

PAY-TELEVISION

Perform spots gap in the market and prepares for 2016 rollout of OTT business

By Robin Jellis

The Perform Group will next year launch two OTT subscription services – one in Japan and one across Germany, Austria and Switzerland – as part of a move which could transform how live sport is delivered to consumers.

In an exclusive and wide-ranging interview with *TV Sports Markets*, Perform chief executive Simon Denyer explained why the company is launching an OTT service and why it has initially chosen these four territories.

Denyer said: “This is not us running individual services for individual sports. This is us going into a territory, going big time and launching a new brand. It’s a whole different ball game.”

The OTT service will launch in Japan in

spring 2016, and in Germany, Austria and Switzerland in summer 2016 – ahead of the 2016-17 football season.

Perform is opting for an OTT service instead of a linear broadcast channel because it does not believe the latter is how live sport will be delivered in five years’ time.

Perform has two models for deals with rights-holders. For larger properties Perform will pay a minimum guarantee. It will also share revenues above the guarantee, if any. For smaller properties, it will share revenues but not pay a guarantee.

A percentage of all Perform revenue from the OTT business will be put into a

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PREMIER LEAGUE

LeTV Sports's Hong Kong buy leaves marker

By Richard Welbirg

Chinese internet company LeTV Sports’s acquisition of English Premier League rights in Hong Kong is indicative of the company’s international ambitions.

It is the first time LeTV Sports has moved to acquire rights outside of China. It will pay just under \$130m (€115m) per season for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19.

TV Sports Markets understands LeTV Sports will support the acquisition with a three-season deal for English Football Association rights in Hong Kong. The deal was agreed with the MP & Silva

agency, and will run for three seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18.


In the existing Premier League deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, the rights are held by pay-television operator PCCW. It pays about \$65m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 16:21).

Late last month, LeTV Sports vice-president Yu Hang told *TV Sports Markets* that Hong Kong would be the first “strategic territory” into which the company would look to expand (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

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FASTRACK 1

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mixed results so far as NFL rolls out across Europe

The National Football League has endured mixed fortunes in its early deals in Europe, earning increases in Germany and France but seeing the value of its rights fall in the Netherlands.

In Germany, Austria and Switzerland the Perform Group has acquired rights from 2015 to 2017 in a direct deal with the NFL. It will pay between \$1m (€885,000) and \$1.5m per season (see separate story, page 1).

After the UK, Germany is the NFL's most valuable European market. Four players from Germany are currently active in the NFL, and the country was home to several teams in the now defunct NFL Europe competition.

In the Netherlands, agency MP & Silva sold rights to pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports, from 2015 to 2019, for just under €200,000 per season. It is believed Fox is paying less for NFL rights than it did previously, and is said to be delighted with the deal.

A deal between MP & Silva and basic-tier broadcaster Eurosport was very close to being finalised, but broke down in the final stages of negotiation. No other broadcasters were interested.

In France, pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports renewed its deal to cover the period 2015 to 2017, paying an incremental increase on its previous deal. It is thought beIN will pay MP & Silva just under \$350,000 per season for all NFL content. From 2012 to 2014, it paid about \$300,000 per season. BeIN faced no competition for the rights.

Extra content in the new deal helped MP & Silva increase the value of the rights. BeIN now holds digital rights in addition to live rights for Sunday, Monday and Thursday night games.

BeIN has also acquired rights to the NFL's RedZone service, a linear live-highlights feed covering every regular-season game in real time. The broadcaster did not hold rights to this service in the previous cycle, when it

bought local-language rights in France from the IMG Events & Media agency.

MP & Silva in March bought NFL rights in all European territories excluding the UK, Scandinavia and Germany. It pays an average of about \$6m per season, from 2015 to 2019.

MP & Silva also completed a deal with pay-television channel Eleven Sports Network in Belgium and Poland. It is thought Eleven's deal is part of a wider arrangement in which MP & Silva co-founder Andrea Radrizzani, owner of Eleven, swapped part of his stake in the agency for a combination of cash and sports rights. ■

Sky snaps up Bangladesh tour

Sky paid a significant fee to secure rights to England's tour of Bangladesh in 2016. The deal ensures Sky has rights to all England international cricket for the next two years.

The pay-television broadcaster paid a fee of about \$8.5m (€7.5m), regarded as very high by some UK experts for two reasons.

First, it is a significant increase on the fee Sky paid for England's previous tour of Bangladesh in 2010, which UK sources believe was in the low millions of dollars.

Second, it is only about 15 per cent less than the \$10m Sky paid for England's upcoming tour against Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates, despite the much lower profile of matches against Bangladesh.

There is also less content in the Bangladesh tour: it includes two Test matches and three one-day internationals, compared to three Test matches, five one-day internationals and three Twenty20 games against Pakistan.

The deal was agreed with pay-television broadcaster Gazi TV, which holds the Bangladesh Cricket Board's global media rights in a six-year deal running from May 1, 2014 to April 30, 2020. It is worth \$20.02m.

Sky's aggression is seen as being prompted by its desire to lock down all

England international cricket in the years before it loses Cricket Australia rights to rival pay-television broadcaster BT Sport from 2016-17 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15). ■

SuperSport extends Zambia deal

SuperSport has renewed its deal for the Football Association of Zambia's top-tier domestic club competitions until 2020.

The pan-African pay-television broadcaster will pay \$1m (€885,000) per season in a five-year deal, from 2016 to 2020. This is an increase of 17 per cent on the previous deal, from 2011 to 2015, worth about \$850,000 per season.

The new deal includes rights to Zambia's top-tier domestic league, the FAZ Super Division, and the Barclay's Cup club knockout competition.

An agreement was reached in private negotiations with the federation, with no third-party involvement. SuperSport faced no competition for the rights, as pay-television rivals StarTimes and Azam showed no interest.

SuperSport will hold exclusive pay-television rights across sub-Saharan Africa to all matches in both competitions. Selected matches from each competition will appear on Zambian state broadcaster ZNBC. ZNBC is not thought to pay a fee.

SuperSport's deal does not include the second-tier Division One. The FAZ has sold these rights to Zambian pay-television operator Muvi.

While SuperSport holds rights to all FAZ Super Division matches, it is unclear how many games it will broadcast live. Currently, most Super Division matches are shown delayed during the middle of the week on African football-oriented channel SuperSport 9.

SuperSport's renewal of the Super League keeps its African domestic football portfolio healthy. It also holds rights to the top-tier leagues in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe. ■

PAY-TELEVISION

Perform takes the lead with Netflix-style OTT sports offering

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'rights-holder pot'. This pot will be shared among rights-holders based on the cumulative minutes each property is watched (see box).

This means Perform will be paying rights fees for the most expensive properties without knowing what it will earn from the service. "We are going to collect all the revenues and take all the risk," Denyer said.

