

## OLYMPIC GAMES

### Latest IOC agreements suggest little room for broadcast unions in Olympic future

By Callum McCarthy and Richard Welbirg

Another public-service broadcasting union lost its grip on Olympic Games rights following deals signed by the International Olympic Committee late last month.

In the Middle East and North Africa, the IOC dropped long-term partner the Arab States Broadcasting Union to sign with beIN Media Group for the four Games between 2018 and 2024.

The IOC also renewed its pan-Asian agreement with Japanese marketing agency Dentsu for the same duration, giving the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) no opportunity to bid.

Asbu is the latest broadcasting union to lose Olympic rights. In June, the IOC eschewed a bid from the European Broadcasting Union, instead selling its

European rights to media company Discovery Communications (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13).

The ABU lost control of Olympics rights in Asia when it was unable to match Dentsu's offer for the 2014 and 2016 Games. A similar story has played out in Mena: Asbu members were unable to match beIN's financial offer or its digital broadcast capability.

In Mena, beIN will pay about \$250m (€226m) for exclusive free-to-air, pay-television and digital rights for two winter Games in 2018 and 2022, and two summer Games in 2020 and 2024.

It is a 290-per-cent per-Games increase on the IOC's current deal with Asbu.

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## FOOTBALL

### LaLiga reaches €650m international target

By Robin Jellis and Richard Welbirg

Spain's LaLiga has reached its revenue target of €650m (\$720m) per season for international rights from 2015-16, with rights in some smaller territories left to sell, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

The €650m-per-season total dwarfs the €235m per season the Mediapro agency earned from the sale of international rights in the previous cycle, 2012-13 to 2014-15.

Then, Mediapro held all Spanish club rights. Now the league is the signatory to all deals, with Mediapro acting purely in an advisory capacity. The agency is paid on a commission basis.

There are six reasons behind the league securing an almost 177-per-cent increase in the value of its international rights.


First, the rescheduling of kick-off times which has taken place since the rights were last sold. Kick-off slots have been moved to better suit audiences in Asia and the Americas in particular.

Second, the league has held many meetings with potential broadcast partners since the last cycle in order to build direct relationships. These meetings, and the establishment of a direct link between the

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## FASTRACK

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### BT pouches Ashes rights

UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport this week blindsided its main rival Sky by picking up Ashes cricket rights, paying a rights-fee increase of about 20 per cent.

BT dislodged Sky as broadcaster of Cricket Australia content in a five-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2020-21, worth £15m (€21m/\$23m) per season. The deal covers the UK and Ireland.

Sky currently pays £12.5m per season in a four-season deal, from 2012-13 to 2015-16. When renewing its current deal in September 2012, Sky paid a 213-per-cent increase, up from £4m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 16:18).

Cricket Australia was advised on the sales process by the IMG Events & Media agency, but was signatory to the contract. BT was awarded the rights after a single round of bidding, the deadline for which was August 20.

The capture represents BT's first significant foray into cricket rights: its only other cricket property is the Caribbean Premier League, which it broadcast in 2014 and 2015. BT was keen to expand its cricket coverage as it feels the sport appeals to an audience outside its current subscriber base.

BT also has an eye on the domestic England cricket rights, sold by the England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB). Acquiring the Cricket Australia rights helps BT "prove its mettle" regarding cricket rights ahead of the next auction, as one expert put it. The rights will be available from 2020. In January, Sky extended its ECB deal by two years, 2018 and 2019, for about £75m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:1).

Local experts are surprised Sky was outbid by BT for the Cricket Australia rights, especially considering the fee has not increased significantly. Sky is thought to be under tight financial constraints after agreeing to pay an 83-per-cent increase for domestic Premier League rights from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:3).

Sky will point to the fact matches will take place late at night, but BT is said to be confident fans will watch its coverage despite the time difference.

The deal covers all of Australia's home Test, one-day international and Twenty20 matches over the period – including the 2017-18 Ashes series between England and Australia. The women's Ashes and the men's and women's Twenty20 Big Bash League are also included. The Ashes accounts for at least half the total value of the package. ■

### Bundesliga signs off sales cycle

The German Bundesliga rounded off its international sales cycle this month, with deals in Australia and New Zealand taking total fees to €160m (\$177m) per season for 2015-16 and 2016-17.

In Australia, the rights were awarded to the beIN Media Group in a five-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, worth just over €500,000 per season.

This is slightly more than double the €250,000 per season paid by pay-television broadcaster Setanta Sports in the previous three-season deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15. BeIN acquired Setanta Sports Australia last October.

Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports and the Discovery Communications media group are both thought to have bid. But neither offer was compelling enough to prise the rights from beIN.

In New Zealand, video-sharing platform YouTube was awarded the rights. The deal is initially only for the 2015-16 season, but may be extended. YouTube is not thought to be paying a rights fee, but will share advertising revenue with the league – thought to be a 55:45 split in favour of the league.

From 2012-13 to 2014-15, the New Zealand rights were held by digital free-to-air channel Sommet Sports in a deal worth about €50,000 per season. Sommet folded in December 2014.

Main pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand did not bid. Lightbox Sport, the joint venture between online subscription services Coliseum and

Lightbox, was interested but did not bid aggressively. The league is still able to agree a deal with a broadcaster in addition to its agreement with YouTube.

The €160m per season the league will earn from international rights is a 125-per-cent increase on the €71m per season it earned in its last cycle, from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

All rights have been sold by DFL Sports Enterprises, the commercial arm of the Deutsche Fußball Liga. ■

### Lega Basket gets Rai-Sky boost

Italy's top basketball league, Lega Basket Serie A, is satisfied with the outcome of its recent domestic rights negotiations, even though total fees remain well below the level of five years ago.

In the new two-season deals, from 2015-16 to 2016-17, state broadcaster Rai is thought to be paying about €1m (\$1.1m) per season for the top match each week, of which about €400,000 per season is for production costs. Pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia is paying about €600,000 per season for the rights to two other matches each week. It will pay production fees on top of this.

The combined rights fee of about €1.2m per season is about €300,000 higher than the league earned in the last two-season cycle, 2013-14 to 2014-15, when matches were covered by Rai and Gazzetta.it, the internet portal of the *Gazzetta dello Sport* newspaper. It is also slightly more than the total fee of about €1m per season earned in the two-season cycle, 2011-12 to 2012-13, when rights were shared by Rai and commercial broadcaster La7.

However, the total fee remains well below the €2.8m per season Sky paid when it held the rights exclusively, from 2008-09 to 2010-11. Sky had been the league's exclusive broadcaster since winning the rights from Rai in 2004.

The league said this week its clubs were happy with the improved visibility and rights fees provided by the new deal, and the quality of the production provided, especially by Sky. ■

## OLYMPIC GAMES

## Little room for broadcast unions in new IOC deals

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Asbu paid \$32m for rights to the 2014 winter Games and the 2016 summer Games in 20 territories across the region (*TV Sports Markets* 13:11).

BeIN was awarded the rights after a second round of bidding, beating Asbu. Pay-television operators Abu Dhabi Media and OSN are also thought to have bid for the rights.

Timo Lumme, the IOC's managing director of television and marketing, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "Times have changed, a lot of markets have been deregulated and there's a lot more capital flowing. We wanted to open it up and see who could provide the best coverage and financial return."

Lumme said that when selling rights in Mena for the 2008 Games, the IOC had only two options: direct deals with individual broadcasters in each territory, or selling to Asbu.

The IOC requires at least 200 hours of each summer Games to be shown live on free-to-air television. But BeIN's emergence as a satellite free-to-air broadcaster created a third option.

Local experts said it can be difficult to collect money from Asbu, as the union must source funds from each individual state-owned member before making a payment. One source said: "It takes years to get your money because it has to go through governments. With private TV stations you sign, you get your first payment – 'thank you very much.'"

Lumme said: "I wouldn't say the days of the IOC dealing with broadcasting unions is over, but the unions need to reinvent themselves in a way that makes them more competitive." Asbu did not respond when contacted by *TV Sports Markets*.

### Pan-Asia

Dentsu will pay \$175m for the rights to the 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024 Games in 22 Asian territories.

## Infront begins free-to-air sales in sub-Saharan Africa

Azam TV secured free-to-air rights in Tanzania to the 2016 summer Olympic Games late last month, the first deal Infront Sports & Media has agreed in sub-Saharan Africa.

The East African pay-television operator was awarded the rights after a tender process run by the agency.

It is believed the Tanzanian Broadcasting Corporation bid, but could not match Azam's offer. Azam will exploit the rights on the ZBC2 and DTV channels.

Infront is also open to deals with Azam in other territories it operates in, such as Rwanda and Uganda. The broadcaster plans to move into central African territories in the near future.

Owned by the Bakhresa Group, a wealthy Tanzanian conglomerate, Azam is an attractive partner for Infront due to its ability to pay market rates and its reputation for timely payment.

Infront paid the IOC a minimum guarantee of around \$3m for the free-to-air rights to the 2014 winter Games and the 2016 summer Games. Any profit above the guarantee will be shared between the IOC and Infront.

The fee is roughly double the \$1.6m paid by Octagon for the 2012 summer Games. Nearly all the value of the rights lies in the summer Games – there is little or no interest in the winter Games.

The rights cover 43 territories in sub-Saharan Africa. South Africa is excluded. Infront also holds non-exclusive internet and mobile rights.

