster BT Sport (*TV Sports Markets* 19:5).

MP & Silva is understood to be in advanced talks over a deal in the Netherlands with pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport.

The beIN Media Group is expected to bid aggressively in territories where it runs its beIN Sports channels. Agency co-founder Andrea Radrizzani is expected to bid in territories where he has launched his new channel, Eleven (*TV Sports Markets* 19:8). ■

The league received no suitable offers, suggesting that internet and mobile operators did not view the product as a potentially profitable one.

Brunelli said the league did not look at the service purely as a commercial proposition, as a private company would. It was also a test of the market.

“This will be an innovative product for new platforms aimed at a public that wouldn’t normally watch live games on Sky or Mediaset, or that watch them while doing other things,” Brunelli said.

“This is a way of incorporating the second screen in a single digital product. We will be integrating the live coverage with data, statistics, social media, virtual effects, interactivity. It’s a business proposition but also an exploration of new segments of the market.”

[www. For the full interview with Marco Brunelli, and the related article ‘Probe will look at why ‘winner’ Sky was denied rights’, visit our website.](#) ■

FOOTBALL

Kenyan FA under fire over contents of MP & Silva deal

By Callum McCarthy

The Football Kenya Federation is embroiled in two separate, but related, disputes which will have a major impact on how both domestic league and national team rights are sold.

The first involves MP & Silva. The agency is seeking damages from the federation claiming breach of contract over a five-year rights deal signed in January. The deal covers national team matches and rights to the country’s second-tier football league, the FKF Premier League.

The second involves the country’s top-tier football league, the Kenyan Premier League, which broke away from the federation in February. The federation has been trying to block the league’s activities. Fifa, football’s global governing body, is mediating between the two parties with a resolution expected next month.

The disputes are related as MP & Silva

claims to have been assured by federation president Sam Nyamweya that many of the country’s top clubs – including the top two: AFC Leopards and Gor Mahia – would leave the KPL to join the FKF-PL. This has not happened.

MP & Silva v FKF

In January, MP & Silva signed a five-year advisory deal with the federation, from 2015 to 2019. The agency agreed to advise the federation on the sale of all media and marketing rights. It has guaranteed the federation \$2.5m (€2.2m) per year and will split revenues above that. The federation remains the signatory of all deals and is heavily involved in the negotiations with broadcasters.

In a letter to Nyamweya on May 13, published in the Kenyan press, the agency said the FKF-PL was currently “second-tier in terms of quality” and that Nyamweya had previously ensured the participation of Kenya’s top clubs. It continued: “Due to the quality of the league no free-to-air operator and no telco operator has considered to enter into any sort of agreement.”

MP & Silva also claimed the federation is trying to sell rights to Kenyan national team matches in Fifa World Cup and Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers with “no clear evidence” it has the ability to do so. It is understood the federation had already ceded both sets of rights to the Confédération Africaine de Football, the governing body of African football, as part of respective centralised rights packages.

The federation has agreed in principle to renegotiate the deal with MP & Silva and the agency is said to be confident that the issues are close to being resolved.

Breakaway league v FKF

The KPL broke away from the federation claiming the federation had been interfering in its affairs and was rife with conflicts of interest.

The federation was granted a temporary injunction in February by the Kenyan High Court to halt the 2015 season, but this was lifted on March 16 due to procedural errors by the federation.

The federation also brought charges against five senior KPL officials, including league chief executive Jack Oguda, for

running an unsanctioned league. These charges were thrown out by the court on March 13.

Fifa’s mediation between the two sides is expected to conclude at the end of June, in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding between the parties.

Whatever the outcome, local sources say there is little chance of any change to the make-up of the respective leagues. The FKF-PL is expected to remain a second-tier product. However, if the KPL were to return to federation control, insiders say the federation may try to fold the rights into the MP & Silva deal.

Related deals

The deal most likely to be affected is between sub-Saharan pay-television operator SuperSport and the KPL. The current SuperSport deal is worth KES830m (€7.5m/\$8.5m) over five years, from 2011 to 2015. The deal, agreed in late 2010, covers all of sub-Saharan Africa and outlying islands. This was a renegotiation of the previous four-year deal, from 2008 to 2011, worth KES410m.

