

FOOTBALL

Nordic deals keep Serie A growing but gap with English and Spanish leagues remains

By Frank Dunne and Robin Jellis

MP & Silva will make a profit of at least 15 per cent on its investment of €185.7m (\$210m) per season in Serie A international rights, according to research conducted in local broadcast markets by *TV Sports Markets*.

With the rights unsold in just one market – Ukraine – the agency appears to be on course to earn upward of €215m per season in the current three-season cycle, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

BeIN Media Group, which operates the beIN Sports pay-television channels, is responsible for about half the total global value, with four separate deals covering: the Middle East and North Africa; the US and Canada; France; and the five markets in Southeast Asia where it formerly had a

joint venture sports channel operation with MP & Silva (see table, page 3).

Roberto Dalmiglio, the agency's chief commercial officer, declined to comment on the figures this week but told *TV Sports Markets*: "We have achieved a very good level of distribution, starting from a point where there was a substantial increase in the rights fee. We are working with the top broadcaster in each market, which confirms that Serie A is still a very good product and very good brand."

The sales keep Serie A ahead of Germany's Bundesliga in terms of international rights value, but well behind England's Premier League and Spain's LaLiga. However, the cycle-on-cycle

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BASKETBALL

Euroleague global income grows by 10%

By Callum McCarthy

The Euroleague will earn a solid increase of about 10 per cent in the value of its global media rights this season, compared to its earnings in 2014-15.

European basketball's top-tier club competition will command about €22m (\$25m) in the 2015-16 season, up from about €20m for the 2014-15 season.

Last season, global media rights income was flat following an increase of 18 per cent from the 2012-13 season, when the rights were worth about €17m.

Increasing the value of its media rights is an essential bargaining chip for the

Euroleague as it faces a threat to its long-term survival from Fiba, the sport's global governing body (see box, page 4).

The structure of the Euroleague's deals in Greece and Turkey is largely responsible for the increase this season.

The number of participating Turkish clubs has increased from three in 2014-15 to four in 2015-16, pushing up the value of the rights. Turkish pay-television operator Digiturk is paying an average of about €3m per season, in a deal running from 2014-15 to 2018-19. But it will pay

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FOOTBALL

Serie A continues growth trend in latest rights cycle

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growth of the German and Spanish leagues is far greater than that of Serie A.

LaLiga enjoyed an increase of 177 per cent in its new cycle, going from €235m per season to €650m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15). The Bundesliga enjoyed a 125-per-cent increase, rising from €71m per season to €160m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:16).

In terms of the minimum guarantee put up by the agency, the value of Serie A rights increased by about 59 per cent from the €117m per season MP & Silva paid in the 2012-13 to 2014-15 cycle. Based on total sales by the agency, the increase is about 43 per cent. MP & Silva is thought to have earned about €150m per season in the last cycle.

The average annual value in the latest cycle may increase in the second and third seasons, for two reasons. First, the deals done in three territories – Cyprus, Malta and Russia – are only for one season, and the agency will be looking for higher fees when it goes back to market. Second, it is expected to add further deals to the two it already has in the booming Chinese market, with online streaming service LeTV Sports and state broadcaster CCTV.

The agency has concluded about 45 deals covering more than 200 territories. In addition to increased fees, it has agreed improved minimum broadcast obligations. In markets where broadcasters have capacity limitations, the agency provides a turnkey solution to stream matches.

Global brands

It is widely accepted in the market – and by Lega Serie A itself – that Italy's top league has fallen behind its main European counterparts as a television product over the last decade. This is due to problems like dilapidated stadiums, crowd violence, match-fixing and other corruption scandals, but also a drain of top players to clubs in England and Spain.

OTT success brings broadcasters back to the table

MP & Silva's deals in the Nordics with Modern Times Group for rights to the Italian, French and Spanish top tiers was the last major agreement in the current Serie A cycle.

Multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster MTG acquired rights across Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden in four separate deals covering the rest of the 2015-16 season through to 2017-18.