Timo Lumme, the IOC's managing director of television and marketing, told *TV Sports Markets*: "We had a successful experiment with Octagon in 2012, which we felt was an improvement [on the previous partner]. Octagon did a great job, but Infront took us to the next level."

Infront has enlisted the help of TV Media Sport, an agency specialising in negotiations with African free-to-air broadcasters.

Infront has told *TV Sports Markets* it will take a "collaborative approach" to striking deals in the region. TV Media Sport's relationships with broadcasters in sub-Saharan Africa will be vital.

TVMS has sold free-to-air rights in the region for a number of high-profile events, including Euro 2012 football and the IAAF World Championships.

The two agencies will look to secure between 90 and 140 hours of live free-to-air coverage in each territory, along with highlights packages and news programming. The IOC relaxes its requirement of 200 hours free-to-air exposure for summer Games and 100 hours for winter Games in the region, which it regards as "developmental". ■

On a per-Games basis, Dentsu is paying 33 per cent more than it paid for the 2014 and 2016 Games in the same territories. Then, it agreed two deals: one worth just over \$2m for the central Asian countries, and a second worth \$64m covering Southeast Asia.

The IOC again carved China, Japan and South Korea out of the pan-Asian deal. Following the Dentsu renewal, the IOC stands to earn a combined \$1.77bn from Asian rights from 2018 through to 2024 (*TV Sports Markets* 15:13; 18:12; 18:23).

At current exchange rates, this is a 61-per-cent per-Games increase on the \$550m earned from Asia for the 2014 and 2016 Games (*TV Sports Markets* 17:16).

The Dentsu renewal is a buyout, the same as the previous deal. Lumme said

such a large buyout was "exceptional". The IOC did not issue a tender.

He told *TV Sports Markets* the IOC wanted to continue with an agency partner in Asia. The options beyond Dentsu were unappealing. Dentsu's increased fee is largely due to the fact that three of the four Games covered by the new contract are in Asia, and will be broadcast in local prime time.

Dentsu has not agreed pre-deals with any broadcasters in the region. One local expert said the agency was unlikely to make money on the deal through selling on media rights, but would make a profit by selling sponsorship and advertising around the broadcasts. ■

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## FOOTBALL

# LaLiga reaches €650m target from international rights

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two, has translated into higher rights fees.

Third, the depreciation of the euro against the dollar, and also the pound, means deals in euros are more affordable for broadcasters that operate in these currencies.

Fourth, by selling worldwide at the same time, the rights have taken on greater importance for wealthy multi-territory broadcasters like beIN Media Group, ESPN and Fox International Channels. The league also benefitted from selling its rights ahead of the English Premier League, which has just begun its own international sales cycle.

Fifth, the league boasts two of the best teams in the world in Barcelona and Real Madrid, as well as the two best players: Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.

Sixth, the inception of the LFP World Challenge, a touring competition aimed at promoting the international image of the top-tier Spanish league, in 2014. The league has spent about €10m over the past two years on accommodation, flights, event hosting and other costs.

## Middle East & Africa

In the Middle East and North Africa, beIN renewed its deal at an 80-per-cent uplift. The fee has increased from about \$50m per season to close to \$90m per season.

LaLiga's value in sub-Saharan Africa is thought to have more than doubled to about €40m per season. This has been driven by a big increase from pay-television broadcaster SuperSport, which will pay about €20m per season for English-language rights across the region, up from about €8m per season.

The remaining €20m per season derives from a French-language deal across the region with pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus Afrique, a Portuguese-language deal with satellite operator Zap in Angola and Mozambique, and a deal with pay-television operator Azam TV in

## TVE snaps up domestic rights in 'controversial' deals

All three of LaLiga's domestic free-to-air packages for the 2015-16 season were controversially acquired earlier this month by TVE.

The league's initial tender separated its free-to-air rights into three packages. Package 1 had one exclusive live second-pick LaLiga match per week. Package 2 had one exclusive live second-pick match from each Copa del Rey match-day. Package 3 contained exclusive highlights to LaLiga and Copa del Rey matches.

Offers for packages 1 and 2 were rejected as too low. Bids for package 3 were given 'scores' based 75 per cent on the financial offer, and 25 per cent on technical considerations.

The package was awarded to public-service broadcaster TVE, which paid

between €12m and €13m.

On July 30, LaLiga opened a second tender for packages 1 and 2, and created a third option allowing bids for both. TVE won this combined package with a bid of between €15m and €16m.

Commercial broadcaster Mediaset, which bid unsuccessfully alongside rival Atresmedia and Forta, the union of Spain's regional public broadcasters, has complained about the process.

Mediaset argued that TVE should not be spending so much public money on the rights. TVE's acquisition of exclusive highlights is a particular problem for the commercial broadcasters' sport review programmes. They can now show only 90 seconds of footage from any one day of LaLiga or Copa del Rey action. ■

Tanzania (see separate story). All deals in the region are for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

## Americas

BeIN paid a huge increase to retain rights in the US and Canada. The fee rose to \$120m per season from \$32m per season. The deal is for five seasons, 2015-16 to 2019-20 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:14).

Rights fees also soared by more than 360 per cent in Latin America, reaching about \$105m per season across the region in three separate deals.

Pay-television broadcaster Sky Mexico was awarded rights in Mexico and Central America for about \$30m per season. Pay-television broadcaster ESPN bought rights in Brazil for about \$45m per season, and in the rest of South America for about \$30m per season. All new deals are for five seasons, from 2015-20.

Rights across Latin America were previously worth \$22.7m per season in deals with pay-television operator DirecTV and ESPN. The fee was split 50:50 (*TV Sports Markets* 16:2).

## Asia

BeIN also acquired rights in six Southeast Asian territories for about €50m per season. The rights cover Thailand, Laos

and Cambodia, as well as Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

BeIN does not currently operate in either Malaysia or Singapore. Local experts believe the acquisition of LaLiga rights heralds a rollout of the group's beIN Sports pay-television channels.

In Japan, the MP & Silva agency was awarded the rights in a deal worth in excess of €15m per season. This was a slight increase on the previous value of €13.3m per season. MP & Silva has since sold live rights to pay-television broadcaster Wowow.

In the Indian subcontinent, pay-television broadcaster MSM acquired rights in a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, worth close to €9m per season. It beat an offer of just over €5m per season from pay-television rival Neo Sports. Pay-television broadcaster Star, which paid about €2m per season in the last cycle, did not bid this time.

In China, online streaming platform PPTV bought exclusive rights in a five-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, worth about €50m per season.

## Europe

Rights fees across Europe increased in most territories, but fell in the Nordics. Deals across the region were for three

seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

MP & Silva bought rights in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden for about €13.3m per season – a 26-per-cent decrease on the €18m per season paid by the TV4 Group in the last cycle.

Local experts say TV4 overpaid for rights to the Italian and Spanish top-tiers in the 2012-13 to 2014-15 cycles following the loss of Premier League rights to Modern Times Group, then its main rival across the region.

MP & Silva also bought rights in the Balkans for about €7m per season, double the €3.5m per season paid by pay-television broadcaster Sportklub in the last cycle. Additionally, the agency picked up rights in Albania for about €2m per season.

France is the most valuable territory in the region in the new cycle, with beIN doubling its fee from about €20m per season to close to €40m per season.

In the UK and Ireland, pay-television broadcaster Sky will pay about €30m per season, about double the value of its previous deal, which was worth between €14m and €15m per season. The fee was forced up by competition from rival BT.

The Perform Group was a surprise winner of the rights in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, paying about €9m per season – an 80-per-cent increase on the €5m per season paid by the Sportsman Media Group in the last cycle. Perform is expected to launch an OTT platform in the coming months.

Belgium provided an increase of about 180 per cent, as Andrea Radrizzani's Eleven Sports Network ousted the incumbent rights-holder, pay-television broadcaster Belgacom. The deal is worth about €7m per season, up from €2.5m per season.

In Romania, pay-television broadcaster RCS-RDS picked up the rights for about €6m per season, replacing Sportsman, which had held the rights in a deal worth between €4m and €4.5m per season.

The Saran Media agency was awarded rights in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in a deal worth about €3.5m per season, while the Pragosport agency retained rights in Hungary for about €2.3m per season. Pragosport had held rights across all three territories in the last cycle in a deal worth about €2.5m per season. ■

## FORMULA ONE

# FOM leaves money on table in latest German deals

By Robin Jellis

Formula One's broadcast rights value in Germany will fall by about seven per cent when the latest renewals, agreed last week, kick in from 2016.

Commercial broadcaster RTL retained its package of free-to-air rights for just under \$50m (€45m) per year. Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland renewed its deal for pay-television rights for just under \$20m per year. Both will show all races on a non-exclusive basis, the same as in their current deals.

Both deals will run for two years, 2016 and 2017, and were agreed with Formula One Management, the commercial rights-holder of the championship.

The new total of slightly under \$70m per year is down from the \$75m the rights command in the 2015 season. RTL pays close to \$60m per year for free-to-air rights in a four-year deal, from 2012 to 2015, while Sky pays about \$15m per year for pay-television rights in a three-year deal, from 2013 to 2015.

FOM studied three options when selling its rights. First, continuing with non-exclusive free-to-air and pay-television deals. Second, splitting exclusivity between free-to-air and pay-television. And third, switching entirely to pay-television.