SuperSport recently renewed its deal agreeing to pay up to KES266m per year for the six years from 2016 to 2021, or up to KES100m more per year.

Well-placed sources say SuperSport is happy dealing with the KPL and would have major concerns if it had to go back to dealing with the federation. It would consider pulling out of the deal under those circumstances.

SuperSport’s main rival, sub-Saharan pay-television operator StarTimes, acquired the pay-television rights to all Kenya national team matches in a five-year deal, from 2015 to 2019, brokered by MP & Silva, worth about \$540,000 per year.

It is understood the contract stipulated that Kenya’s qualifier matches were included. However, StarTimes is said to have known at the time of signing the contract this was impossible, as the rights were with Caf. Even if the federation is eventually forced to admit it was not in a position to award these rights, StarTimes is thought unlikely to seek a renegotiation.

StarTimes also sealed a separate deal with MP & Silva for exclusive marketing

and sponsorship rights of the Kenyan national team, worth \$400,000 per year over the same period.

MP & Silva brokered a deal for the FKF-PL rights with Tanzania-based pay-television operator Azam Media for three years, from 2015 to 2017, thought to be worth about \$745,000 per year. The deal covers seven East African territories: Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

The deal is not likely to be affected by the dispute as Azam was aware it was acquiring a second-tier league, despite suggestions some top teams would join.

Rhys Torrington, chief executive of the channel, said: "Obviously we keep a close eye on developments in Kenya. We entered into the agreement with our eyes wide open and have not since discovered anything that we did not know before. Our coverage of the FKF matches has met our expectations and been well received, both within Kenya and by our viewers across East Africa." ■

FOOTBALL

Scramble for Asian rights continues ahead of qualifiers

By Frank Dunne and Richard Welbirg

Qualifier matches for the 2019 Asian Cup begin on June 11 with about a dozen Asian football federations yet to sell second- and third-party media rights to their home matches to an agency.

An intense scramble is under way for their signatures, with all of the industry's major agencies involved. The matches also serve as qualification for the 2018 Fifa World Cup finals.

The real prize is Afghanistan, which has been drawn in the same group as Japan, by far the most valuable market to sell second-party qualifier rights into (see table). Qualifier matches in Japan can earn rights fees above \$2m (€1.75m), although the market has been flat for several years due to limited competition.

At the Asian Football Confederation congress in Bahrain last month there was some confusion over the federation's

position, with at least two agencies claiming to have a deal in place and other agency executives being told the rights were still available.

There is also strong interest in other central Asian countries, particularly Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, which have both been drawn in the same group as Australia, another of the most valuable broadcast markets. Matches in Australia can bring in between \$1m and \$2m.

Other strong markets include South Korea, where matches can bring in over \$1m. However, much like Japan, South Korea has a culture of cooperation (rights-holders would call it collusion) between broadcasters which limits the value of the rights.

In markets such as Thailand and Indonesia, attractive matches are rising toward the \$1m mark. In China, where the dominance of state broadcaster CCTV acts as a strong brake on rights inflation, qualifier matches earn fees in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars.

One agency source said that the Philippines and Chinese Taipei, despite lacking a strong football culture, were

also now beginning to provide decent rights fees.

MP & Silva, World Sport Group, IMG Events & Media, Infront Sports & Media and Dentsu are all looking to add to their portfolios. MP & Silva currently has six federations, WSG five, Infront four (of which one, Qatar, is part of a joint venture), IMG and Dentsu three. Having multiple federations enables the agencies to bundle the rights and sell a single package of matches into target markets.

Long game

The negotiations also give the agencies an opportunity to build long-term strategic relationships with some federations which go well beyond the sale of rights. This often includes trying to develop the sport commercially at all levels.

IMG has such a relationship with the All India Football Federation and MP & Silva in Malaysia and Singapore. Dentsu's recent agreements in Guam and Chinese Taipei are thought to be similarly wide-ranging and developmental.