The total value of the deals is thought to be between €15m (\$17m) per season and €17m per season, with Spain's LaLiga accounting for about 60 per cent of the value, Serie A about 35 per cent and France's Ligue 1 about five per cent.

The region was one of the most difficult markets for the agency. Bidding was conditioned by a number of factors.

First, broadcasters did not want to commit funds to other leagues until deals for England's Premier League had been completed, which was not until the first week of October (*TV Sports Markets* 19:18).

Second, the previous Serie A deal in the region was agreed when Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimović still played for AC Milan, which helped push up the value of the rights in Sweden, the most valuable single market. He left shortly afterwards to play for Ligue 1 club Paris Saint-Germain.

Third, pay-television broadcaster C More was considered to have overpaid last time, as a response to having lost Premier League rights. It paid €18m per season for LaLiga rights and €12m per season for Serie A (*TV Sports Markets* 18:13). Local experts thought it would be impossible for the agency to maintain the value of Serie A in current market conditions.

MP & Silva's strategy for the region was twofold. First, it bundled Serie A with other attractive football. It acquired LaLiga rights in the region from the Mediapro agency for about €13.3m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

Second, it agreed temporary OTT streaming deals for both LaLiga and Serie A with several local publishers.

These included: Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet*; Danish football publication *Tipsbladet*; the online platforms of Norwegian football service *Josimar*; the VG newspaper; the sporten.com website; and the Norwegian supporter groups of Real Madrid and Inter Milan.

OTT coverage was available for free for the first five weeks of the season, but the agency intended to switch to a pay-model after this month's break for international matches.

The deals served two purposes. They maintained exposure of the leagues in the region and showed broadcasters alternatives were available should no linear deals be found once the Premier League auction was completed.

Konstantinos Filippas, managing director in Europe for MP & Silva, told *TV Sports Markets*: "The broadcasters did not know that we would launch an OTT service. When they saw that, and saw the numbers of viewers, they realised that the only way to stop us going down this route was to pay a premium price."

Once talks with broadcasters resumed, MTG made an initial offer for some of the territories, which during negotiation was extended to cover all four. Filippas said MTG "made the most appealing offer in each market".

Roberto Dalmiglio, the agency's chief commercial officer, added: "Scandinavia was about defending the market position of the company in the region. We envisaged that the loss of Ibrahimović – one of the few real football icons – from Serie A since we last went to market could have weakened our package. We looked at how we could strengthen it. So we acquired LaLiga."

He said that the timing of the Madrid derby between Atlético and Real, on October 4, was beneficial. "It showed that either you pay or you won't get the top matches and premium properties."

He said MTG were "incredibly knowledgeable" and had information about the numbers of unique users for matches that were shown on the various OTT platforms. ■

Serie A international rights deals in selected territories, 2015-16 to 2017-18

Territory	Buyer	Per-season value (€m)
Middle East and North Africa	BeIN Media Group	55
Latin America (including Brazil) and the Caribbean	Fox Sports Latin America	26
US and Canada	BeIN Media Group	24
France	BeIN Media Group	18
Japan	Perform, Sky PerfecTV, NHK	17
Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei and the Philippines	BeIN Media Group	9
China	CCTV, LeTV Sports	6.5
Nordics	Modern Times Group	6
Spain	BeIN Media Group	6
Sub-Saharan Africa	StarTimes	5.3
UK & Ireland	BT Sport	4.7
Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia	Arena Sport	4.5
Malaysia & Singapore	Eleven Sports Network	4
Greece	OTE	3.5
Belgium	Eleven Sports Network	3
Romania & Hungary	Digi Sport	3
Albania & Kosovo	Digitalb	3
Netherlands	Eurosport	2.1
Germany & Austria	Perform	1.5
Poland	Eleven Sports Network	1.5
Portugal	BTV	1.5
Czech Republic and Slovakia	Sport1	1.2
Indian subcontinent	MSM	0.9
Israel	Charlton	0.5
Cyprus ¹	CyTA	0.3
		208
Source: TV Sports Markets Rights Tracker ¹ One-season deal		

Dalmiglio said there was little an agency could do to change underlying structural problems, such as the stadiums, but added that in areas where the agency could make a difference it had done so. "In the last five years, we have really worked hard to make sure that the product looks good", he said.