Three-year target

Perform expects many consumers to take the OTT service as an add-on to existing pay-television subscriptions. Denyer said it would be "reasonably priced" and similar to Netflix, the global OTT entertainment service. Netflix costs about €8 (\$9) per month across Europe.

The company hopes the new service will be profitable within three years of launching. "It's obviously going to lose a lot of money in the first year – it's losing a lot of money right now – but it's the right thing to do in the medium- to long-term," Denyer said.

Denyer describes the service as "phase three" of Perform's evolution. The first phase was content licensing; the second online advertising. Perform last year had total revenues of just over £250m.

The service will be run by John Gleasure, Perform's chief commercial officer, and James Rushton, the group's managing director in the Asia-Pacific region. They have been joined by Ashley Wirasinha, formerly of Netflix, and Ben Lavender, formerly of Amazon Prime.

Major challenges

The project requires big start-up costs, particularly for content, but Perform has the backing of a wealthy owner in Access Industries. Access, which holds a 77-per cent stake in the company, is controlled by Len Blavatnik, the richest man in the UK, whose net worth of £17.1bn.

Perform brings Spotify model into sports streaming

Perform has used its knowledge of the Spotify revenue model to shape its own ahead of its 2016 roll-out of subscriptions OTT services.

Perform's majority shareholder is private investment group Access Industries, which owns global record company Warner Music Group. Access also has stakes in music streaming services Deezer and Spotify.

Spotify collects all revenue from subscriptions and puts a percentage into a rights-holder pot. The pot is shared between rights-holders, with each receiving income based on the number of streams it accumulates.

"We've looked at the music model a lot with Access and said there's an element of this that can work in the

sports sector," Simon Denyer, Perform chief executive, told *TV Sports Markets*.

Perform will adopt broadly the same model, although it will pay a minimum guarantee for high-profile properties, and share any revenue above the guarantee. More than half its OTT revenues will go into the pot.

The pot will be divided based on usage. If a rights-holder gets five per cent of the usage on the service, it will get five per cent of the pot.

The results of this will be audited and all rights-holders will be aware of how and why they have been paid a certain amount. Denyer believes that, as the rights-holder will know what their share is, renewal talks will be more "straightforward". ■

There are other challenges for Perform beyond the level of investment required, according to independent experts.

Perform is not a strong consumer brand, though the company does operate some consumer-facing services, such as football websites. "People who move from B2B into B2C often underestimate how hard it is to build a consumer brand, and how much is needed in terms of marketing and promotion," one pay-television expert said.

Another issue will be how to pick up content at affordable prices if the service is seen to be making money. "At the point after three years where they get to be earning decent revenues, they will have to renew their deals and rights-holders are going to push the price up," the expert said. "So there is a risk that revenues will always lag behind what they are being charged for the rights."

Some experts also question the long-term advantages of being the first mover in this sector. As one digital media executive put it: "It's not about whether this will be the way that sport is delivered in the future but when, and it's all about getting that timing right. If the service is successful, other people will come in and try to do the same thing. There's nothing to stop Netflix deciding that it wants to extend into sport."

Building scale in Germany is also seen as a big challenge because of the resistance of German people to pay for television. This has made growth extremely difficult for anyone who has ever launched a subscription service in the country.

Trying to convince those who already take a subscription to Sky Deutschland to pay an additional amount every month is not as difficult as acquiring a new pay-television subscriber, experts say, but the target market is relatively narrow. Sky is available in about 4.3m German homes.

Content deals

The service will launch initially with a combination of European league football and some US sport.

Perform will target rights to other US sports, tennis, golf, rugby and fight sports for both territories.

The basis of Perform's initial content is deals with MP & Silva and Pitch International agencies.

From Pitch, it has acquired matches played by the nations of Conmebol, the confederation of South American football. It also acquired rights to English football's two domestic cup competitions, the FA Cup and the Capital One Cup.

From MP & Silva it has acquired France's Ligue 1 and Italy's Serie A for Japan and across Germany, Austria and

Switzerland. It has also acquired Germany's Bundesliga and the FA Cup in Japan. The deal in Germany, Austria and Switzerland is for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and is thought to be worth between €3m and €3.5m per season.

In August, Perform acquired rights to Spain's LaLiga across the same three countries for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, in a deal worth about €9m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

Perform has also acquired rights to the National Football League in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. It will show coverage on its online streaming website spox.com ahead of the OTT launch. The deal was agreed directly with the NFL.

The NFL deal will run for three years, from 2015 to 2017, and is worth between \$1m and \$1.5m per year. This is up from the \$700,000 per year paid by Sport1 in its three-year pay-television rights deal, from 2012 to 2014.

The fee has risen despite increased coverage on free-to-air television in the new deal. From 2015 to 2017, commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1 will show two live games per week, plus the play-offs and Super Bowl.

Sat.1's deal is worth just under \$1m per year. This is understood to be a significant increase on its previous deal, from 2012 to 2014.

Ahead of launch, Perform has sublicensed Ligue 1, Serie A and NFL rights to German sports broadcaster Sport1 for the 2015-16 season. The deal is thought to be worth about €1m. In Switzerland, LaLiga rights have been sublicensed to the Cinetrade media group.

It has also sublicensed LaLiga rights to Laola, the online sports broadcaster service owned by the Sportsman Media Group, for the 2015-16 season. One local expert estimated Laola to be paying €500,000.

Perform is thought to be nearing a deal for basketball's NBA in the German-speaking territories. In 2013-14 and 2014-15, Sport1 paid about \$1.3m per season. Perform is also thought to be close to a deal for ATP 250 tennis events.

The company is almost certain to bid for English Premier League rights when they come on the market next month.

Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland holds these rights in Germany and Austria in a three-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, worth about €3.6m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:10).

Advanced markets

The two initial territories have been chosen for a number of reasons, the most important being their large populations. "We wanted to pick two big markets to really test it," Denyer said.

Connection speeds and broadband infrastructure across these territories are very good. Consumers have also been exposed to similar style services such as Netflix and Hulu, and have "got their head around a different style of delivery".

These markets also suffer from a lack of competition for sports rights, meaning many properties are more affordable than in other territories. Perform's move into the OTT sector has the potential to add dynamism to both markets.

In Germany, there is still some competition in the free-to-air sector for premium sports rights, such as national football team matches.

But the pay-television market is dominated by Sky Deutschland, which holds rights to the most important properties, including top-tier Bundesliga football, the Uefa Champions League and Formula One motor racing.

In Japan, there is a culture of co-operation between broadcasters which limits rights values, especially in the pay-television sector.

As it will be an OTT service, rather than a linear channel, Perform's platform will have a lower cost, Denyer said. It will not have to buy additional content for the sake of filling the schedule, while technical play-out costs will be zero.

Perform will also be able to minimise costs by marketing the product to the customer base of its existing content services – over 130m users.