Infront said this week that its recent deals with the federations of Laos,

2018 Fifa World Cup/2019 Asian Cup qualification groups			
Group A	Agency	Group B	Agency
UAE	Abu Dhabi Media	Australia	WSG
Saudi Arabia	Sela Sport	Jordan	IMG
Malaysia	MP & Silva***	Bangladesh	Infront
Palestine	n/a	Tajikistan	n/a
East Timor	n/a	Kyrgyzstan	n/a
Group C		Group D	
China	CSM	Iran	MP & Silva
Qatar	Infront-Aspire	Oman	MP & Silva
Hong Kong	Oceans Marketing	India	IMG***
Maldives	n/a	Guam	Dentsu***
Bhutan	n/a	Turkmenistan	n/a
Group E		Group F	
Japan	Dentsu***	Vietnam	WSG
Singapore	MP & Silva***	Thailand	Infront
Cambodia	WSG	Indonesia	WSG
Syria	n/a	Chinese Taipei	Dentsu***
Afghanistan	n/a	Iraq	n/a
Group G		Group H	
Kuwait	MP & Silva	Uzbekistan	WSG
Myanmar	IMG	Bahrain	MP & Silva
Laos	Infront	Philippines	ABS-CBN
Lebanon	n/a	North Korea	n/a
South Korea	n/a	Yemen	n/a

Source: TV Sports Markets
Footnotes: *** Deals include 1st, 2nd and 3rd party rights. All others include 2nd and 3rd party only.
n/a - either unaligned or information unavailable.

Thailand and Bangladesh were similarly predicated on building long-term strategic relationships (*TV Sports Markets* 19:8).

Ian Mathie, managing director of Infront Pan-Asia, told *TV Sports Markets*: “Since launching our pan-Asian office 18 months ago we are looking for long-term opportunities, with a focus on football. We believe these three deals represent that: it’s not just about the World Cup qualifiers.”

He said the situation in each country was different. Thailand is one of the powerhouses of Southeast Asia, but in football terms is yet to realise its potential.

Bangladesh is a country of 100m people with a fairly rich history of football. Laos is a small but well-run federation which Mathie has known for a long time, and the federation was looking to work with an agency. Mathie worked for WSG in Asia for 18 years before joining Infront last year.

He said Infront’s approach in Asia had not changed since being bought by Chinese property and entertainment conglomerate Dalian Wanda in February.

“Football will remain a key pillar of our strategy for Asia,” Mathie said. “We’ll continue to actively offer our services to major federations, clubs and governing bodies here in Asia.”

[www.](#) For the full interview with Ian Mathie, visit our website. ■

TV AUSTRALIA

NRL timing switch will test budgets and priorities

By Richard Welbirg

The National Rugby League’s decision to accelerate its sales process means the two biggest sport properties in Australia will negotiate new deals simultaneously.

The NRL, the top division of rugby league in Australia, initiated talks with broadcasters late last month to ensure that deals for the Australian Football League don’t significantly reduce competition in the market. The NRL will hold talks with commercial networks Seven, Nine and Ten, and pay-television operator Foxtel.

Negotiations between the broadcasters and the NRL – whose existing rights

deals expire after the 2017 season – will now overlap with those of the AFL, whose broadcast deals expire after 2016.

Neither rights-holder is required to sell its properties in specific packages. The make-up of the eventual agreements will be defined during negotiations.

For the broadcasters, this presents a test of game theory: they must each take into account their commercial imperatives, those of their rivals, and the impact of their decisions in both negotiations.

Both the NRL and the AFL, the top tier of Aussie rules, will seek new five-year deals. Negotiations are expected to last at least three months. Australia’s anti-siphoning legislation requires the rights to both competitions be offered to free-to-air broadcasters first.

The AFL currently earns A\$1.253bn (€883m/\$1bn) in five-year deals, from 2012 to 2016, with Seven, Foxtel and telco Telstra. The NRL earns A\$1.225bn in five-year deals, from 2013 to 2017, with Nine, pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports, Telstra and pay-television broadcaster Sky in New Zealand.

The players

Seven, the AFL’s current free-to-air partner, is strongest in the southern states where Aussie rules is the dominant sport. Acquiring NRL content would strengthen its position in the northern states where rugby league is more popular.