"Serie A was one of the first leagues to guarantee full delivery in HD to all its foreign broadcasters. Recently we have improved, and we will keep improving, the support programming side."

In other areas, the agency was lobbying the league and the clubs to make changes. "We have brought to the attention of the league the potential benefit of playing over Christmas. That is an obvious

marketing tool and hopefully in the future this will be unlocked. [The second tier] Serie B has already started to play around Christmas and New Year."

He said the league still had seven or eight clubs that were genuine global brands, evidenced by the demand in Scandinavia to stream Serie A matches.

"For Spain, Real Madrid and Barcelona had huge numbers of unique users. For Serie A, we had seven or eight teams delivering big numbers. This shows that Serie A still delivers a number of brands that are widely recognised by fans." ■

[www. For the full interview with Roberto Dalmiglio and Konstantinos Filippas, visit our website.](#)

BASKETBALL

Euroleague manages to preserve value in two tricky markets

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more this season due to the inclusion of a fourth club, Darüşşafaka Doğuş Istanbul (*TV Sports Markets* 18:11).

The deal in Greece with the Asset Ogilvy agency runs from 2011-12 to 2015-16 and is worth an average of about €4.3m per season. The deal also rises incrementally. It has since been extended to cover the 2016-17 and 2017-18 seasons (*TV Sports Markets* 17:14).

The Euroleague this month secured a single-season deal in Russia with Gazprom Media, and a five-season deal covering the Baltic and Nordic regions with previous rights-holder, multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group.

Russia falls slightly

The Euroleague rights fee in Russia is set to drop slightly in 2015-16, but it and its clubs could offset this with increased sponsorship revenue in future.

The deal with Gazprom Media covers the 2015-16 season only. The media group, a subsidiary of state-owned energy company Gazprom, will exploit the rights on its pay-television platform NTV Plus, which will show at least one match per week. It will cover production costs of the home matches of all Russian clubs.

Free-to-air terrestrial channel Match TV, also owned by Gazprom Media, will show all matches involving Russian clubs as well as the final stages of the tournament. It will broadcast from November 1, when the Rossiya 2 channel is rebranded.

Gazprom Media will pay an initial fee in the low hundreds of thousands of euros per season, but this could rise to just under €500,000 depending on how far Russian clubs progress in the competition. CSKA Moscow, Russia's top club, is one of the stronger clubs in Europe and has performed well in the past.

However, the Euroleague will earn less

Euroleague future under threat as Fiba fights for control

The Euroleague's €22m (\$25m) media rights income for 2015-16 is less than half what the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) believes it is worth, and the power struggle between the league and the sport's global governing body has intensified.

The competition was created in 2000 as a breakaway from Fiba's own club competitions. It has never been authorised by Fiba, which is now attempting to wrest back control of pan-European club basketball.

During the summer off-season, Fiba sent a proposal to the top eight Euroleague clubs – Anadolu Istanbul, Barcelona, CSKA Moscow, Fenerbahçe, Maccabi Tel Aviv, Olympiacos, Panathinaikos and Real Madrid – encouraging them to join a new Fiba-run European club basketball competition.

In its proposal, Fiba claimed a new competition, which may begin as early as the 2016-17 season, could earn about €50m per season in media rights income – about 127 per cent more than the Euroleague currently earns.

Fiba believes the Euroleague has not adequately developed European basketball over the last 15 years, and points to slow growth in its media rights income over the last decade. It highlights the fact the global per-season value of the competition's media rights has grown by only €4m since 2008-09.

TV Sports Markets understands Fiba has offered the clubs a 16-per-cent stake in its competition. The Euroleague is wholly-owned by its participating clubs, which take between 70 and 75 per cent of all revenue it generates.

It is unclear what share of income the

clubs would earn under Fiba's proposal, but this is thought to be a key factor in negotiations. The eight clubs put the proposal on hold as they wanted Fiba to approach all Euroleague clubs. They also felt it was made too close to the start of the 2015-16 Euroleague season.