Perform has experience with subscription platforms as it has been running the TennisTV service for 10 years. TennisTV is the streaming platform owned by the ATP and WTA Tours. ■

[www. For the full interview with Simon Denyer, visit our website.](#)

PREMIER LEAGUE

LeTV Sports entry shakes up cooling pay-television market

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The Premier League is the must-have pay-television property in Hong Kong. For several cycles, it has been subject to a tug-of-war between PCCW's Now TV platform and rival pay-television operator i-Cable.

The Premier League launched its tender in August. LeTV Sports's offer was considerably higher than its competitors and it was successful in the first round of bidding. It will use the property as leverage to support the entry of its parent, entertainment and online video company LeTV. LeTV Sports was also keen to establish a relationship with the league. Proving itself as a valuable partner could be beneficial as it expands into further territories.

Along with rivals Sina and Tencent, LeTV Sports pays \$18m for digital rights to the 2015-16 Premier League season in China, but the league's contract is with the Super Sports Media Group, which bought the rights for six seasons, from 2013-14 to 2018-19 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:14).

Sharing

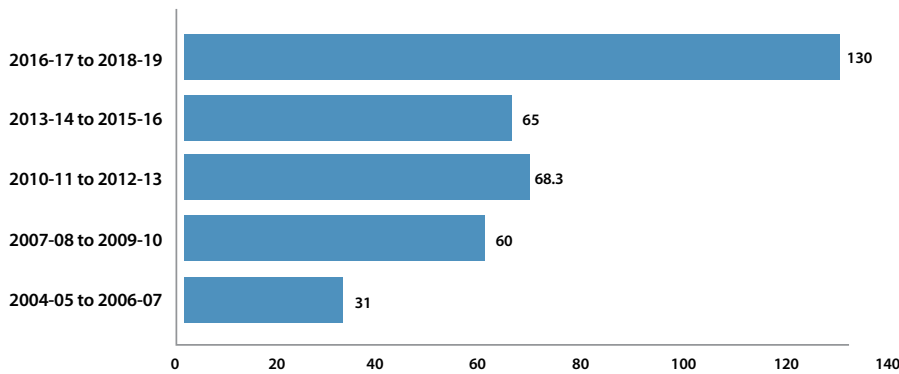
LeTV Sports has already agreed to share content with PCCW. The deal will ensure Now TV subscribers continue to have access to the Premier League coverage in the forthcoming cycle.

The deal is likely to take the form of LeTV Sports-branded programming on Now TV's platforms. It may also include broader collaboration on entertainment programming as well as sport.

LeTV Sports may also consider partnering with i-Cable for the distribution of set-top boxes for its OTT service.

For LeTV Sports, partnering with the existing market leaders will reduce demand for their OTT subscriptions but help the company to build its brand in Hong Kong ahead of the next sales cycle.

Premier League media rights income from Hong Kong by cycle, 2004-2019 (\$m/season)



Source: TV Sports Markets Rights Tracker

The model

Chinese viewers are used to watching sport free of charge, either streamed by one of the four big digital players – LeTV Sports, PPTV, Sina and Tencent – or on state broadcaster CCTV.

LeTV Sports's content is included at no extra charge alongside the entertainment programming available to buyers of LeTV-branded devices: mobile phones, smart televisions and set-top boxes.

The company launched its branded digital devices in Hong Kong this week. Buyers will get LeTV's entertainment programming with a basic subscription. The company has struck rights deals with Chinese movie studios and television rights deals with broadcasters including the BBC.

But subscribers will have to pay extra for the Premier League package when it comes into being from the 2016-17 season. By that point, the company expects to have between 1m and 1.2m subscribers. At the end of 2013, PCCW's Now TV and i-Cable had 1.18m and 1.09m subscribers respectively.

The history

LeTV Sports's move into Hong Kong comes at a fortuitous moment for the Premier League, which is unlikely to have extracted a significant rights-fee increase from PCCW or i-Cable.

Rights fees rose sharply for the league

when it was first carved out of a pan-Asia deal with now-defunct ESPN Star Sports: PCCW's entry drove i-Cable to pay \$31m per season to acquire the rights from 2004-05 to 2006-07 (*TV Sports Markets* 8:5). Then, from 2007-08 to 2009-10, PCCW took the rights for the first time, paying \$60m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 10:21).

But growth slowed as the market matured. PCCW's fee in the current cycle is down five per cent from the \$68.3m per season i-Cable paid in the 2010-11 to 2012-13 cycle (*TV Sports Markets* 13:21).

Hong Kong has 2.4 million television homes and pay-television has about a 90-per-cent penetration rate.

The size of the market meant there were too few potential new subscribers for either player to justify huge rights fees.

Long-term, LeTV Sports's arrival creates serious problems for the two domestic operators. It is doubtful there are enough potential subscribers for the market to sustain Now TV, i-Cable, LeTV Sports and TVB Network Vision, the pay-television arm of TVB, the country's dominant free-to-air broadcaster.

TVB Network Vision is by far the smallest pay-television operator, but it is the only one to carry the two beIN Sports channels. BeIN holds rights in Hong Kong to the Euro 2016 international football tournament, and Spain's top-tier LaLiga. www.

TENNIS

Eurosport ups fee to keep Australian Open in tennis stable

By Richard Welbirg

Eurosport has paid a significant increase to retain long-term exclusivity over Australian Open rights in Europe.

The international sports broadcaster is thought to be paying between €16m (\$18m) and €19m per season for five years, from 2017 to 2021. The deal includes rights across Europe and in Francophone Africa, where its channels are carried by pay-television operator Canal Plus Afrique.

In its current five-year deal, from 2012 to 2016, the broadcaster pays €10.5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 15:3; 16:3). There was no formal tender process. It is understood that beIN Media Group was interested in acquiring the rights but did not get an opportunity to bid.

In the last cycle, rights-holder Tennis Australia – and its then sales agent IMG Events & Media – persuaded Eurosport to increase its fee 163 per cent by threatening to move to a market-by-market process. Between 2008 and 2011, Eurosport paid about €4m per year.

Eurosport's new deal was agreed directly with Tennis Australia, whose global advisory agreement with IMG comes to an end in 2016. *TV Sports Markets* understands the governing body intends to take sales in-house.

The Australian Open takes place over the last fortnight of January, when Eurosport has little other top sport.

For the first time, the deal includes live rights to two Australian Open warm-up ATP World Tour men's tournaments, the World Tennis Challenge exhibition tournament and the Hopman Cup international mixed team competition, the last of which will become exclusive to Eurosport from 2019.

The additional content is valuable to Eurosport: it represents a month-and-a-half of tennis, and allows the broadcaster to drive viewership into the Australian Open proper.

Eurosport also holds pan-European rights to the French Open and US Open. It pays about €20m per year for French Open rights outside France, in a seven-year deal with the MP & Silva agency (*TV Sports Markets* 17:19). It pays \$19.5m per year for US Open rights from 2013 to 2017, in a deal agreed with IMG.