It is the wealthiest of the free-to-air broadcasters and, though it could plausibly afford deals for both properties, neither rights-holder would countenance a situation that would relegate many matches to Seven’s lower-rating digital channels 7Two and 7mate.

Seven may bid strongly for rights to State of Origin, the annual best-of-three rugby league match between state representative sides from Queensland and New South Wales. State of Origin has thus far been sold alongside the NRL.

State of Origin represents about 10 per cent of rugby league’s cumulative audience in a given year in Australia, and, as matches are played on Wednesdays, there is no clash with the AFL.

Seven will have to bid very aggressively to take any rights from incumbent Nine, which will focus on retaining the rights it

currently holds. Media reports suggest this may preclude a Nine bid for AFL rights. Whether or not Nine makes a serious offer, it is not in its interest to allow Seven to renew unopposed.

Ten, the lowest-rating commercial network, has the greatest need but the least means. Losing out again, as it did in the last round of negotiations for both the NRL and AFL, would leave it without a major winter sport for another five years.

Ten’s difficult financial position could mean any bid would have to be underwritten by its shareholders, or more likely – given ongoing takeover proceedings – as part of a joint offer with another broadcaster.

Ten’s clearest opportunity appears to be with the AFL, where fans are keen for more games to be shown free-to-air. Seven currently show four games per week.

Seven may be willing to sublicense some of the lesser matches, or the AFL itself may decide to allow a fifth match to be simulcast on free-to-air and pay-television.

Pay-television broadcaster Fox is also a realistic partner for a joint bid for either code: Fox and Ten have bid together for netball, V8 Supercars and Formula One in recent years (*TV Sports Markets* 19:5).

Digital shake-up

Another uncertainty is the role of Telstra, which currently holds digital rights to all games from both the AFL and NRL.

All broadcasters have indicated an interest in acquiring digital and broadcast rights in new deals. These rights are becoming increasingly important as linear viewing declines, especially among younger audiences.

Ousting Telstra would be difficult. The telco is deeply entwined with both properties. It sponsors the league as part of its media rights agreement, and it provides the digital infrastructure for all AFL clubs.

The AFL has suggested it could retain some rights for distribution via an online subscription service. This is unlikely to be more than a threat to encourage the broadcasters and Telstra to bid strongly. Sources say the AFL is neither prepared to create such a service nor take the financial hit that would accompany its initial launch. ■ [www.](#)



The most accurate assessment ever of the global sports media rights business

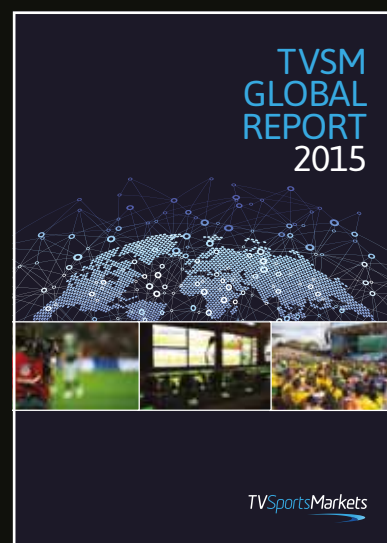
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TVSportsMarkets

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 14 to May 27**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: World Cup, European qualifiers, Copa América and Serie A**

- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand sealed a deal for events operated by Fifa, the sport's global governing body. The eight-year deal, from 2015 to 2022, covers the 2018 and 2022 World Cups and all men's and women's U-17 and U-20 World Cups plus the Fifa Beach Soccer, Futsal, Confederations Cup and Women's World Cups.
- **Football:** Media company Guardian Media Limited acquired rights in Trinidad & Tobago for events operated by Fifa in a sublicensing deal with international pay-television broadcaster DirecTV that will run for three years, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Guardian will exploit the rights – including coverage of the 2015 Women's World Cup, 2017 Confederations Cup, 2018 World Cup, and all Fifa U-17 and U-20 matches – on free-to-air channel CNC3.
- **Football:** German commercial broadcaster RTL acquired rights for third-party European qualifiers to the Uefa Euro 2016 and 2018 Fifa World Cup national team tournaments from the CAA Eleven agency. The rights will be exploited via RTL's pay-television sister channel RTL Nitro and will include at least 20 live games plus highlights of other qualifiers. RTL Nitro will broadcast at least eight live games from the remaining qualifying schedule for Euro 2016, including the play-offs. From September 2016, the channel will show 12 matches from the qualifying campaign for the 2018 World Cup. RTL already holds the rights to qualifying matches of the German national team through a deal signed in July 2013.
- **Football:** Finnish telco Elisa acquired rights for third-party Uefa European qualifiers and Uefa's 2015 U-21 Championships in a deal with the CAA Eleven agency. The rights will run for three years, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired exclusive live rights for the 2015 Uefa European U-21 Championships. BT Sport will show live coverage of all 15 matches.
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster Premier Sports acquired exclusive rights for the 2015 Copa América national team tournament in Chile in a deal with the WeMatch agency. Premier Sports will show all 26 games live and offer subscribers to the Sky pay-television platform a two-month subscription to watch the tournament for £9.99 (€13.85/\$14.90). WeMatch is comprised of the Traffic Sports, Full Play and Torneos y Competencias agencies.
- **Football:** Spanish pay-television operator Canal Plus acquired exclusive rights for the 2015 and 2016 editions of the Copa América.
- **Football:** Irish pay-television broadcaster Setanta Sports acquired rights for the 2015 Copa América. All 26 games will be shown live on Setanta Ireland.
- **Football:** Indian pay-television broadcaster Sony acquired rights for the 2015 Copa América. Live coverage will be shown on the Sony Six and Sony Kix channels.
- **Football:** Mediaset Premium's parent company, RTL, acquired a supplementary package of rights to support the pay-television broadcaster's coverage of Italy's Serie A for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Package C includes ancillary rights such as access to changing rooms, the tunnel and the pitch-side area for interviews (page 1).

SINCE LAST TIME

- Executives from the Full Play, Torneos y Competencias and Traffic Sports agencies were accused of corruption in relation to the sale of media and marketing rights surrounding certain football matches and tournaments in the Americas. The US Department of Justice named Torneos controlling principal Alejandro Burzaco, Traffic Sports USA president Aaron Davidson, and Hugo and Mariano Jinkis, the controlling principals of Full Play, in the indictment, which featured 14 individuals, including nine officials from Fifa, football's global governing body. The deals under suspicion surround events under the jurisdictions of Conmebol, football's governing body in Latin America, and Concacaf, the sport's governing body in North and Central America and the Caribbean. The defendants were charged with racketeering, wire fraud and money laundering conspiracies over a 24-year period. The DOJ also "unsealed" the names of individuals who had already pleaded guilty to charges, including José Hawilla, the owner and founder of the Traffic Group. Hawilla pleaded guilty in December to racketeering conspiracy, wire fraud conspiracy, money laundering conspiracy and obstruction of justice. He agreed to forfeit over \$151m (€140m). The DOJ added that Traffic Sports USA and Traffic Sports International pleaded guilty to wire fraud conspiracy on May 14 this year.
- A US district judge ruled that sports fans accusing Major League Baseball, the National Hockey League, sports franchises and broadcasters of illegally restricting their ability to watch their favourite teams on local television cannot claim damages as a group. Fans can still pursue class action claims that the defendants committed antitrust violations, but class-wide damages cannot be awarded as there is insufficient evidence that all viewers were harmed, according to Judge Shira Scheindlin.