Fiba is scheduled to meet with representatives from all Euroleague clubs on November 3, where the proposal will be discussed further. It is believed Euroleague representatives have also been invited to attend the meeting.

Fiba is thought to have the backing of the Union of European Leagues of Basketball (Uleb), which represents Europe's domestic competitions. Fiba and Uleb share the views that the Euroleague's private-entry qualification system is unfair, and that it has had a negative impact on the popularity and growth of domestic basketball leagues.

Euroleague matches run on Thursdays and Fridays, while domestic league matches mostly take place at the weekend. Uleb believes this encroaches on its schedule. Fiba intends to better accommodate European leagues as part of its revamped calendar.

Fiba and Uleb are also lobbying clubs to cease their participation in the second-tier Eurocup, also run by the Euroleague, from the 2016-17 season. Instead, Fiba and Uleb want clubs to participate in Fiba's new European club competition, the Fiba Europe Cup, which is currently the third tier of European club basketball.

This competition will begin its inaugural season next week without the clubs currently playing in the Euroleague or Eurocup. ■

than it did in its previous one-season deal covering the 2014-15 season.

In that deal, with NTV Plus and state-owned free-to-air broadcaster VGTRK, the Euroleague earned no rights fee. Instead, the competition earned €550,000 from advertising and sponsorship revenue around Euroleague programming. This was half the value of its deal with NTV Plus from 2011-12 to 2013-14, worth €1.1m per season.

The Euroleague opted for a rights-fee based deal for the 2015-16 season, as the calculation and collection of revenue from its deal in 2014-15 is understood to have been very complex.

The Euroleague had very few options. The Russian government has consolidated sports broadcasting under the Gazprom Media banner, meaning there is currently no competition for rights. The Euroleague has chosen a one-season deal for 2015-16

in the hope the market will become more competitive.

One positive from the new deal is the increased free-to-air exposure the competition will receive. Last season, only the Euroleague's Final Four was shown free-to-air – on Sport 1, VGTRK's digital-terrestrial channel. In 2015-16, between one and three matches per week will be shown on terrestrial channel Match TV. The Euroleague is hoping to exploit free-to-air coverage to generate increased income from sponsors.

Baltic/Nordic security

In the Baltic and Nordic regions the Euroleague renewed its deal with MTG, which will exploit the rights on its pay-television Viasat Sport channels.

The deal, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, is worth an average of €1.1m per season. MTG holds rights in the Baltic territories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and the Nordic territories of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

The vast majority of the value lies in Lithuania, home to BC Žalgiris. BC Žalgiris holds an A-licence for the tournament, guaranteeing its participation in the competition.

The Euroleague considered agreeing single-market deals in Lithuania and Finland, but was uncertain whether it would receive coverage in the other territories covered by the MTG deal. Basketball is not a popular sport in territories such as Norway and Sweden.

The latest deal means the Euroleague will receive the same average per-season income it earned from its previous deal, also with MTG, which ran from 2010-11 to 2014-15. That deal included bonus payments when more than one Lithuanian team participated in the competition. This occurred in four of the five seasons covered by the deal, bringing the competition's income up to an average of about €1.1m per season.

In the new deal, the Euroleague opted to receive a flat fee with no bonus payments as it is unlikely a second Lithuanian club will participate. The Euroleague is said to be happy with the outcome as it has both retained and guaranteed its income, despite offering less locally-relevant content. ■

BASKETBALL

Telefónica pays premium to take Liga to pay-TV

By Richard Welbirg

Spain's top-tier basketball league, the Liga ACB, this week defended its decision to switch coverage exclusively to pay-television from next season following a three-season deal with telco Telefónica.

Telefónica earlier this month agreed to pay €46m (\$52m) in cash and contra for the rights to the league and the Supercopa and Copa del Rey cup competitions, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Until now, coverage has been shared by state broadcaster TVE and regional free-to-air channels.

Mario Hernando, Liga ACB's director of media, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "Technological developments mean that finally the pay-television time has arrived in Spain. Pay-TV is no longer a niche market. It has accumulated 4m subscribers and continues to record strong growth."