Eurosport has no obligation to sublicense rights in the new deal, although it has the option to do so. Earlier this month, the broadcaster sublicensed the US Open women's final in Italy – featuring Italian players Flavia Pennetta and Roberta Vinci – to DeeJay TV, the commercial entertainment channel owned by Discovery Communications, also Eurosport's parent company. ■

FOOTBALL

Federation woes continue as deals look set to sink

By Callum McCarthy

The Football Kenya Federation has threatened to cancel its \$2.5m (€2.2m) per year advisory deal with MP & Silva, the latest event in the ongoing dispute between the two parties.

Agency MP & Silva has refused to forward any money to the federation beyond its initial payment of \$833,000, after the federation included several properties in the contract which it did not own (*TV Sports Markets* 19:10).

This lack of funding has crippled clubs in the second-tier FKF Premier League, who refused to allow pay-television broadcaster Azam to televise games last weekend. Azam holds exclusive rights to the FKF-PL.

Separately, pan-African pay-television broadcaster StarTimes is to walk away from its five-year media rights deal with the federation, from 2015 to 2019, for which it pays \$540,000 per year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:10). StarTimes's deal also included a number of properties the federation had no remit to sell.

The federation did not respond to requests for comment as *TV Sports Markets* went to print.

MP & Silva stalemate

In May, MP & Silva asked to renegotiate its five-year deal, which runs from 2015 to 2019. The agency delivered its terms to the federation on June 15.

The federation has not yet replied to this request. Instead, it sent a letter to MP & Silva on September 8, in which it threatened to terminate the deal if MP & Silva did not respond within a “reasonable” amount of time. The agency has not yet replied to the letter.

Sources close to the situation believe the federation's current administration is posturing before the upcoming FKF presidential elections, which will take place between October 29 and November 5. A change of president in these elections could potentially save the deal.

MP & Silva is thought to be waiting on the outcome of the elections before making a decision. But the likelihood of a change in administration is slim: local sources believe president Sam Nyamweya is highly likely to retain his position.

StarTimes cancellation

Since July, StarTimes has been attempting to reduce its rights-fee payments to the federation by about \$200,000 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13). Attempts to renegotiate the deal have broken down, and the pay-television operator last week decided it would cancel the deal.

The dispute occurred when StarTimes attempted to broadcast an African Nations Championship (CHAN) qualifier, only to be informed by the Confédération Africaine de Football, African football's governing body, that the rights belonged to pay-television broadcaster SuperSport.

The rights to World Cup, Africa Cup of Nations and CHAN qualifiers are included in Caf's centralised rights package, which was sold to Sportfive from 2009 to 2016, for \$160m (*TV Sports Markets* 16:2).

These rights were erroneously included in StarTimes's deal with the FKF (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13).

It is unclear whether StarTimes is also seeking to cancel its marketing and sponsorship rights deal with the federation. This deal, which runs from 2015 to 2019, is worth \$400,000 per year.

Azam club snub

Pay-television broadcaster Azam's production crew was turned away from the Kariobangi Sharks v Kakamega Homeboyz FKF Premier League fixture on September 19. The clubs did not want to provide Azam with content while receiving no compensation.

Azam holds rights to the second-tier FKF-PL, from 2015 to 2017, paying \$745,000 per year. Sources say the league is on the brink of collapse due to the lack of funding (*TV Sports Markets* 19:16).

Azam will decide whether to continue with the deal after the federation elections have taken place. The FKF-Premier League is not a major priority for Azam, which holds rights to a number of other African domestic football leagues. ■

GYMNASTICS

Sport Plus closure gives MCS chance to build portfolio

By Frank Dunne

The closure of Canal Plus-owned sports channel Sport Plus has provided French basic-tier broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport with another opportunity to boost its portfolio, after last month's deal for domestic basketball rights.

MCS has agreed a deal with the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) for 10 seasons, from 2015-16 to 2024-25, for the rights in France, Belgium and Luxembourg.

The broadcaster is thought to be paying about €1m (\$1.13m) over the course of the deal, averaging €100,000 per season. This is understood to be about 10 per cent more than Sport Plus had been paying for the rights. Canal Plus had held the rights for three consecutive cycles.

There is not thought to have been any serious competition for the rights, nor was there a formal tender process. MCS moved quickly to close the deal after the closure of Sport Plus in August and the transaction was smoothed by good relationships.

MCS's parent company, the telco Altice, is advised in sports rights by Nick Haigh, former chairman of the international

board of the IEC in Sports agency. IEC, which has now been subsumed into the Lagardère Sports brand, has worked with the FIG since it centralised the rights to its World Cup events in 2010.

Last month, MCS, jointly with digital-terrestrial broadcaster L'Équipe 21, picked up the rights to domestic basketball for five years in a deal worth about €10m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

Both sets of rights had been under contract to Sport Plus and came back onto the market when the channel closed.

MCS is thought to be interested in enhancing its gymnastics portfolio by trying to acquire content from French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports.

The key property in this month's deal with the federation is the FIG World Championships. The other valuable events are the Artistic World Cups, Challenge Cups (Artistic) and Rhythmic World Cups, to which beIN holds the rights through a deal with IEC.

BeIN's deal runs for two years, from 2015 to 2016, but the broadcaster has not been showing the events due to an overloaded schedule. Although the federation is earning a rights fee from the broadcaster, it is thought to be concerned about the lack of exposure in France for its events. Sources say a three-way negotiation between MCS, beIN and the FIG could take place later this year about a possible sub-licensing deal.

Good business

Picking up a popular Olympic sport for 10 years for a modest annual rights fee looks like good business for MCS.

The sport delivers a large number of hours and good ratings, with audiences fairly evenly divided between men and women, and a strong appeal to younger viewers. Coverage will be split across the male-oriented Ma Chaîne Sport channel and the more female-oriented MCS Bien-être channel. France has a fairly good, and growing, tradition in the sport.

The duration of the deal, allowing MCS to build interest in the sport, is also thought to have been an important factor in the broadcaster's interest.

In addition to the increased rights fee, the FIG is thought to have been impressed by MCS's plans to market the World

Championships and the number of hours it has committed to showing live.

Coverage

MCS will show all of the federation's major events. Coverage begins with this month's 2015 FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships in Stuttgart, Germany. The flagship event, the FIG World Gymnastics Championships, take place from October 23 to November 1 in Glasgow, UK. ■

FOOTBALL

Sky activates clause to trigger Scottish football renewals

By Richard Welbirg

Scottish football will remain split between pay-television broadcasters after a clause in Sky's contract triggered an early renewal process.

Both Sky and rival BT Sport have extended their deals with the Scottish Professional Football League for an additional three seasons, from 2017-18 to 2019-20. They will pay a combined fee of £20m (€17.7m/\$22.6m) to £22m per season for rights in the UK and Ireland.