FOOTBALL

- The Team Marketing agency expects to generate about €5bn (\$5.48bn) in revenue through the sale of media rights across the 2015-16 to 2017-18 cycle of the Uefa Champions League and Europa League European club football tournaments. About 75 per cent of the income will come from pay-television broadcasters, according to Team's managing director of media rights, Thomas Schmidt. Schmidt added that Team will forgo extra revenue in certain territories to secure key strategic

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 14 to May 27

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

Football: Serie A, Czech Liga, Bundesliga, Chinese football, MLS and more

- **Football:** Mediaset Premium acquired exclusive archive rights to 15 of the 20 Serie A teams for the next three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, in a deal with the Infront Sports & Media agency. The deal gives the broadcaster exclusive rights to show match action from the team's home games nine days after the matches have been played. Juventus, Roma, Torino, Empoli and Sassuolo are not part of the deal.
- **Football:** O2 Sport, a yet-to-launch subscription sports channel operated by telco O2 in the Czech Republic, acquired rights for the top tier Czech Liga over three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. O2 Sport will show the first-choice match every week under the deal with the Pragosport agency.
- **Football:** Greek pay-television broadcaster OTE renewed an exclusive rights deal for Serie A for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The agreement covers all 380 games per season (page 5).
- **Football:** OTE confirmed a rights extension for the Bundesliga covering two years, from 2015-16 to 2016-17. The German Supercup and play-offs are included in the package.
- **Football:** Media company China Sports Media struck a rights distribution and production deal with the Chinese Football Association for four years, from 2015-16 to 2018-19. CSM, a subsidiary of China Media Capital, will produce and distribute coverage of home and away games featuring China's national teams.
- **Football:** LeTV Sports, a new sports-rights venture operated by Chinese internet firm LeTV, acquired rights for North America's Major League Soccer in a deal with the IMG Events & Media agency. LeTV will show at least two MLS regular-season matches per week plus the All-Star Game, all MLS Cup Playoff games and the MLS Cup knockout tournament as part of the long-term deal.
- **Football:** ESPN renewed rights for the German Bundesliga in a sublicensing deal with pay-television sports broadcaster Fox Sports Latin America. The deal, which covers Latin America including Brazil, and certain Caribbean territories, will run for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. ESPN will have exclusive rights to half of the Bundesliga's matches per season, some end-of-season relegation games and non-exclusive rights to the German Super Cup knockout tournament in 2016 and 2017. ESPN will have non-exclusive rights to the Bundesliga Weekly magazine programme plus a weekly highlights programme and other shows produced by the German Football League, the DFL, which approved the sublicensing deal through its commercial arm, DFL Sports Enterprises. The deal covers ESPN's television and digital platforms.
- **Football:** The MP & Silva agency will distribute the global rights to new North American Soccer League club Miami FC. MP & Silva will also be a shareholder in the franchise.
- **Football:** The B4 Capital agency struck a deal to distribute rights outside North America to an exhibition match between US club New York Cosmos and the Cuba national team on June 2 in Havana.

partnerships, citing a deal with state-owned broadcaster CCTV in China as an example.

- Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, chairman of German Bundesliga club Bayern Munich, called for reforms to the country's media market amid concern over Sky Deutschland's "monopoly" in the pay-television sector. Rummenigge warned that rights would continue to be sold "below value" if the sector is not reformed ahead of the Bundesliga's next four-season cycle, from 2017-18 to 2020-21.
- The BBC hit back at claims by Scottish Professional Football League chairman Ralph Topping that the UK public-service broadcaster is "discriminating" against the sport in Scotland. The BBC said that its rights are "negotiated in line with market conditions and not population quotas."
- UK commercial broadcaster Channel 5 awarded the contract to produce its English Football League highlights programme to Sunset+Vine. The production company will produce 46 editions of the 90-minute highlights show per season plus three additional one-hour shows covering each round of the play-offs and eight covering the League Cup knockout competition for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Match footage will be filmed and edited by the Football League's production partner, ITN Productions, which signed on for the same three-season term (page 2).
- US pay-television operator Charter Communications will acquire cable-television operator Time Warner Cable, a major sports broadcaster, for \$78.7bn (€69.3bn). The deal requires the approval of Time Warner Cable shareholders and regulators, but is expected to be signed off by the end of 2015. Charter committed to carrying regional pay-television channel SportsNet LA following the takeover.
- Media company Vivendi launched a bid to buy out the French pay-television unit of Canal Plus, a major sports broadcaster. Vivendi, which already has a 48.5-per-cent stake, offered to acquire the outstanding share capital for €7.60 (\$8.18) per share, valuing Canal Plus at €962m.
- LeTV Sports, a new sports-rights venture operated by Chinese IPTV operator LeTV, generated \$129m (€120m) through a funding round, with media moguls Jack Ma and Wang Jianlin the lead investors.
- Australian commercial broadcaster Seven will launch a set of free mobile applications in June to show live coverage of sporting events over a 40-day period. The apps will provide live coverage of