Telefónica's rights are non-exclusive in the first season as the league has an existing deal with long-term partner TVE. TVE's current deal covers 2014-15 and 2015-16; it pays about €600,000 per season, and allows league sponsors advertising airtime worth between €2.5m and €3m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:18).

In addition to its deal with TVE, the league had a three-season deal with Forta, the consortium of regional public-service broadcasters. The deal ran from 2012-13 to 2014-15 and was worth €1.2m in its final season. On a per-season average cash basis, the Telefónica deal is about 252 per cent greater than the league's total media rights income in the 2014-15 season.

Telefónica was willing to pay a sizeable sum for three reasons. First, the property will work well alongside its existing deals for NBA and Euroleague basketball.

Second, basketball is one of the most popular sports in Spain behind football, and a useful investment for the telco to help drive fibre broadband take-up.

Third, it hopes to harness interest following the Spanish national team's

victory in EuroBasket 2015.

The league will receive much greater promotion from Telefónica than it received from TVE.

Its coverage will also grow significantly. For the first time, all nine weekly matches will be produced for live broadcast.

Telefónica will show four matches live per week on its Movistar Plus platform in the first season.

TVE will continue to show one live match exclusively in 2015-16, which will be shown on Movistar Plus from 2016-17. The remaining matches will be available on the Liga ACB website and Movistar's Yomvi video-on-demand platform.

Spanish law mandates the final of the Copa del Rey knockout competition be shown on free-to-air television. The league decided the Supercopa match between the Liga ACB and Copa del Rey champions should also be retained for free-to-air. The non-exclusive rights will be sublicensed by the telco, but the league will have final say on which broadcaster will show matches.

Income

The impact of the new deal on the league's bottom line will not be as dramatic as the headline value would suggest. One Spanish expert said the league's income, on average, would be €5m higher in each season of the new deal.

Production costs in the new deal will be split between Movistar Plus and the league. Until now all production costs have been covered by TVE and Forta. One source said this would cost the league between €3m and €4m per season.

It must also compensate telco Orange, whose €1m-per-season sponsorship deal was due to expire at the end of 2015-16. The league has to cancel the deal as the rival telcos cannot be concurrent sponsors.

Telefónica's offer is thought to be split as follows: €12m in the 2015-16 season, with €4m in cash and €8m contra; €15m in 2016-17, with €7m in cash and €8m contra; and €19m in 2017-18, with €8m in cash and €11m contra.

Services in kind include airtime for the league's other sponsors, promotional spend on the league and financial support to education programmes. ■

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

FOOTBALL

Uefa secures increase from age-old BBC/ITV alliance

By Robin Jellis

After protracted negotiations over a UK deal for Euro 2016 and 2020, Uefa last week signed off on a valuable deal with long-term partners the BBC and ITV.

The deal is worth about £150m (€203m/\$230m), split evenly between the two tournaments. The cost is to be split equally between public-service broadcaster the BBC and commercial broadcaster ITV.

Talks have been ongoing for months. Uefa, European football's governing body, issued a tender for the rights on November 19 last year. Bids were due by December 17. The CAA Eleven agency sold the rights on behalf of Uefa.

Local experts say the delay has been a sticking point over the price. The BBC and ITV have had a monopoly over European Championship and World Cup rights for many years. As a result, both were unwilling to pay a big increase in the face of limited competition.

The new deal is a good result for Uefa. It has secured an increase of about 34 per cent on the value of the Euro 2012 rights, which were worth about £56m.

Despite the overall increase, Uefa has suffered a cut in the price per match. The 51 matches at Euro 2016 will be worth about £1.47m each, while the 31 matches at Euro 2012 were worth £1.81m each.

UK listed-events legislation stipulates that all European Championship matches must be shown free-to-air, limiting the number of potential bidders.

Commercial broadcaster Channel 4 seriously considered bidding. It eventually declined as it does not have a wider football portfolio. Fellow commercial broadcaster Channel 5 did not bid.