TV Sports Markets understands FOM turned down a lucrative offer from Sky for exclusive rights in favour of retaining wide free-to-air exposure. Sky is thought to have offered between \$110m and \$120m per year for exclusive rights.

FOM was reluctant to award complete exclusivity to Sky because of the broadcaster's limited reach. It has about 4m subscribers in Germany.

FOM was concerned that reaching a smaller audience could have a negative impact on the value of its sponsorship agreements. It has deals with three German companies: financial services provider Allianz, courier service DHL and carmaker Mercedes. Although these

companies have global sponsorship deals in place, free-to-air coverage in their home market is also important.

The deal shows FOM will not always award rights to the highest bidder.

Shorter-term deals were agreed this time because of the decreased fee; FOM did not want to lock itself into a long-term deal at a lower fee.

## Value drop

There are three main reasons why the value has decreased. First, RTL has suffered declining audiences for its coverage. It had an average audience of 4.36m in 2014, a 30-per-cent drop on the 6.28m it attracted in 2010, and well below its high of 10.44m in 2001, at the apex of interest in German star Michael Schumacher.

Second, there is no longer a German grand prix. This year is the first without one since 1960, after neither the Hockenheim nor the Nürburgring racing circuits could meet the financial commitments required by FOM.

Third, there was little competition. Neither public-service broadcasters ARD or ZDF nor commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1 showed a strong inclination to acquire the free-to-air package awarded to RTL. ARD/ZDF did, however, show interest in a smaller package of rights.

The drop in value comes despite the success of German driver Sebastian Vettel, who won four consecutive championships from 2010 to 2013, while German driver Nico Rosberg finished second in the driver's championship last year.

## Rights sale

The deals with RTL and Sky were agreed in principle in June. No official tender document was issued by FOM, but it held talks with all major broadcasters.

RTL has retained its right to sublicense practice and qualification content, as well as highlights and repeats. RTL currently sublicenses these rights to sports broadcaster Sport1 in a three-year deal, from 2013 to 2015, estimated to be worth between \$1.5m and \$2m per year.

Sky's deal covers Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and also covers German-language rights in Liechtenstein and Luxembourg, as in its current deal. ■

## ICE HOCKEY

# MTG renews NHL but misses out on IIHF rights in Sweden

By Robin Jellis

Multi-territory broadcaster Modern Times Group renewed National Hockey League rights across the Nordics late last month, but missed out on the sport's World Championship rights in Sweden.

Commercial and pay-television broadcaster MTG agreed a five-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2020-21, for NHL rights, worth just over \$10m (€9m) per season. This is a very slight increase on the \$9m per season MTG pays in its current five-season deal, from 2011-12 to 2015-16.

The NHL is a strong brand and has marketing value for MTG. MTG has held NHL rights in the region since 2009.

The new deal is for exclusive rights to all regular-season games, the Stanley Cup Playoffs and final, as well as some smaller events. The best matches will be shown on MTG's pay-television sports channels: the pan-Nordic Viasat Hockey channel and TV3 Sport in Denmark.

The deal was agreed directly between the league and MTG. Rights in the current cycle were sold by the Medge Consulting Sports agency, which initially bought the rights from the league. Medge has ceased to exist as a rights-trading agency (*TV Sports Markets* 15:19; 19:12).

MTG is not thought to have faced any competition for the rights. Pay-television broadcaster C More, which previously operated across the region, is focusing on its core Swedish market. MTG's deal covers Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Ice hockey is hugely popular in Finland and Sweden.

As well as the lack of competition, the value is limited by the fact most matches take place late at night local time, and therefore attract only small audiences.

The value of the rights was propped up by three main factors. First, the package contains about 1,300 matches per season at a good standard of production.

Second, MTG lost domestic rights to

the Swedish second-tier ice hockey league, the HockeyAllsvenskan, to C More in May 2015, and was therefore keen to retain its NHL rights (*TV Sports Markets* 19:11).

Third, the planned World Cup of Hockey in 2016 has been included in the contract. The World Cup hasn't taken place since 2004; one ice hockey expert said its reintroduction is part of an attempt to boost interest in the sport. The tournament is organised by the NHL and takes place ahead of the NHL season.

There is no additional cost for the World Cup; it is included in the \$10m-per-season contract. One local expert estimated the 2016 World Cup would be worth between \$2.5m and \$3m across the four territories. The next edition, set to take place in 2020, is likely to be worth closer to \$5m when the tournament has had more time to establish itself.

There is strong interest in the NHL in the region because of the high number of Nordic players in the league.

## Rest of Europe

NHL rights across the rest of Europe are still up for grabs. Rights across Europe, the Middle East and Africa were held jointly by Medge and the Advisers Media International agency from 2011-12 to 2015-16 in a deal worth \$20m per season. Following missed payments from both agencies, the rights reverted to the league.

The NHL is in talks with agencies about rights distribution across Europe, outside the Nordics. The rights will be worth less than the \$10m per season commanded in previous deals. The Nordics are excluded, and rights-holders are finding it tough to extract decent fees from Russia, another important market for the property.

It is thought likely that the league will honour deals agreed by AMI/Medge which still have one season to run.

## IIHF switch in Sweden

MTG is thought to have bid for, but failed to win, rights in Sweden to the International Ice Hockey Federation World Championships.

Swedish public-service broadcaster SVT bought the rights in a six-year deal, from 2018 to 2023, for about €10m per year. The rights were acquired from the Infront

Sports & Media agency, which sells them on behalf of the IIHF, the sport's global governing body, over the same six-year period (*TV Sports Markets* 18:10).

These rights are currently held by commercial broadcaster TV4 in a six-year deal, from 2012 to 2017, worth €11m per year. The deal covers Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Sweden accounts for about 80 per cent of the total, just under €9m per year, meaning the fee has increased by more than 11 per cent in the new deal.

TV4 bid for rights in Sweden alone. It has sold on its operations in Denmark and Norway. TV4 is thought to have offered less than it pays in the current cycle. The World Championship rights fee is already at a high level and is difficult to refinance for a commercial broadcaster. MTG was interested in the rights, but is not thought to have put forward an aggressive offer.

There is strong interest in the matches of the Swedish national team, which is ranked third in the world behind Canada and Russia. Sweden won the 2013 edition of the World Championship.

One school of thought is that SVT was keen to acquire some top rights following the likely loss of the Olympic Games. In June, Discovery and its international sports channel Eurosport were awarded Olympic Games rights in 50 European territories (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13).

But the broadcaster is understood to have been discussing a deal with Infront for many months. A deal is thought to have been first mooted in November, when SVT acquired rights to the 2019 and 2021 Alpine and Nordic Ski World Championships and World Cup from Infront (*TV Sports Markets* 18:21).

The IIHF deal provides SVT with exclusive live, delayed, repeat and highlights coverage. The deal covers free-to-air and pay-television rights.

Infront will now agree separate deals in Denmark and Norway. It will also sell rights in Finland, where the rights are currently held by commercial and pay-television broadcaster MTV, from 2012 to 2017, in a deal worth €8m per year.

Experts are unsure MTV will be able to retain its rights. The broadcaster is owned by media group Bonnier, which also owns TV4. Bonnier is said to be looking to scale back MTV's spending. ■



## FOOTBALL AFRICA

# SuperSport pays top dollar to retain African crown

By Callum McCarthy

Football rights fees across sub-Saharan Africa continued their rapid growth this month, with big increases paid for three of Europe's major football leagues.

Deals for the English Premier League, Spain's LaLiga and Italy's Serie A have all been completed, while a deal for France's Ligue 1 is expected to be finalised in the coming days.

SuperSport protected its status as the dominant pay-television broadcaster in sub-Saharan Africa, renewing deals for the Premier League and LaLiga.

But it did so at a cost, paying large increases for both. It prioritised these two main subscription drivers and chose not to bid strongly for Serie A rights.

Pay-television operator StarTimes, SuperSport's main rival in the region, took advantage, securing exclusive pay-television Serie A rights, which will complement its German Bundesliga rights.

*TV Sports Markets* understands pay-television channel Fox Sports Africa is on the cusp of a deal for Ligue 1. SuperSport and StarTimes have showed little or no interest in the property.

SuperSport does not see Ligue 1 as a subscription driver, while Fox Sports has two channels on StarTimes's mid- and top-range channel packages across sub-Saharan Africa, negating StarTimes's need to acquire the property.

## Premier League

It is thought SuperSport will pay in the region of \$180m (€162.5m) per season for Premier League rights from 2016-17 to 2018-19. The deal is for exclusive pay-television rights across all territories in sub-Saharan Africa.

This represents an increase of about 60 per cent on the value of SuperSport's current deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, worth just over \$113m per season.

A free-to-air package consisting of one game per week plus highlights is expected

to be sold later in the year.

It is the second time in a row the Premier League has sold pay-television rights in sub-Saharan Africa without a tender, and the private sale caught SuperSport's rivals off-guard.

"It's another lesson in making sure you have the right relationships," said one local rights expert. "SuperSport's rivals have to be quicker off the mark. A lot of people were waiting for the tender and sat back thinking they didn't have to rush."

A tender was widely expected in October, with StarTimes, Fox Sports and a number of agencies and start-ups thought to be preparing bids.