This is at least 25 per cent up on the £16m per season Sky and BT pay in the current five-season deal, which runs from 2012-13 to 2016-17 (*TV Sports Markets* 15:22). The deal was agreed by the then-Scottish Premier League with Sky and pay-television broadcaster ESPN; BT took on the rights from the 2013-14 season after ESPN closed its UK operations.

The SPFL formed in June 2013 from the merger of the Scottish Premier League and the Scottish Football League.

Sky's deal with the SPL included a clause enabling the broadcaster to extend its contract for three seasons. This was activated in June. The SPFL then offered BT Sport the option to extend its own deal for the same duration.

It is understood the SPFL would prefer to sell its rights exclusively, as it would likely command a higher fee. Sky's clause made this impossible: the broadcaster is not interested in acquiring more content.

It would have to pay a higher fee, and is satisfied with the number and quality of games it broadcasts in the current deal.

BT would be interested in acquiring exclusive rights but it is nonetheless happy with a share, as it believes it is vital that a UK broadcaster has content which appeals directly to a Scottish audience.

Sky has no such clause in the new deal.

Content

Sky and BT will retain the current split in matches in the extended deal. While Glasgow Rangers remain in the second-tier Scottish Championship, Sky holds the rights to 25 top-tier Premiership matches and five Rangers matches. BT holds the rights to 30 Premiership matches and 10 Rangers matches.

Should Rangers gain promotion to the Premiership, both broadcasters will have rights to 30 matches.

Sky pays about 65 per cent of the total fee in the current deal, and a similar amount in the extension. Its deal includes more of the top matches than BT's. For example, if Rangers are in the Premiership Sky has 21 first pick matches and nine second picks. BT have 17 first picks and 13 second picks.

The new deal will include for the first time play-offs for promotion and relegation between the Premiership and Championship. BT will show all these matches. Play-offs between the Premiership's 11th-placed team and those placed 2nd-4th in the Championship were introduced in the 2013-14 season.

Matches were shared between Sky and BT in the first season, before BT won the tender for playoff rights for three seasons from 2014-15 to 2016-17. One source said the deal was worth in the low hundreds of thousands.

International

The MP & Silva agency holds SPFL international rights in a nine-year deal worth about £18m from 2014-15 to 2022-23. The deal covers all countries outside the European Economic Area.

Rights in the EEA are held by Sky in the current deal, and will continue to be in the extension. However, they are exploited in combination with the league and MP & Silva (*TV Sports Markets* 17:12). ■

FASTRACK 2

NEWS IN BRIEF

Fox Olympics sell-off marks end of failed sports plan

Fox's deal to sublicense rights to the 2016 Olympic Games in Turkey to the Saran Media agency marks the end of its failed experiment with sport in the Turkish market.

The broadcaster had bought the exclusive rights with the intention of developing a sport offering in the country, but has not done so. Informed media sources said local Fox management never bought into the strategy, and there were no major rights deals in the wake of its Olympics deal.

One source close to the media group said: "Fox hasn't moved away from sport to entertainment. The reality is these rights were bought in anticipation of a move into sport which never transpired. Fox Turkey has been built into a channel based on Turkish drama and entertainment, targeted to a female audience."

Fox originally bought rights to the 2014 and 2016 Olympic Games in 2008, paying €23m for both Games (*TV Sports Markets* 12:20). The summer Games in 2016 accounted for around 80 per cent of the value.

The broadcaster is believed to have made a loss on sublicensing all rights to the 2014 winter Games to state broadcaster Turkish Radio Television. TRT is thought to have paid between €3m and €4m for the rights.

Fox gave all the major players in the Turkish television market the opportunity to bid for the 2016 rights.

Saran has no pre-deals in place with broadcasters, but a package of free-to-air rights will almost certainly be sold to TRT. Another package will be sold to a pay-television sports channel.

The agency is not in a hurry to sell on the rights. Turkey is experiencing economic and political turmoil, with an election scheduled for November 1. It is unlikely sales will be made before then.

The deal with Saran has been approved by the International Olympic

Committee, which is satisfied that any deals concluded by Saran will respect the IOC's requirement for a minimum of 200 hours of free-to-air coverage.

Saran Media has been keen to create a relationship with the IOC, having bid to carve out Olympic rights in Turkey and the CIS states for the 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024 Olympic Games. These rights were bought by Eurosport as part of its blockbuster €1.3bn pan-European deal in July (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13). ■

O'Brien: We did not overpay for Caf

Seamus O'Brien, the executive chairman of Lagardère Sports and Entertainment, confirmed this week that the agency has renewed in principle its deal with the Asian Football Confederation. He also strongly defended the level of the company's investment in its recent renewal with the Confederation of African Football.

O'Brien said that the AFC deal has been approved at committee levels, and was "going through the procedures of finally being done". A deal has been in place in principle since early this year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:7).

The delay in signing off the agreement has been due to the presidential election in May – at which Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa was re-elected – and subsequent changes to the AFC executive committee.

No details of the contract have yet been made public by the agency or the AFC but local sources expect the deal to run for eight years, from 2021 to 2028, and will be worth about \$1.25bn (€1.1bn), or \$156m per season. The agency's current deal, from 2013 to 2020, is worth \$75m per year.

If these figures are confirmed it would represent a similar level of uplift to that in its 12-year, \$1bn renewal with Caf (*TV Sports Markets* 19:12). But the agency says it did not overpay.

"We're bullish on Africa as a market," O'Brien said. "It's about being committed to spending resources to support our market-leading positions.

We certainly see football in Africa as a premium market opportunity.

"We've made a significant investment into football in Africa, as it is a prime example of the premium content we are looking for. We don't feel we overpaid to secure the Caf deal. We are comfortable with the price."

The Caf deal was handled by Sportfive Africa and the AFC deal by the World Sport Group, two subsidiaries of what was formerly known as Lagardère Unlimited. This month the agency was rebranded Lagardère Sports and Entertainment, with the old subsidiary names disappearing.

The full interview with O'Brien, and the agency's chief operating officer Andrew Georgiou, will appear in the October edition of *SportBusiness International* magazine. ■

Tabcorp strikes Victoria deal at last

Australian gambling conglomerate Tabcorp will pay just over A\$10m per season (€6.3m/\$7.1m) for rights to thoroughbred racing from the state of Victoria for the next five years, from 2015 to 2019.

The new deal with Racing Victoria, the representative body of the state's four racing clubs, covers domestic and international broadcast rights, plus digital rights.

Tabcorp will exploit the domestic broadcast rights through its Sky Racing channels, which are available on pay-television platform Foxtel, and in Tabcorp's betting outlets in pub, clubs and betting shops. Tabcorp holds the monopoly gambling licence in Victoria and neighbouring New South Wales.

Domestic and digital rights are non-exclusive. Victorian racing is also broadcast on Racing.com, a free-to-air-channel created in June by the Victorian clubs in partnership with commercial broadcaster Seven (*TV Sports Markets* 19:12).