For Euro 2020, which will be hosted across Europe, the BBC and ITV will share production costs to the seven matches which will be held in the UK. Matches are expected to cost about £200,000 each to produce. ■

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

UFC opens up Africa by agreeing landmark Fox deal

By Callum McCarthy

The Ultimate Fighting Championship last month signed off its first English-language broadcast deal in sub-Saharan Africa, plugging a large gap in its global footprint.

The UFC promotion agreed a three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018, with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Africa. The deal is worth an average of about \$450,000 (€395,000) per year. The broadcaster will pay about \$400,000 in 2016, rising to about \$500,000 in 2018.

It will begin broadcasting UFC events on October 24, beginning with a live broadcast of the UFC Fight Night event in Dublin, Ireland. Fox is understood to be paying a small rights fee to show coverage for the remainder of 2015.

Its deal in Africa dovetails with the UFC's seven-year deal with the Fox network in the US, which also ends at the end of 2018. The US deal is worth \$90m per year from 2012 to 2018 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:4).

The UFC also held discussions in the region with Fox's pay-television rivals SuperSport and StarTimes, but described a deal with Fox as "a long time coming".

James Elliott, UFC's vice president of Europe, Middle East and Africa, told *TV Sports Markets*: "We have a relationship with Fox in America and parts of Europe. They understand the brand, the sport and the fans. Having someone who can hit the ground running is fantastic for us."

Fox Sports has UFC rights in Italy and the Netherlands for 2015 and 2016, and is thought to be in discussions over a deal covering Greece and Turkey. The broadcaster also has a deal across Asia, excluding Chinese Taipei, the Philippines and South Korea.

Content

The UFC will provide Fox with 100 hours of ancillary content in Africa, but Fox is yet to decide whether it will broadcast the UFC's *Ultimate Fighter* reality show. Fox

has not made a commitment to broadcast every event live as it cannot guarantee the UFC will take precedence over its other live programming.

The broadcaster will not hold rights to preliminary fights shown before its main broadcast – these will remain the exclusive property of UFC Fight Pass, the UFC's online subscription service.

The deal covers English-, French- and Portuguese-language rights to a minimum of 45 UFC events per year. The French-language rights are non-exclusive as events will also be shown by basic-tier channel Kombat Sport, owned by telco Altice.

Fox will immediately offer programming in English and French, and hopes to roll out Portuguese-language programming by the end of 2016.

The deal covers all of sub-Saharan Africa, but Fox currently operates in only 25 territories. These include the biggest markets: Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.

Extreme potential

The UFC has been keen to hold an event in South Africa since 2012, but according to the promotion this is now unlikely to happen in the near future. Its schedule for 2016 will not include an event in Africa.

The UFC earmarked South Africa as a target market as it was keen to build on the success of the Extreme Fighting Championships, Africa's top mixed martial arts promotion.

During 2012, the EFC commanded audiences of up to 1.8m on South African commercial broadcaster e.tv. The EFC is shown across sub-Saharan Africa by pay-television broadcaster SuperSport in a three-year deal, from 2013 to 2015, and is currently in negotiations to extend the deal. EFC programming has delivered SuperSport a different demographic.

Cairo Howarth, president of the EFC, told *TV Sports Markets*: "The SuperSport audience, especially in South Africa, is usually a white male over the age of 50. The EFC can attract a younger, more diverse audience."

Football is by far the most popular sport across the region, but experts believe mixed martial arts has untapped potential in sub-Saharan Africa, and that the deal will help Fox expand its audience beyond traditional sports fans. ■

TENNIS

Talks over WTA deal in France at an advanced stage

By Robin Jellis

The Perform Group is in advanced talks over a deal for Women's Tennis Association rights in France from 2017, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports is said to be bidding aggressively. Incumbent rights-holder, basic-tier sports broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport, is thought to be keen to renew its deal. Sports broadcaster Eurosport is also interested.

One source close to the negotiations said it may take weeks for a deal to be signed off. The departure of WTA chief executive Stacey Allaster earlier this month may be a factor. The WTA is signatory to all media rights deals.