Several rights experts believe the Premier League's decision to sell the rights privately is anti-competitive, while others believe the league cannot have secured the best possible deal without allowing all parties to bid. One football rights expert described the league's decision not to test the market as "baffling".

But many industry insiders understand why the Premier League doesn't want to jeopardise its relationship with SuperSport, which has broadcast the league since its inception in 1992.

SuperSport has bailed the Premier League out of failed deals in previous cycles, taking over broadcasting duties after pay-television operators GTV and HiTV defaulted on payments. SuperSport reimbursed the league on both occasions.

## LaLiga

The value of LaLiga has increased hugely in the region, with the league and its advisor, the Mediapro agency, carving out additional non-exclusive broadcast deals.

LaLiga is now worth close to €40m per season across the region, more than double the fee in the previous cycle. All deals run from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

SuperSport renewed its English-language pay-television rights in a deal worth about €20m per season. This is around 150 per cent more than its previous deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, worth about €8m per season.

StarTimes and Fox were both interested in acquiring English-language rights, but were reluctant to bid as aggressively as SuperSport. Along with the Premier League, SuperSport identified LaLiga as a

property it couldn't afford to lose.

SuperSport has retained pay-television rights in all sub-Saharan territories, but will be forced to share the rights in every territory outside South Africa.

LaLiga has three other deals across the region. Pay-television operator Canal Plus Afrique acquired French-language rights across the region, excluding: Chad, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania and Western Sahara.

For the first time, the league agreed separate local-language deals in Tanzania, and in Angola and Mozambique.

East African pay-television broadcaster Azam TV acquired non-exclusive rights to all 380 games per season in Tanzania. Local experts estimate the deal to be worth about €3m per season.

Live commentary will be broadcast in English. However pre-match, post-match and half-time broadcasts will be in Swahili, a language spoken by around 80 per cent of the population. It is Azam's first major sports rights acquisition, and provides its new Azam Sports channel with premium content with which to attract subscribers.

Satellite operator Zap TV acquired Portuguese-language rights in Angola and Mozambique.

## Serie A

StarTimes has acquired exclusive Serie A rights, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, in a deal with the MP & Silva agency worth about \$6m per season.

The deal is an increase of about 140 per cent on the previous cycle, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, when SuperSport paid about \$2.5m per season.

MP & Silva waited for LaLiga to be sold before awarding Serie A rights. It did not issue a tender, instead holding private talks with all interested broadcasters. The agency is keen to encourage competition in the region, and is thought to have been reluctant to sell the rights to SuperSport.

Initially, MP & Silva sought between \$7m and \$11m per season. SuperSport is thought to have made a low bid of about \$4.5m per season.

StarTimes now owns rights to both Serie A and the Bundesliga. StarTimes pays around €7m per season for the Bundesliga, in a deal from 2015-16 to 2019-20 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:18). ■

## TV CHINA

# LeTV Sports leads charge of China's digital brigade

By Richard Welbirg

China's booming digital sports rights market has helped the Premier League, LaLiga and Uefa's Champions League earn impressive returns in recent months from a historically difficult market.

Internet services giants Tencent and Sina, and digital platform LeTV Sports, each pay \$18m (€16.3m) for English Premier League rights in 2015-16. Digital platform PPTV this month agreed an exclusive €50m-per-season deal for Spain's LaLiga (see separate story, page 1).

All four this month acquired Uefa Champions League and Europa League rights for fees between \$2.5m and \$4m per season. These four companies currently dominate the market.

LeTV Sports has been the most aggressive, spending an estimated CNY400m (€56m/\$63m) on rights acquisitions in 2015 alone.

Chinese fans are used to watching sport and entertainment content for free, and at present all four firms deliver sport broadcasts without charge. LeTV Sports streams via the LeTV.com website and its mobile app. People who buy smart televisions, set-top boxes and mobile phones from parent company LeTV get LeTV Sports content bundled with their basic subscription.

But the income the four can make selling advertising around streams has lagged behind the explosion in rights fees over the past year. Yu Hang, LeTV Sports's vice president, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "No company in this market is profitable. Every single digital platform has a model to compensate."

## The LeTV model

LeTV Sports was spun off from its parent, entertainment company LeTV, in February 2014. It has built on its core video-streaming business with three other revenue streams: event organisation, smart sporting goods and 'value-added' services.

"It's unique," claimed Yu Hang. "We have no benchmark. We see the traditional agencies like IMG, Infront or World Sports Group. We see media platforms like Tencent or Sina. But if we combine those together LeTV Sports is the only one."

LeTV operated the Chinese leg of the International Champions Cup friendly football tournament this summer (*TV Sports Markets* 19:9). It will do the same in 2016, as well as hosting a World Rally Championship event near Beijing.

Long-term, it wants to create new properties in China's most popular sports, football and basketball, working with domestic governing bodies and international agencies. LeTV Sports's deal for MP & Silva rights in China was described as an 'alliance' for the development of joint projects.

Smart sporting goods include the smart bicycle, launched in China this month and will be available in the US from November. There are plans to sell a GoPro-style sports camera, alongside connected watches, wristbands and shoes. Value-added services encompass online lotteries, games, and intelligent solutions for Chinese stadia.

"All our business should be integrated rather than single pieces," explained Yu Hang. "The ICC for example: we ran the tournament and distributed the media rights to the global editions."

"Our hardware, like the sports camera, was integrated into the event. And we used our stadium solutions to promise a whole new experience to users."

PPTV looks set to follow LeTV, launching its own-branded smart television earlier this year. Sina is expected to spin off its sport division into a separate company very soon.

Tencent uses sport to underpin internet gaming and services offered via QQ and WeChat, which had 820m and 468m unique monthly users respectively in the last quarter of 2014.

## Growth

LeTV Sports hopes to be profitable within about three years, but is focused on revenue growth in the short term. It has targeted revenues of CNY500m this year, rising to CNY1.7bn in 2016 and CNY3bn in 2017.

Its investment in live sport underpins the

other revenue streams, but the cost of rights acquisitions means it is always likely to be the firm's least profitable division while advertising is its only income.

LeTV Sports reaches about 6m subscribers through LeTV hardware. Online, the LeTV Sports section of LeTV.com has 10m daily unique users.

Football has been, and will continue to be, the focus of its rights acquisitions. It buys premium properties like the Premier League and Champions League, but also exclusive rights to smaller properties, appealing to Chinese gamblers who are looking for live football.

It is "very clear" that the Chinese streaming players will eventually need to move to a subscriber model, argued Yu Hang: "Everywhere except China needs to pay for the premier content. Only because of the traditional system in China is it different. It will eventually follow the same route."

Super Sports Media Group, which distributes Premier League rights in China, has experimented with streaming a proportion of each season's games on a subscription basis. Yu Hang believes that in five years this model is likely to be more widely accepted (*TV Sports Markets* 19:14). He also anticipates consolidation in the market, and – as the digital players grow – an increasing desire for exclusivity.

## Ambitious plans

LeTV Sports intends to expand beyond China, first into certain "strategic territories", eventually becoming a truly global sports business.

It will extend its digital platform and content acquisition business into Greater China (including Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong and Macau) before the end of the year. India, and major countries in Southeast Asia such as Indonesia and Thailand, will be the next targets.

Yu Hang said the US will be "a major focus", but the business there will be sporting goods rather than content acquisition. The firm is also considering acting as a venture capital investor for virtual reality and advanced reality hardware and software in the US, "to change the way people watch sport". ■

[www.letv.com](#) For the full interview with Yu Hang, visit our website.



## FOOTBALL

## NBC doubles fee for longer Premier League term

By Richard Welbirg

NBCUniversal blew its rivals out of the water to retain Premier League rights in the US earlier this month – the league's first deal in its new international sales cycle.

The NBC Sports Group division of media company NBCUniversal will pay about \$1bn (€903m) for the rights over six seasons, from 2016-17 to 2021-22, an average of \$166.7m per season.

This is double the \$83.3m per season it pays in its current three-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. And it is almost 650 per cent more than the \$22.3m per season the league earned in the previous cycle, when the rights were held by the Fox network (*TV Sports Markets* 16:20).

NBC Sports Group president Mark Lazarus has said neither the current nor new deal could be directly refinanced by advertising. But the Premier League is a key property driving the growth of its NBCSN sports channel.

A clause in NBC's existing deal meant a first-round bid from the incumbent at least 15 per cent larger than its rivals would trigger an exclusive negotiating window. NBC's first offer activated this window and the deal was finalised without allowing the other bidders – the Fox network and pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports – to make further bids.

US sports broadcaster ESPN's decision not to bid was a surprise to industry observers. It made a joint offer with Fox the last time the rights were sold.

But ESPN has announced cost cuts in recent months, and Premier League matches would cause scheduling problems with its college American football and college basketball commitments.

BeIN was always unlikely to win the rights. As of July 2015 the channel was available in just 15.6 per cent of cable homes, and would have had to sublicense matches to meet the league's coverage requirements. NBCSN reaches 72.1 per cent, ESPN 79.8 per cent.

It is only the second time the Premier League has agreed a six-season deal, after its agreement with Super Sports Media Group in China (*TV Sports Markets* 18:4). All bidders were required to make offers for both three and six seasons.