Racing Victoria had turned down a A\$30m-per-season offer for exclusive broadcast rights from Sky. ■

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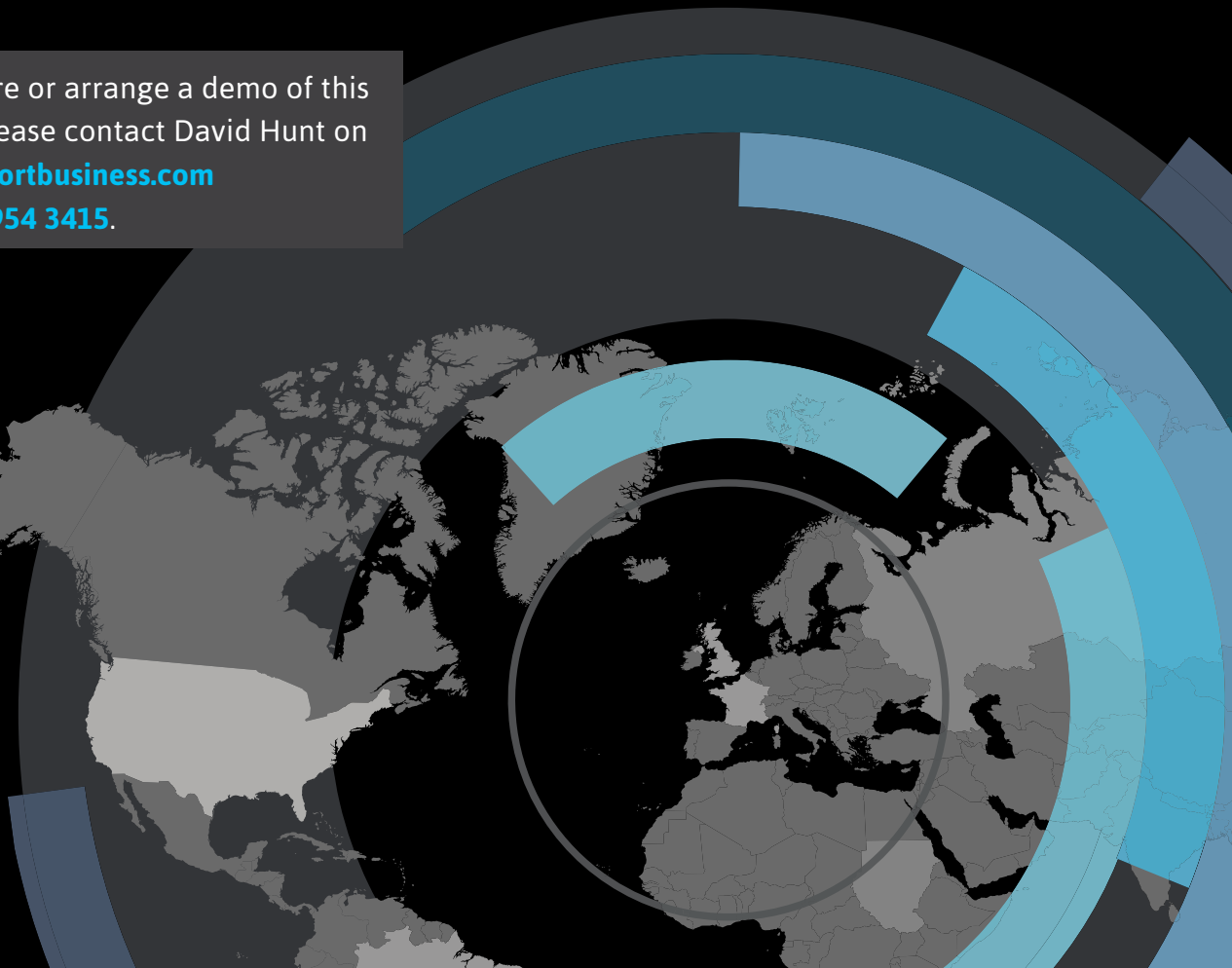
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from September 10 to 23**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: Premier League, Scottish football, Serie A, LaLiga and more**

- **Football:** Chinese IPTV operator LeTV acquired rights in Hong Kong for the English Premier League. The exclusive agreement will run for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 1).
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcasters Sky and BT Sport extended rights deals with the Scottish Professional Football League for three seasons, from 2017-18 to 2019-20 (page 7).
- **Football:** Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet* struck a digital rights deal with MP & Silva for coverage of Serie A and LaLiga.
- **Football:** The *Josimar* and *VG* magazines, the Sporten.com website and the Norwegian supporter groups of Spanish LaLiga club Real Madrid and Italian Serie A club Inter Milan acquired digital rights in Norway for LaLiga and Serie A in deals with the MP & Silva agency.
- **Football:** The *Tipsbladet* magazine acquired digital rights in Denmark for Serie A and LaLiga from MP & Silva.
- **Football:** The Mediaset Premium pay-television service of Italian commercial broadcaster Mediaset acquired rights for the Uefa Youth League European club tournament for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- **Football:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 acquired rights for the Uefa Youth League for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- **Football:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus acquired rights for the Uefa Youth League. Canal Plus will show between two and four matches live each week via its main channel and Canal Plus Sport.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand agreed a one-season rights deal, covering the 2015-16 campaign, with New Zealand Football for coverage of the domestic top-tier Premiership. Sky will show live coverage of 32 matches.
- **Football:** Australian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports and public-service broadcaster ABC acquired rights for the women's W-League competition. The deals with Football Federation Australia will cover the 2015-16 season. Both broadcasters will show live coverage of the match of the round every Sunday afternoon, plus the W-League semi-finals and grand final.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Lagardère Unlimited, the sports marketing division of conglomerate Lagardère, unified all its agencies – Sportfive, World Sport Group, IEC in Sports, Sports Marketing and Management and Lagardère Unlimited Inc. – under the single commercial brand name of Lagardère Sports and Entertainment.
- BeIN Media Group assumed full control of the beIN Sports channels in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. It acquired the outstanding 50-per-cent shareholdings in the channels from the MP & Silva agency, which entered into a joint venture with the broadcaster in 2013.
- Six UK sports governing bodies renewed a commitment to allow their events to be broadcast on free-to-air television. The national governing bodies of cricket, football, golf, tennis, rugby league and rugby union re-signed the Voluntary Code of Conduct on the Broadcasting of Major Sporting Events, which was first established in 2009. They also committed to allocating up to 30 per cent of their media-rights income towards grassroots projects.
- The Australian Consumer and Competition Commission said that pay-television operator Foxtel's proposed acquisition of a minority stake in commercial broadcaster Ten could reduce competition in the domestic sports-rights market. In June, Foxtel agreed a deal to acquire a 15-per-cent stake in Ten. The regulator is expected to make a final decision on the proposed agreement on October 22.
- Lega Serie A launched a new online streaming service, Serie A TV, to show coverage of the top division of Italian football. The service will be available in Italy for free until the start of October, when it will cost €2 (\$2.26) per match, or €3.99 for a maximum of three matches per round. The new platform will exploit the domestic rights that were unsold following the tender for the 2015-16 to 2017-18 cycle.
- The Ligue de Football Professionnel, which operates the French football league, renewed a production agreement with company HBS for four seasons, from 2016-19 to 2019-20.
- Spanish commercial broadcaster Mediaset was given permission to return to LaLiga top-tier football matches by the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia (CNMC), the country's competition regulator. Mediaset cameras had been banned from LaLiga matches after the broadcaster refused to accept conditions imposed on free-to-air broadcasters regarding limits of 90 seconds per weekend on highlights. LaLiga imposed the restrictions in an effort to protect the rights of public-service broadcaster TVE. Mediaset complained about the award of the rights in August, with the CNMC expected to rule on the matter within three months.