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 14 to May 27**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****Red Bull Air Race, EuroBasket Women, UK boxing, The Open and more**

- **Air Sports:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 acquired rights for the 2015 Red Bull Air Race World Championship. Sport1 will stream live coverage on the Sport1.de website and show delayed coverage on pay-television channel Sport1 Plus, plus qualifying sessions with German and English-language commentary.
- **Basketball:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC struck a deal to show Great Britain's games during the 2015 EuroBasket Women national team tournament. The BBC will provide live coverage of Great Britain's first-round matches via its digital Red Button service and the BBC Sport website.
- **Boxing:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky renewed a rights deal with Matchroom Sport for the promoter's stable of British fighters. The deal will run for five years, from 2016-17 to 2020-21, and covers the UK and Ireland (page 2).
- **Golf:** Irish pay-television broadcaster Setanta Sports acquired rights for the 2015 Open Championship at St Andrews, Scotland.
- **Motorsport:** The Asset Ogilvy agency extended a deal for the Formula One world championship with Greek pay-television broadcaster OTE for two years, from 2016 to 2017. OTE will show every race, practice and qualifying session live on its OTE Sport channels and video-on-demand mobile platform OTE TV Go.
- **Motorsport:** Belgian pay-television broadcaster Telenet acquired rights for the Formula E electric car-racing championship. The deal – following a one-race agreement covering the race in Monte Carlo, Monaco, on May 9 – will run until the end of the 2014-15 season. Telenet's coverage will focus on the Flemish-speaking region of Belgium.
- **Multi-sport:** Mexican telco América Móvil acquired rights across Central and South America, excluding Brazil, for the 2015 European Games.
- **Multi-sport:** Pay-television operators Sport 5 and Charlton acquired rights in Israel for the 2015 European Games.
- **Multi-sport:** SPTV, a free-to-air specialist sports channel owned by the Croatian Olympic Committee, secured rights for the 2015 European Games. SPTV will broadcast 10 hours of daily coverage plus the opening and closing ceremonies.
- **Multi-sport:** Norwegian commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 acquired rights for the 2015 European Games.
- **Multi-sport:** Free-to-air broadcaster NTU acquired rights in Ukraine for the 2015 European Games.
- **Multi-sport:** Free-to-air broadcaster Georgian Public Broadcasting acquired rights in Georgia for the 2015 European Games.
- **Multi-sport:** Persian-language broadcast group Gem TV acquired exclusive rights in Iran for the 2015 European Games. The rights will be exploited across Gem TV's free-to-air channels Yahsat, Nilesat and Hotbird.

the Australian Masters, Australian Open and Australian PGA Championships golf tournaments, as well as the Royal Ascot horse race, tennis's Davis Cup and Wimbledon championships and the Fina World Championships.