The Premier League felt the size of NBC's offer, married to the broadcaster's work in marketing the league in the US, was sufficient to merit the longer term. ■

## RUGBY UNION

## Altice signals sport intent with deal for Premiership Rugby

By Robin Jellis

French telco Altice signalled its intent to bid aggressively for sports rights late last month, teaming up with RDA TV to buy international Premiership Rugby rights.

The deal – struck jointly with Altice and the RDA TV agency – is for five seasons, from 2016-17 to 2020-21, and is worth about \$22m (€20m), or \$4.4m per season.

This is about 120 per cent up on the value of the current three-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, in which the Pitch International agency pays about \$2m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:11).

Altice first showed an interest in acquiring sports content in June 2007, when its Numéricable cable operation bought domestic rights to Ligue 2, the second tier of French football (*TV Sports Markets* 11:12).

At the time, local experts thought it might herald aggressive bidding for other sport, but this never materialised.

A source close to the telco told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "Owning and operating platforms is the first part of a two-part strategy. The second part is to acquire content. The plan is definitely to build content."

Altice will announce another long-term deal in French-speaking territories next month. This would follow the telco's deal for Premiership Rugby, and a deal earlier this month for French basketball rights.

Together with digital-terrestrial broadcaster L'Équipe 21, Altice acquired rights to the Pro A domestic league from

the Ligue Nationale de Basket and national team matches from the Fédération Française de Basketball. The deal is for five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, and is reportedly worth €10m per season.

The LNB's previous deal with pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus, from 2012-13 to 2016-17, was worth €6.2m per season. It was ended two seasons early after Canal Plus closed its Sport Plus channel, on which it broadcast games.

In 2013, Altice had revenues of €13.6bn and ebitda of €4.2bn. Altice is the ninth most valuable telco in Europe.

## Rival bidders

Premiership Rugby, the top flight of English rugby union, held a formal tender process which was led by the league's long-term advisor, David Kogan. The league invited offers for either three or five seasons. It asked for global offers outside the UK, Ireland and the US.

Altice/RDA beat offers from the B4 Capital and IMG Events & Media agencies, as well as incumbent Pitch and the beIN Media Group. New Zealand-based digital sports broadcaster Coliseum Sports Media is thought to have bid for rights in the Asia-Pacific region.

The new deal is a buyout, whereas the fee from Pitch in the current deal is a minimum guarantee with revenue above it split between Pitch and the league. This, the longer duration of the new deal, and the need to bid significantly more than the incumbent, are the main reasons the fee increased. Rugby experts also pointed to the fact the sport is growing rapidly in popularity.

The deal excludes the US, as well as the UK and Ireland. Rights in the US are included in Pitch's current deal. The league carved these out in order to sell directly to a broadcaster, building a relationship in the process. It is expected to sell the rights together with the USA Rugby governing body.

Rights in the US are currently held by beIN, but the league is thought to be keen to increase its exposure.

Altice will exploit the rights on its basic-tier Ma Chaîne Sport channels in the French-speaking territories of Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Switzerland, as well as Israel, Portugal and sub-Saharan

Africa, excluding South Africa. RDA will sell on in other territories.

Most of the value in the remaining territories will come from the major rugby-playing nations of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, as well as the Middle East and North Africa.

Altice/RDA could potentially sell English- or French-language rights across sub-Saharan Africa to another broadcaster should it receive a strong offer. One expert estimated that rights in South Africa alone could be worth up to \$1m

per season.

The pair's first deals are likely to be announced at the Sportel trade fair in Monaco this October.

### Blow for Pitch

The deal marks a step change for Premiership Rugby – Pitch has held the league's international rights since 2004. Pitch also lost European club rugby international rights to IMG last June (*TV Sports Markets* 18:20).

There was better news for the agency

this month when it picked up English Rugby Football Union international rights in a deal with UK pay-television broadcaster Sky. The five-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, is worth about \$12m, or \$2.4m per season.

Pitch held the international rights in the previous cycle, from 2010-11 to 2014-15, in a deal worth about \$2m per season. When Sky renewed its domestic RFU rights last October it also picked up the international rights previously held by Pitch (*TV Sports Markets* 18:20). ■

## TV AUSTRALIA

# NRL's bold choice pushes Foxtel to go large on AFL

By Richard Welbirg

Nine's capture of additional National Rugby League free-to-air rights helped drive a record fee for the Aussie Rules Australian Football League, as both codes agreed new deals this month.

On August 10, the NRL sold an expanded package of free-to-air rights to commercial broadcaster Nine for A\$925m (€617m/\$683m) over five years, from 2018 to 2022. It still has pay-television and digital rights to sell.

Between 2013 and 2017 the NRL earns A\$1.125bn from deals with Nine, pay-television operator Foxtel and telco Telstra.

Eight days later, the AFL agreed a six-year extension, from 2017 to 2022, with incumbent commercial channel Seven, Foxtel and Telstra. The deals are worth a record A\$2.508bn, or A\$418m per year.

It is a per-year increase of 67 per cent on the AFL's existing agreements, which are worth A\$1.253bn over five years from 2012 to 2016, or A\$250.6m per year.

The new deal will see Foxtel pay about A\$217m per year (up 74 per cent from A\$125m per year). Seven will pay A\$150m per year (up 58 per cent from A\$95m per year) and Telstra A\$50m per year (up 61 per cent from A\$31m per year).

Negotiations with the two codes became interdependent when the NRL decided to bring forward its sales process ahead of the AFL's (*TV Sports Markets* 19:10).

The NRL's decision to award more content in the new cycle to Nine before negotiating pay-television rights angered and worried Fox. Both leagues usually begin separate negotiations with different broadcasters before bringing the parties together to finalise agreements.

AFL and NRL are two pillars of Fox's offering, alongside Australian and English football, and domestic rugby union.

It needs to hold enough AFL and NRL content relative to the free-to-air broadcasters to persuade fans to pay additional subscription fees for the exclusive pay-television games.

Nine's deal will take NRL content away from Fox. This made it more important that Fox lock down the AFL rights.

### NRL angers News

Nine will pay 95 per cent more in the new NRL cycle. In the current five-year cycle, from 2013 to 2017, Nine pays A\$475m for exclusive live rights to three of the eight weekly matches in the top-tier Premiership. It also holds exclusive rights to the Premiership finals and the three-game State of Origin competition.

Fox pays A\$550m for the five remaining Premiership matches each week and non-exclusive digital rights. Nine's hugely increased fee represents the far more favourable terms in its new deal. Not only has it secured its key sports property for another five years, it will add another exclusive live game each week, and move from two prime-time slots to four.

Expectations of an aggressive bid from Seven for State of Origin rights were unfounded: Nine moved so swiftly that no other commercial broadcasters had the chance to discuss values with the NRL.

The league must now sell a reduced package of pay-television rights to Fox. Negotiations are likely to take some time.

One former Australian broadcast executive told *TV Sports Markets*: "They'll get bullied by [Foxtel part-owner] News but we all know Foxtel needs NRL. It won't happen quickly: News will want to punish them – expect lots of posturing."

It will be impossible to judge the NRL's strategy until the pay-television and digital rights deals are also done.

Telstra pays A\$100m for mobile and tablet rights to all matches in the current cycle, but the new deal gives Nine non-exclusive streaming rights for the first time. It is questionable how much Telstra will be willing to pay to renew its rights when Nine will stream four matches free.

### Aussie Rules rules

The AFL's new agreement is widely seen as a great success for the league. One local expert described the new financial terms as "unbelievable". In the current agreement, Seven and Fox simulcast four of the nine games per week. Fox shows the other five games exclusively.

In the new deal Seven will show three to four games per week, 11 fewer games each year overall. The AFL's free-to-air exposure could increase should Foxtel exercise its option to sublicense one match to a commercial broadcaster.

AFL chief executive Gill McLachlan told *TV Sports Markets* Fox was "well advanced" in talks with a commercial network. That is almost certainly Ten.

In June, Foxtel paid A\$77m for a 15-per-cent stake in Ten. The deal requires approval from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. ■