FOOTBALL

- The Mediapro agency was ordered to pay rival Canal Plus €32m (\$35.2m) after a court found that the latter had overpaid on a football rights deal in Spain. The case, which was heard by the International Court of the Paris Commerce Chamber, ruled that pay-television operator Canal Plus was overcharged for its coverage of the Spanish top-tier Primera Liga and the Copa del Rey knockout tournament for the first two seasons of its three-season deal from 2012-13 to 2014-15.
- Jack Warner, a former vice-president at football's global governing body Fifa, generated a profit of at least \$17m (€15m) on World

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from September 10 to 23**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****NFL, Swimming Australia, college basketball, boxing, chess and more**

- **American Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Flow TV acquired NFL rights in the Caribbean for five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20.
- **American Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired NFL rights in the Netherlands in a five-year deal, from 2015 to 2019 (page 2).
- **American Football:** International pay-television broadcaster Eleven Sports Network acquired NFL rights in Poland and Belgium for three years, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 2).
- **American Football:** Spox.com, owned by digital sports media company Perform Group, acquired rights for the NFL in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Spox.com will offer free live streaming of 50 regular-season games during the 2015-16 season (page 1).
- **American Football:** New Zealand public-service broadcaster TVNZ acquired television and online rights for the 2015-16 season of the NFL.
- **Aquatics:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven secured a rights deal with Swimming Australia. The agreement will run for five years, from 2016 to 2020, with the option to extend the arrangement for a further four years.
- **Basketball:** American Sports Network, the college sports platform operated by US television broadcasting company Sinclair Networks Group, agreed a sublicensing deal with US sports broadcaster ESPN for rights to up to 10 men's games from the American Athletic Conference during the 2015-16 academic year.
- **Boxing:** Indian pay-television channel Sony Six sublicensed rights for the Floyd Mayweather Jr. v Andre Berto welterweight fight on September 12 from pay-television broadcaster Fight Sports.
- **Chess:** Norwegian public-service broadcaster NRK acquired rights for the 2015 World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships and the 2016 World Chess Championship. The deal was brokered by the Agon agency on behalf of FIDE, the sport's global governing body.
- **Cricket:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky acquired rights for the England national team's tour of Bangladesh in 2016, including two Tests and three One-Day Internationals (page 2).
- **Cycling:** Norwegian commercial broadcaster TV2 struck a rights and production deal with the International Cycling Union (UCI) for the 2017 UCI Road World Championships. As part of a four-year agreement, from 2017 to 2020, TV2 will serve as host broadcaster of the 2017 championships, which will take place in Bergen, Norway. TV2 will broadcast other UCI events in the track, mountain bike, BMX and cyclo-cross disciplines.
- **Handball:** Italian DIT sports broadcaster Sportitalia acquired exclusive rights for the European Handball Federation Champions League club competition until at least the end of the 2015-16 season.
- **Horse Racing:** Satellite Information Services, a provider of services to the betting and broadcast industries, agreed a five-year deal, from 2018-19 to 2022-23, with Racecourse Media Group, which manages the media rights for 34 UK racecourses. SIS will distribute audiovisual images and data to bookmakers in the UK and Ireland.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** Yaveo, the Spanish-language over-the-top streaming service from pay-television broadcaster DirecTV, struck a deal to stream live coverage of the new Combate Americas series in the US.

Cup media rights that were sold to him for a fraction of their true value. The rights for the 2010 and 2014 World Cups were sold to Warner's Caribbean Football Union in 2005 for \$600,000.

Warner, who was CFU president at the time, sublicensed the rights to his own company, J & D International, which then sold on the rights in 2007 to Jamaica-based SportsMax for between \$18m and \$20m.

- Uruguayan Civil Court Judge Guzmán López asked Full Play to provide a \$1.75m (€1.55m) guarantee before making a decision over whether the Uruguayan Football Association can scrap a rights deal with the agency. Full Play, which has rights for Uruguay national team qualifying matches until 2018, has been implicated in the corruption scandal surrounding football's global governing body Fifa.
- English Premier League executive director Bill Bush criticised European Commission plans to remove geographical barriers to accessing digital content across member countries. Bush said that companies had not shown an interest in pan-European rights.
- The English Premier League agreed a partnership with content and platform security provider Friend MTS in an effort to protect live broadcasts of the club football competition against copyright violations.
- UK pay-television broadcaster Sky and US cross-platform media network Whistle Sports launched a new social media channel dedicated to creating original football content, including programming and video footage. Operating under Sky's 'Soccer AM' brand, the channel will be accessible via multiple platforms worldwide and will have a presence on various social media websites such as Twitter and Facebook as well as video-sharing website YouTube.
- Portuguese media company NOS joined forces with domestic pay-television broadcaster Sport TV and electronics company Samsung to broadcast the Porto v Benfica match from Portugal's top-tier Primeira Liga football club competition in virtual reality. On September 20, viewers wearing Samsung Gear VR virtual reality headsets were able to watch the match at a Samsung store and NOS theatre in Lisbon, Portugal.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from September 10 to 23