- South African public-service broadcaster the SABC will not launch its SABC Sport channel in its initial rollout of digital terrestrial television channels. It has scaled back its initial plans for switching from analogue frequencies from 18 to five channels.
- Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand will increase the price of its sports package due to spending more on sports rights. From June 15, the Sky Sport package will go up to NZ\$28.29 (€18.60/US\$20) per month, an increase of NZ\$1.61 on the current price. The broadcaster's Sky Basic package, which is required before adding the sports package, will also increase by NZ\$1.15 to NZ\$49.22 per month.
- Brazilian pay-television channel Sports Plus, which is operated by Time Out, a subsidiary media company of the Torneos y Competencias agency, is set to close by the end of the year.
- Social media platform Snapchat sealed a partnership with MLB Advanced Media, Major League Baseball's interactive media and internet company, to supply weekly video content to its users. Published every Wednesday or Thursday, 'MLB Story' will feature footage of game action and other experiences submitted by fans at games across the US via Snapchat's Our Stories feature.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- Sri Lanka Cricket's interim committee delayed a decision on awarding domestic rights for the three-year period from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Terrestrial sports broadcaster the Carlton Sports Network tabled the highest bid of Rs175.5m (€2.5m/\$2.7m) – Rs65.5m more than the Rs110m offered by state broadcaster Rupavahini. Specialist sports channel MTV bid Rs51.5m for the rights.
- Australian commercial broadcaster Nine is targeting the acquisition of domestic top-tier A-League football rights in order to challenge rival commercial broadcaster Seven's Australian Football League Aussie rules coverage on Saturday nights. Public-service broadcaster SBS is looking to offload the final two seasons of its A-League rights, from 2015-16 to 2016-17.
- Russian pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus is close to sealing a three-season renewal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, to its rights deal for the top division of domestic football, the Premier League.
- German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland decided against bidding for the rights to upcoming fights involving heavyweight world boxing champion Wladimir Klitschko.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 14 to May 27**MEDIA RIGHTS 4****Netball World Cup, U-20 rugby, French Open, Wimbledon and more**

- **Netball:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky acquired rights in New Zealand for the 2015 Netball World Cup. Sky will show live coverage of every game on television, website and mobile platforms.
- **Rugby Union:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired live rights for the 2015 World Rugby U-20 Championship national team tournament. The deal – which covers every match featuring the UK’s home nations and Ireland – was agreed with the World Rugby governing body.
- **Tennis:** Setanta Sports acquired rights in Ireland for the French Open in a five-year deal, from 2015 to 2019.
- **Tennis:** Setanta Sports acquired rights in Ireland for the Wimbledon Championships in a three-year deal, from 2015 to 2017.
- **US College Sport:** US pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN expanded its partnership with the Mountain West conference by acquiring rights to its annual American football championship game. The rights were added to an existing seven-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2019-20, covering a selection of the conference’s American football and basketball games.
- **US College Sport:** The Learfield Sports agency struck rights deals with the athletics divisions of Butler University and the University of Northern Iowa. The Butler deal will run for 10 seasons, from 2015-16 to 2024-25. Learfield brokered a deal for Who-HD, the regional Iowa affiliate of the NBC network, to show selected Northern Iowa American football, men’s and women’s basketball, women’s volleyball and wrestling during the 2015-16 academic year.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- Australian horse racing organisation Racing Victoria signed a 10-year partnership, from 2015 to 2024, with telco Telstra. The agreement covers production services and video content through the new Telstra Digital Video Network platform.
- The Fédération Equestre Internationale, equestrian sport’s international governing body, appointed the IMG agency as its production partner in a five-year deal, from 2015-16 to 2019-20. The deal covers post-production services for the FEI’s entire portfolio of properties. IMG will also produce programming for the FEI’s broadcast partners and digital platforms such as FEI TV, FEI TV On the Go and the FEI YouTube channel.
- The proposed cricket series between Pakistan and India later this year is in jeopardy due to a dispute between the Board of Control for Cricket in India and the Pakistan Cricket Board’s broadcast partner, pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports. The BCCI is unhappy that Ten’s parent company, the Essel Group, is planning to launch an unsanctioned Twenty20 tournament.
- Barbara Slater, the director of BBC Sport, warned that a cut in the UK television licence fee could lead to the broadcaster losing rights to major sports properties – a development that would be “enormously damaging to the ecology of sports broadcasting.” The fee will be reviewed over the next 18 months. The licence fee has been frozen at £145.50 (€201/\$229) since 2010.
- The Formula E electric car-racing championship agreed a deal with social video platform Grabyo. The championship will use the Grabyo Studio service to share real-time highlights from live television coverage of the series via the Facebook and Twitter social media websites.
- Tom Harrison, the chief executive of the England and Wales Cricket Board, labelled terrestrial television as “less relevant every year,” suggesting that the body’s focus will remain on pay-television platforms in the future.
- Periscope, the live streaming application owned by social media website Twitter, will be used by some teams during the final stages of the 2014-15 Volvo Ocean Race as part of live online coverage provided by organisers of the sailing event.

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