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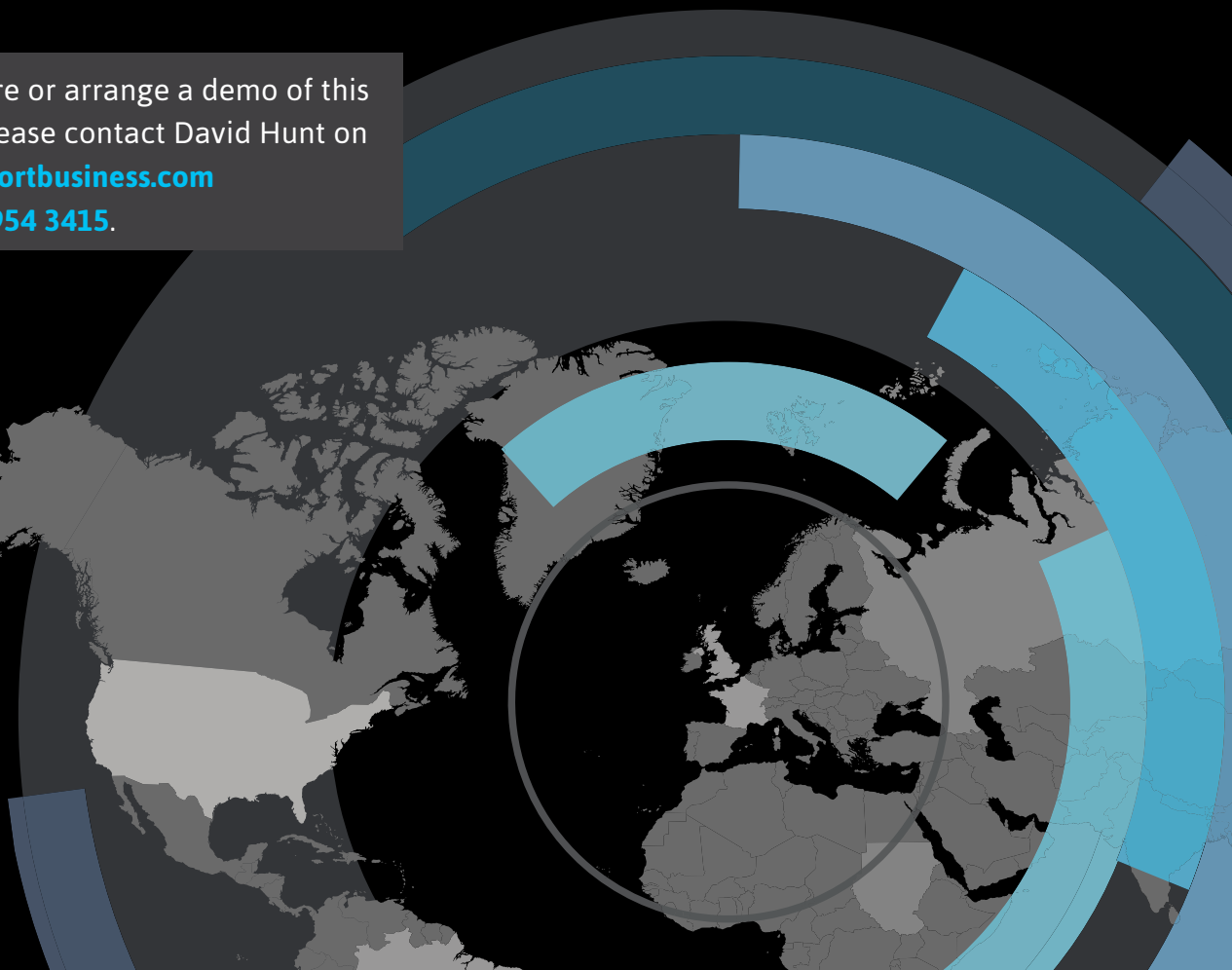
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# SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 23 to August 26

## MEDIA RIGHTS 1

### Football: Premier League, LaLiga, Bundesliga, Champions League and more

- **Football:** The NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal retained exclusive live rights for the English Premier League in a six-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2021-22 (page 9).
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster beIN Media Group renewed exclusive rights in the US for the top divisions in Spain, Italy and France until at least the end of the 2015-16 season.
- **Football:** The Saran Media agency acquired rights for the Uefa Champions League and Europa League European club tournaments in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- **Football:** BeIN Media Group acquired German Football League rights in Australia for five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20. The deal includes all 306 matches from the top-tier Bundesliga plus second-tier 2. Bundesliga games.
- **Football:** Caribbean telco Digicel secured an exclusive five-season rights deal, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, for LaLiga coverage across the region.
- **Football:** Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE acquired live and exclusive free-to-air highlights rights for LaLiga and the domestic Copa del Rey knockout tournament (page 4).
- **Football:** Telcos Orange and Vodafone sublicensed domestic rights for the 2015-16 LaLiga season and Copa del Rey in a deal with rival Telefónica.
- **Football:** The MP & Silva agency acquired exclusive multi-platform LaLiga rights in Scandinavia, Finland, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and Japan (page 1).
- **Football:** The ESPN International division of pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN acquired LaLiga rights in Spanish-speaking South America for five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20 (page 1).
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky extended its deal with LaLiga for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 1).
- **Football:** Saran Media acquired LaLiga rights in the Czech Republic and Slovakia for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 1).
- **Football:** BeIN Media Group acquired LaLiga rights in Australia (page 1).
- **Football:** Sony-owned Indian pay-television broadcaster Multi Screen Media acquired LaLiga rights for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The deal covers India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives (page 1).
- **Football:** Hong Kong telco PCCW retained exclusive live rights for LaLiga in a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. PCCW's Now TV pay-television platform will show coverage (page 1).
- **Football:** International pay-television broadcaster Eleven Sports Network acquired rights in Poland for LaLiga. The deal will run for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 1).
- **Football:** Eleven Sports Network acquired LaLiga rights in Belgium for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 1).
- **Football:** Russian pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus acquired rights for the 2015-16 LaLiga season.
- **Football:** BeIN Media Group acquired exclusive rights in Spain for the 2015-16 season of the Primeira Liga, the top division in Portugal.
- **Football:** Australian public-service broadcaster SBS sublicensed Uefa Champions League rights from beIN Media Group for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The deal covers live coverage of Wednesday matches.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster NC Plus and pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired rights in Poland for the Uefa Europa League for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- **Football:** BeIN Media Group acquired exclusive rights in France for LaLiga and Italy's top-tier Serie A in deals starting from the 2015-16 season.
- **Football:** Sub-Saharan African pay-television broadcaster SuperSport retained English Premier League pay-television rights for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 7).
- **Football:** Chinese digital players Sina, Tencent, PPTV and LeTV acquired rights for the Uefa Champions League and Europa League European club tournaments for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 8).
- **Football:** Chinese state broadcaster CCTV sublicensed rights to the 2015-16 English Premier League season from Super Sports Media Group.
- **Football:** Online video platform PPTV acquired LaLiga rights in China, Chinese Taipei and Macau for five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20 (page 1).
- **Football:** Tencent acquired German Bundesliga rights in a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Tencent will stream live coverage of 240 Bundesliga matches per season.
- **Football:** PPTV acquired multi-platform rights for the Eredivisie for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- **Football:** Singaporean telcos SingTel and StarHub sublicensed rights for the Uefa Champions League and Europa League from international sports broadcaster Eurosport. The deals, which cover television and digital platforms, will run at least until the end of the 2015-16 season.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand sublicensed Uefa Champions League, Europa League and English Football League rights – comprising the three divisions below the Premier League and the League Cup competition – from beIN Media Group, beginning in the 2015-16 season.

# SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 23 to August 26

## MEDIA RIGHTS 2

### Football: League Cup, Championship, Bundesliga, Ligue 1 and more

- **Football:** Gazzetta TV, the Italian sports channel operated by RCS MediaGroup, acquired rights for the 2015-16 season of the English League Cup and second-tier Championship, plus the 2015 Trophée des Champions in France.
- **Football:** Video-sharing platform YouTube acquired German Bundesliga rights in New Zealand (page 2)
- **Football:** Dutch commercial broadcaster SBS sublicensed rights to the KNVB Beker knockout competition from pay-television broadcaster Fox International Channels. The deal will run for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and cover highlights plus live coverage of the semi-finals and final.
- **Football:** Vietnamese pay-television operator SCTV agreed deals for the German Bundesliga, Italian Serie A, French Ligue 1 and English knockout competitions the FA Cup and League Cup for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- **Football:** Sports websites Spox.com and Goal.com acquired streaming rights in Germany for France's Ligue 1 until at least the end of the 2015-16 season.
- **Football:** Canadian pay-television broadcaster Rogers Sportsnet sublicensed German Bundesliga rights from the Fox Sports division of US network Fox. The deal covers five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20.
- **Football:** Digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 acquired exclusive rights in France for the Russian Premier League for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. L'Équipe 21 will broadcast live coverage of two games per week.
- **Football:** NTV Plus acquired rights in Russia for Italy's Serie A, beginning with the 2015-16 season.
- **Football:** NTV Plus secured rights for France's Ligue 1 and Coupe de la Ligue knockout tournament, beginning with the 2015-16 season.
- **Football:** PPTV struck a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, to broadcast a new channel in China dedicated to Dutch Eredivisie club Ajax.
- **Football:** Italian Serie A club Roma extended a rights deal with the NBC Sports Regional Networks division of US media group NBCUniversal until the end of the 2015-16 season.
- **Football:** Pan-regional pay-television broadcaster GolTV agreed a two-season deal, for 2015-16 and 2016-17, with the Venezuelan Football Federation for domestic and international rights to the top-tier Primera División.
- **Football:** The Tunisian Football Federation agreed a deal with public-service broadcaster Télévision Tunisienne that will allow the B4 Capital agency to market the governing body's global rights for the 2015-16 season. Public-service broadcaster Télévision Tunisienne objected to the original deal, claiming the terms of its domestic rights deal with the governing body were violated.
- **Football:** The B4 Capital agency retained international rights to Italy's second tier Serie B for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The coverage will be produced by pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia, which acquired domestic rights to Serie B in May.
- **Football:** Italian commercial broadcaster La7 acquired rights for the 2015 Spanish Supercopa season-opening contest between Barcelona and Athletic Bilbao in a deal with B4 Capital.