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

Formula E, World Touring Cars, Paralympics, Extreme Sailing and more

- **Motorsport:** International sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired rights in Europe for the Formula E Championship electric car-racing series. The deal includes exclusive live coverage of all 11 rounds during the 2015-16 campaign. The deal covers Germany, Poland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, and non-exclusive rights in Iceland.
- **Motorsport:** UK commercial broadcaster ITV renewed a rights deal for Formula E for the 2015-16 season. Digital channels ITV4 and ITV4 HD will show all 11 rounds live, with the season-ending London ePrix to be shown live on the main ITV channel.
- **Motorsport:** UK digital-television channel Quest TV acquired rights for the World Touring Car Championship in a multi-year agreement. Quest TV will show Tuesday evening highlights programmes following each round. The deal was agreed with the championship's promoter, Eurosport Events.
- **Motorsport:** Italian state broadcaster Rai acquired rights for Formula E. The deal will run for two seasons, from 2015-16 to 2016-17.
- **Motorsport:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 agreed a two-year extension to its rights deal for the ADAC GT Masters series, from 2016 to 2017. Sport1 will continue to provide live free-to-air coverage of every race.
- **Paralympic Games:** Brazilian media company Globo acquired rights for the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro. Globo-owned pay-television broadcaster SporTV will show live coverage, highlights and documentaries. Online platforms Globoesporte.com and Sportv.com will also show the Games.
- **Sailing:** Bloomberg EMENA, the European, Middle Eastern and Northern African division of international business news broadcaster Bloomberg, acquired rights for the 2016 Extreme Sailing Series in a deal with production company Sunset+Vine.
- **Sailing:** Chinese IPTV service LeTV acquired rights for the 2016 Extreme Sailing Series in a deal with Sunset+Vine.
- **Skiing:** The Infront Sports & Media agency extended rights partnerships with seven of the sport's national federations covering International Ski Federation World Cup events in Canada, China, Japan, Norway, Russia, South Korea and Spain. The deals will run for six seasons, from 2016 to 2021. Infront will continue to market collective rights for the events across the disciplines of alpine skiing, cross-country, ski jumping, Nordic combined, snowboard and freestyle skiing.
- **Tennis:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC renewed its deal for the Wimbledon Championships for three years, from 2018 to 2020, in an agreement with tournament operator the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club.
- **Tennis:** Pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport renewed exclusive rights for the Australian Open for five years, from 2017 to 2021. The platform-neutral deal covers more than 50 European markets (page 5).

- Uefa, European football's governing body, will stream live coverage of this season's Youth League club competition. Coverage of up to four games per week will be shown on the Uefa.TV channel on video-sharing website YouTube.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- Madison Square Garden Company, which owns US regional pay-television channels MSG Network and MSG Plus along with major league franchises the New York Knicks and the New York Rangers, approved a spin-off of its sports and entertainment businesses from its media division. The new standalone company will be called MSG Networks. Following the spin-off, which is expected to be activated on September 30, Andrea Greenberg will become president and chief executive of MSG Networks, while Bret Richter will join the company as chief financial officer.
- The NFL renewed a deal with digital service provider RR Media for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. RR Media will support digital delivery of live and non-live coverage into Asia, Europe and, for the first time under the new deal, Latin America.
- UK production company Sunset+Vine secured an extension to its production and distribution contract for the Extreme Sailing Series to cover the 2016 season.
- UK horseracing pay-television broadcaster Racing UK renewed a partnership with production company RaceTech for three years, from 2016 to 2018.
- UK pay-television broadcaster Sky assumed full control of Sky Deutschland, which operates in Germany and Austria. Sky sealed the acquisition of the remaining minority shareholdings – approximately four per cent – in Sky Deutschland for €6.68 (\$7.55) per share.
- US television broadcasting company Sinclair Networks Group held talks with Tennis Channel over a potential takeover of the pay-television broadcaster.
- The Pac-12 US collegiate athletic conference rejected a proposal from AT&T that would have allowed the US telco's DirecTV satellite pay-television service to carry coverage of the US college conference. AT&T, which took control of DirecTV this summer, had proposed the broadcaster begin carrying Pac-12 Networks, the pay-television channels dedicated to covering the conference. The Pac-12 walked away from negotiations after AT&T requested an equity stake in the channels.
- Telefónica's director general for Catalunya, Kim Faura, is hopeful the Spanish telco can soon agree a deal for its IPTV platform Movistar TV to carry the beIN Sports channel, despite saying that

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from September 10 to 23

the Mediapro agency – the channel's distributor – is asking for a “very high” carriage fee. Mediapro said that there had been no significant talks with the telco for four weeks.

- Polish pay-television operators NC Plus, East & West, City-Net and Gawex struck deals to carry channels operated by international pay-television broadcaster Eleven Sports Network.
- Sri Lankan pay-television operator Dialog Television agreed a carriage deal with pay-television broadcaster Sony Six, which operates in the Indian subcontinent, for the duration of the 2015 Rugby World Cup.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- Football's world governing body Fifa launched a rights sales process in France for the 2018 and 2022 editions of the World Cup. The rights include the 2019 Women's World Cup in France and the 2017 Confederations Cup. They cover television, IPTV, online, mobile and radio platforms. Bids must be submitted by November 9.
- UK commercial broadcaster ITV will bid to acquire rights for the Olympic Games in 2022 and 2024 in a sublicensing deal with international media and entertainment company Discovery Communications, which operates pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport. UK public-service broadcaster the BBC will also bid for the rights, but commercial broadcaster Channel 4 will not submit an offer.
- Twelve companies expressed an interest in acquiring domestic rights for the DFB-Pokal German knockout club football tournament. A total of seven packages are on offer covering the three seasons from 2016-17 to 2018-19. The rights cover the men's and women's editions of the DFB-Pokal. The sales process is being handled by the Infront Sports & Media agency.
- Sanzar, which operates the Super Rugby franchise-based rugby union competition in South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, is set to unveil a new rights deal in the coming weeks for the next cycle of rights in the tournament's competing countries.
- Austrian public-service broadcaster ORF is considering whether to bid to renew rights in the country for the Formula One motor-racing world championship beyond the end of the 2015 campaign.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The NFL launched a new subscription streaming service, NFL Game Pass, to allow US fans to watch regular-season games that are broadcast on television as soon as they are over.
- Internet video technology provider NeuLion sealed a partnership with the Euroleague to support the club basketball tournament's new digital service. Euroleague TV will provide live and on-demand coverage of the competition worldwide from the start of the 2015-16 campaign.
- Fiba, the international basketball federation, expanded its partnership with Twitter to incorporate the social networking website's live video broadcasting application, Periscope.
- UK commercial broadcaster ITV has agreed a partnership with Transport for London under which the city's commuters will be provided with live news from the 2015 Rugby World Cup. Information from the rugby union tournament in England will be available on digital information boards at more than 180 London Underground and Docklands Light Railway stations.
- The NFL Players' Association launched Athlete Content & Entertainment (Ace Media), a company that will identify and create programming opportunities for the American football league's players. Ace Media will leverage the NFLPA's exclusive group player rights, representing more than 1,800 active players.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- The Fox International Channels (FIC) subsidiary of media company 21st Century Fox appointed Frank Rutten as executive vice-president of its operations in Europe and Africa. Rutten will combine his new role with existing duties as managing director of Fox Sports in the Netherlands. • Theresa Ong will join FIC Asia as its new senior vice-president of affiliate partnerships for Hong Kong and Southeast Asia on October 12. She leaves international media and entertainment company Discovery Networks International, where she served as senior vice-president and general manager for Southeast Asia. • One World Sports hired Hayley Mackay as the North American pay-television broadcaster's new director of production.

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