## SINCE LAST TIME

- US media and entertainment company Discovery Communications will take full ownership of pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport through a €491m (\$544m) deal with French commercial broadcaster TF1 Group. Discovery already holds a 51-per-cent stake in Eurosport.
- UK pay-television broadcaster Sky will assume full control of sister channel Sky Deutschland, which operates in Germany and Austria. Sky Deutschland's shareholders approved the request by majority shareholder Sky German Holdings to transfer the shares of minority stakeholders and remove the company from the German stock exchange.
- UK media regulator Ofcom launched a supplementary consultation over whether Sky's demand that rival operators supply key sports rights in exchange for its own sports content "would prejudice fair and effective competition". Ofcom is carrying out a review into the must-offer obligation it imposed on Sky, which requires the broadcaster to provide competitors with wholesale access to its Sky Sports 1 and 2 channels.
- Spain's competition regulator, the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia, fined telco Telefónica €10m (\$11m) and pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus €5.5m for anti-competitive behaviour in the exploitation of football rights for the three seasons from 2012-13 to 2014-15.
- Swiss telco Swisscom will fight a CHF143m (€137m/\$151m) fine that Switzerland's Competition Commission is seeking to impose for alleged prohibited marketing of sports content via pay-television. ComCo accused Swisscom of abusing its dominant position in the market by offering Swiss football and ice hockey games through pay-television broadcaster Teleclub.
- Modern Times Group, the multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster, will cut about 300 jobs in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the UK to generate annual savings of SEK600m (€63m/\$72m).
- New Zealand-based digital sports broadcaster Coliseum Sports Media plans to launch in 25 overseas countries next year, according to chief executive Tim Martin.
- LeTV Sports, a sports-rights venture operated by Chinese IPTV operator LeTV, aims to raise \$500m (€452m) to fund acquisitions.

# SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 23 to August 26

## MEDIA RIGHTS 3

### NFL, AFL, MLB, NBA, French Pro A Basketball, Lega Basket and more

- **American Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Latin America acquired rights for the NFL's Thursday Night Football package in Mexico and Central America for the 2015-16 season.
- **American Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky expanded its NFL coverage by agreeing a two-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2016-17, for the Sunday Night Football package.
- **American Football:** The Mediaset Premium pay-television service of Italian commercial broadcaster Mediaset acquired exclusive NFL rights for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- **Australian Rules:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven, pay-television operator Foxtel and telco Telstra retained rights for the Australian Football League for six seasons (page 10).
- **Baseball:** Major League Baseball franchise the St. Louis Cardinals signed a 15-year local television rights deal worth more than \$1bn (€903m), from 2018 to 2032, with regional sports network Fox Sports Midwest.
- **Baseball:** Chinese Taipei broadcaster Videoland was awarded rights for the 2015 World Baseball Softball Confederation's Premier12 national team competition. It will serve as the host broadcaster for the event, which is being co-hosted by Chinese Taipei and Japan.
- **Basketball:** International pay-television operator Eleven Sports Network acquired exclusive NBA rights in Belgium in a multi-year deal, beginning with the 2015-16 season. The Eleven Sports channel will show live coverage of four regular-season games per week.
- **Basketball:** AMC Networks International – Central Europe, the central European division of US entertainment company AMC Networks, agreed a multi-year extension to its NBA rights deal in Hungary. AMC will broadcast at least two live games per week.
- **Basketball:** Basic-tier broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport agreed a five-year deal, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, for exclusive rights to events staged by the French Basketball League and French Basketball Federation. MCS will show two games per week from the top-tier Pro A plus coverage of the Pro B second-tier, Ligue Féminine de Basket women's league, Coupe de France knockout tournament, all-star game and Leaders Cup (page 9).
- **Basketball:** Lega Basket, which operates the top division in Italy, agreed two-year rights deals, from 2015-16 to 2016-17, with state broadcaster Rai and pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia (page 2).
- **Boxing:** UK pay-television channel BoxNation acquired rights for welterweight world champion Floyd Mayweather Jr's fight against Andre Berto on September 12.
- **Boxing:** The Fox Sports division of US network Fox agreed a multi-year rights deal to show Toe-to-Toe Tuesdays, a new property launched by the Premier Boxing Champions series.
- **Boxing:** The TSA agency sealed a rights deal with pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand for AIBA Open Boxing events for two years, in 2015 and 2016.
- **Boxing:** Irish public-service broadcaster RTÉ acquired rights for the 2015 men's European Championships and the men's and women's World Championships in 2015 and 2016 in a deal with AIBA, the sport's global governing body.
- **Boxing:** Pay-television broadcaster Fight Channel acquired European Confederation Championship rights in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.
- **Cricket:** BT Sport dislodged rival UK pay-television broadcaster Sky as holder of Cricket Australia rights (page 2).
- **Cricket:** Indian telco DigiVive sublicensed digital rights for the 2015 series between Sri Lanka and India from Sony-owned Indian pay-television broadcaster Multi Screen Media.

- Man Tie Li, the owner of Chinese electronics company Ledman Optoelectronic, is set to become the latest investor from the country in the Infront Sports & Media agency.
- German media company ProSiebenSat.1 completed its acquisition of a majority stake in the DOSB New Media arm of the German Olympic Committee. ProSiebenSat.1's 7NXT subsidiary will have a 57.5-per-cent stake in DOSB New Media.

## MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- The NFL American football league signed a new multi-year deal allowing social networking website Twitter to show video content created specifically for the platform.
- US pay-television sports broadcaster Universal Sports Network will launch a new pay-per-view streaming service for the 2015 Rugby World Cup. WatchRWC2015 will offer live and on-demand coverage of all 48 matches during the rugby union tournament in England. Viewers will be able to watch the whole tournament for \$199.99 (€180) or individual matches for \$27.95.
- US media group EverSport.tv will stream live coverage of international pay-television broadcaster Eleven Sports Network's channels and premium sporting content to subscribers under a multi-year deal.
- Sports production and media company Sunset+Vine extended its production deal with UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport for two years, 2016-17 and 2017-18.
- UK pay-television broadcaster Sky struck a digital partnership with News UK-owned newspaper *The Sun*. Sky customers who subscribe to Sky Sports will gain access to Sun Goals, the newspaper's digital football clips service.
- The German Football League (DFL) struck a deal with Onet to provide the Polish internet company with exclusive content from the top-tier Bundesliga for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.



# SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 23 to August 26

## MEDIA RIGHTS 4

### Tour de France, Handball Champions League, Preakness Stakes and more

- **Cycling:** International sports broadcaster Eurosport agreed a five-year extension, from 2017 to 2021, to its deal with Amaury Sport Organisation for exclusive multi-platform rights for its events in 43 Asia-Pacific territories, excluding China, Japan and New Zealand. In Asia, the deal includes the Tour de France, Vuelta a España, Paris-Roubaix, Flèche Wallonne, Liège-Bastogne-Liège, Paris-Nice, Critérium du Dauphiné and Paris-Tours. The same package, excluding the Tour de France, was renewed for Australia and the Pacific region. The rights are for exclusive live coverage, with the exception of Australia.
- **Handball:** Eleven Sports Network agreed a four-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2018-19, for exclusive live rights in Belgium, Poland, Malaysia and Singapore for the European Handball Federation's men's and women's Champions League club competitions.
- **Handball:** AMC Networks International-Central Europe acquired rights in Hungary for the EHF men's and women's Champions League and other EHF events, starting with the 2015-16 season.
- **Handball:** Online sports broadcaster Laola1.tv, a subsidiary of the Sportsman Media Group, agreed a deal to show Friday evening games from the country's top-tier Handball Liga Austria.
- **Horseracing:** The NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal agreed a seven-year extension, from 2016 to 2022, to its global rights deal with the Maryland Jockey Club in the US for the Preakness Stakes.
- **Ice Hockey:** The Major League Baseball Advanced Media division of Major League Baseball sealed a digital rights deal with the NHL in North America for six years, from 2016 to 2021. MLBAM will take over the NHL's online, mobile and streaming operations and will have exclusive rights to distribute live, out-of-market NHL coverage in the US and certain international markets.
- **Ice Hockey:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 agreed a one-year extension to its rights deal for pan-European club competition the Champions Hockey League. Sport1 will broadcast games featuring German clubs in the group stage plus selected matches from the knockout stages.
- **Ice Hockey:** Laola1.tv will show coverage in Germany of the 2015-16 European Champions Hockey League. Laola1.tv will stream live coverage of all 24 group games featuring German clubs. Sportsman markets the CHL's rights in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.
- **Judo:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport agreed a deal to show highlights of the 2015 International Judo Federation's World Championships.
- **Motorcycling:** Belgian pay-television broadcaster Telenet acquired rights for the Motocross World Championship in a two-year deal, from 2015 to 2016, with series promoter Youthstream.
- **Motorsport:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland acquired rights in Germany, Austria and Switzerland for the Formula One world championship for two years, from 2016 to 2017 (page 5).
- **Motorsport:** German commercial broadcaster RTL retained exclusive free-to-air Formula One rights in the country for two years, from 2016 to 2017 (page 5).
- **Netball:** Pay-television broadcaster SuperSport secured rights in sub-Saharan Africa for the 2015 Netball World Cup.
- **Netball:** The Fiji Broadcasting Corporation acquired free-to-air rights for the 2015 Netball World Cup.
- **Olympic Games:** Pay-television broadcaster BeIN Media Group acquired exclusive rights in the Middle East and North Africa for four editions of the Games, from 2018 to 2024 (page 1).
- **Olympic Games:** The International Olympic Committee extended a rights deal in Asia with the Dentsu agency for four editions of the Games, from 2018 to 2024 (page 1).
- The DFL launched a new free-to-download mobile application that will offer clips of goals from every Bundesliga game plus highlights, interviews, press conferences and virtual tours of stadia.
- German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland began sending sports clips via mobile messaging service WhatsApp, and launched a high-definition version of its Sky Sport Austria channel.
- Italian commercial broadcaster Mediaset sealed a partnership with Telecom Italia under which content from pay-television service Mediaset Premium, including domestic top-tier Serie A and Uefa Champions League European football, will be distributed by the telco on a new Premium Online service.
- Spanish pay-television operator Telecable and telcos Orange and Vodafone agreed carriage deals with the Mediapro agency for the new beIN Sports channel. Mediapro also added the channel to its own TotalChannel platform.
- Italian Serie A football club Roma launched a television channel in partnership with pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia.
- Eleven Sports Network agreed carriage deals in Poland with media group TVN and telco Netia and in Singapore with pay-television operator SingTel.
- The Vodafone Portugal division of telco Vodafone struck a deal with global programming provider SPI International to carry a number of sports channels, including FightBox HD and Fast'nFunBox HD, on its TV Net Voz IPTV platform.
- Discovery Communications will launch Eurosport Norge, the new regional version of the international media company's pan-European sports broadcaster, in Norway on September 3.
- The Norwegian Handball Federation will launch its own online channel after an agreement for internet coverage with Norwegian commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 was curtailed.

# SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 23 to August 26

## MEDIA RIGHTS 5

### NRL, Super League, Premiership Rugby, Pro12, America's Cup and more

- **Rugby League:** Australian commercial broadcaster Nine retained rights for the country's National Rugby League for five years, from 2018 to 2022 (page 10).
- **Rugby League:** Pay-television channel Setanta Sports Asia will show coverage of English club rugby league after parent company Discovery Communications struck a sublicensing deal with British pay-television broadcaster Sky. The deal starts immediately and will run until the end of the 2019 season. The rights include the top-tier Super League, second-tier Championship and the Challenge Cup knockout competition.
- **Rugby Union:** The Pitch International agency struck a deal with Sky to jointly market the English national team's international rights. In October, Sky agreed a five-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, with the Rugby Football Union, the sport's governing body in England, for global rights. Pitch and Sky will sell the rights to all England's home games, excluding Six Nations and Rugby World Cup matches.
- **Rugby Union:** Premiership Rugby, which operates the sport's top division in England, signed an international rights deal with the RDA TV agency and multinational telco Altice for five seasons, from 2016-17 to 2020-21 (page 9)
- **Rugby Union:** Public-service broadcaster BBC Wales and Welsh-language channel S4C secured broadcast and online rights to the Wales national team matches at home to Ireland on August 8, away to Ireland on August 29 and at home to Italy on September 5. Both Wales home matches will be shown live by BBC Wales, with the broadcaster showing highlights of the away game. S4C will show highlights of the first Ireland match and will broadcast the Italy game in full.
- **Rugby Union:** Italian state broadcaster Rai acquired rights for the Pro12 European club competition and the Eccellenza, the top division in Italy, in a deal with the Italian Rugby Federation that will run until at least the end of the 2015-16 season.
- **Sailing:** Pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN International acquired multi-platform rights in more than 40 territories for the next edition of the America's Cup, which starts this summer and finishes in 2017. The deal includes exclusive rights in Mexico, Central America and Latin America, and non-exclusive rights in the Caribbean.
- **Sailing:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights in Australia for the next edition of the America's Cup.
- **Sailing:** Polish pay-television operator NC Plus acquired rights for the next edition of the America's Cup.
- **Snooker:** UK commercial broadcaster ITV acquired rights for the Snooker Shoot-Out event for three years, from 2016 to 2018.
- **Tennis:** The Sina Sports division of Chinese internet operator Sina acquired exclusive online rights for the Women's Tennis Association's Elite Trophy, starting with the 2015 edition in China.
- **US College Sport:** US pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN extended a rights deal for the Missouri Valley Conference in a 10-year deal, from 2015-16 to 2024-25, and sublicensed rights for the next five years, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, to the CBS Sports division of US network CBS.
- **US College Sport:** ESPN extended a rights deal with the Southern Conference for six years, from 2015-16 to 2020-21.

- Nova Broadcasting Group, part of multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group, launched a new high-definition sports channel called Diema Sport 2 in Bulgaria.
- Telco O2 was granted permission by the Czech Republic Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting to launch five new sports channels.
- Singaporean telco StarHub launched StarHub Go, a new online streaming service that will offer access to sports content provided via its pay-television operation.
- Australian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports will increase its coverage of the National Rugby Championship by showing live coverage of all 39 games during the 2015 edition of the country's third-tier rugby union tournament on digital or television platforms.
- South African public-service broadcaster the SABC is set to launch a new dedicated sports channel, SABC Sport.
- Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand introduced daily and weekly services to access its sports channels. Non-subscribers can buy a 24-hour 'Fan Pass' for online access to its sports channels for NZ\$14.99 (€8.90/\$9.86) or a weekly pass for \$19.99.

## MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The CAA Eleven agency launched a tender in Russia for rights to European football qualifiers for the Uefa Euro 2020 and 2022 Fifa World Cup national team tournaments, the 2018-19 and 2020-21 Nations League competitions and other international matches. CAA Eleven launched a separate bidding process in Russia for the Euro 2020 finals. It set a deadline of August 18 for all bids.
- Club officials from Bayern Munich and Hamburg called for changes to the media-rights model for the Bundesliga. Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge wants the league to switch from a centralised rights model to a club-by-club approach. Hamburg chief executive Dietmar Beiersdorfer said broadcast ratings for teams should be considered when deciding revenue distribution.
- UK pay-television broadcaster Sky offered the England and Wales Cricket Board £40m (€56m/\$62m) per year for global rights to a proposed city-based Twenty20 tournament to launch in 2017.
- Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand criticised the Cricket South Africa governing body after the two parties failed to agree a

## SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from July 23 to August 26

- rights deal for the one-day international series between the countries. Cricket South Africa provided free live streaming of the home series to viewers in New Zealand via its own website.
- Australian commercial broadcaster Seven started talks with the NFL American football league over rights for games in the 2015-16 season featuring the San Francisco 49ers, with Former Australian National Rugby League player Jarryd Hayne trying out for a place on the team's roster.
  - German Football League chief executive Christian Seifert said the Bundesliga could adopt a pan-European model when selling its next set of media rights over four years, from 2017-18 to 2020-21.
  - Football streaming platform fuboTV generated an additional \$4m (€3.6m) in funding to support expansion plans.
  - Golf's PGA Tour launched its PGA Tour Live digital subscription service in the US, Canada, Ireland, Australia and the UK.
  - Media company Vivendi increased its stake in the French unit of its Canal Plus broadcaster to 93.6 per cent following a public tender offer, which ran from July 9 to August 12. Vivendi, which already had a 48.5-per-cent shareholder in the unit through its subsidiary, Canal Plus Group, announced in May that it had launched a bid to buy-out the division.
  - Astra, the Australian group of pay-television broadcasters, renewed calls to reform the country's anti-siphoning list of events reserved for free-to-air television.
  - Gaelic Athletic Association president Aogán Ó Fearghail said that coverage from Irish public-service broadcaster RTÉ was "tiresome" and "consistent in its negativity", adding that it could be a factor in negotiating a new rights deal.
  - The Fox International Channels division of media company 21st Century Fox teamed up with South Korean media company JTBC to launch JTBC3, a new sports channel in the country.
  - Social media platform Facebook streamed live coverage of the 2015 Audi Cup pre-season football club tournament to 64 countries worldwide.
  - The Professional Squash Association cited its rights partnership with the Broadreach Media agency as a key driver behind record growth in television exposure of its events so far this year.

### ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- US satellite-television provider DirecTV launched a live streaming version of its Sunday Ticket package of NFL programming. The streaming service will be available to subscribers living in a residence where a satellite dish cannot be installed. NFLSundayTicket.tv packages will start at \$49.99 (€45.15) per month for four months.
- The Fox Sports division of US network Fox provided free live coverage in the US of German Bundesliga's season-opening game between Bayern Munich and Hamburg on August 14 via its Fox Soccer channel on video-sharing website YouTube.
- US entertainment studio Warner Bros. signed a content creation partnership with SpringHill Entertainment, a company co-founded by basketball superstar LeBron James.
- Simon Hopkins and Leon Passlow, who illegally sold access to coverage of football's English Premier League to commercial premises in the UK, were each handed prison sentences of three-and-a-half years.
- European pay-television group Sky posted better-than-expected financial results for 2014-15. Sky generated a five-per-cent increase in revenue to £11.3bn (€15.9bn/\$17.6bn) and an 18-per-cent increase in operating profit to £1.4bn.
- The America's Cup Event Authority launched AC Plus, a dedicated live streaming service, via the event's official website and mobile application.

### INDUSTRY MOVES

- Andrea Radrizzani sold a portion of his shareholding in MP & Silva to fellow co-founder Riccardo Silva and stepped back from the management of the agency. Silva is now president of MP & Silva, with Radrizzani focusing on new international pay-television operator Eleven Sports Network. The agency will open a formal procedure in September to seek new investment. • The Ultimate Fighting Championship promoter hired Eric Winter as the new general manager of the Fight Pass online viewing subscription service.

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