MCS holds rights in France as part of a wider four-year deal, from 2013 to 2016, worth about €3.5m (\$4m) per year. The deal also covers Belgium, Israel, Luxembourg, Portugal and selected territories in sub-Saharan Africa. Rights in France are worth about €3m per year.

Any new deal is likely to be for five or 10 years – from 2017 to 2021, or 2017 to 2026. The rights fee is expected to rise sharply due to the increased number of matches available. Perform will produce all 2,000 WTA matches per year from 2017, up from about 750 matches per year in the current cycle.

Perform holds global WTA media rights in a 10-year deal, from 2017 to 2026, worth \$52.5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:23).

Acquiring WTA rights would be a logical move for beIN which already has a strong tennis portfolio in France. It holds rights to ATP World Tour 500 and World Tour Masters 1000 men's events, the Wimbledon championships and rights to all International Tennis Federation events (*TV Sports Markets* 17:21; 19:3).

If MCS were to lose the rights it would be a blow to the broadcaster – the WTA is the bedrock of the coverage on its MCS Tennis channel. ■

HORSE RACING

RMG betting deal provides big uplift and avoids leakage

By Robin Jellis

Racecourse Media Group's betting rights deal with Satellite Information Services will provide UK racecourses with a significant uplift in rights fees, while also ensuring more of its revenues will be distributed directly to the racecourses.

The deal with SIS, agreed last month, will run for five years, from May 2018 to April 2023. The deal will bring in up to £76m (€103m/\$117m).

This would be an increase of close to 53 per cent on the current value of the rights, which are held by Turf TV. In 2014, Turf TV delivered licence fees of £49.8m to RMG (*TV Sports Markets* 19:10).

The provision of broadcast content to bookmakers is RMG's biggest revenue stream. RMG distributes media rights on behalf of 34 UK racecourses.

The rights for a new cycle were tendered by RMG in April, with a deadline for bids of May 22. One source said there were no responses to the tender, with bookmakers choosing not to acquire the rights directly from RMG.

RMG had opened the process to bookmakers as many now have their own channels. RMG did not want to award its rights exclusively to one bookmaker as it wants coverage of its events to be distributed as widely as possible.

SIS will distribute content from RMG racecourses to bookmakers on behalf of RMG. Both SIS and RMG have said content will be made available more cheaply to bookmakers than in the past.

Bookmakers currently pay about £8,000 per shop per year to access Turf TV, which is part-owned by the 34 RMG racecourses. Turf TV is distributed to nearly all the 10,000 bookmakers in the UK and Ireland.

SIS is expected to offer RMG content to bookmakers for about £7,600 per shop per year. If all bookmakers in the UK and Ireland were to carry the content, it could bring in up to £76m per year.

The racecourses are guaranteed to earn more from May 2018 for two reasons. First, bookmaker Paddy Power's contribution will increase. It was the first bookmaker to agree to carry Turf TV, and as a result struck a discounted deal worth about £2,000 per shop per year. It will pay a much higher price from May 2018.

Second, RMG has also ensured that more of its revenue will be distributed to the racecourses by agreeing a deal with SIS rather than Turf TV.

Turf TV is operated by Amalgamated Racing, a joint venture owned 50:50 by Racecourse Media Services (the 34 racecourses whose rights are distributed by RMG) and media company Timeweave.

Of the revenue generated by Turf TV in 2014, a dividend of about £8m was paid to Timeweave. The horse racing industry has come in for criticism for this so-called leakage of money from the sport.

Losing the contract is a blow to Turf TV: coverage of RMG racecourses forms the basis of its coverage. Its main remaining content is Irish greyhound racing, which is of limited interest.

Free-to-air broadcast rights

RMG is also selling its domestic free-to-air broadcast rights. These are currently held by commercial broadcaster Channel 4 in a four-year deal, from 2013 to 2016, worth about £5m per year.

Channel 4 is reported to be facing strong competition for the rights from rival commercial broadcaster ITV. RMG is open to selling rights for individual events to different broadcasters.

This means races from big racecourses such as Aintree, Ascot, Cheltenham and Epsom – which command the bulk of the value – could be sold separately from other RMG racecourses.

Local experts say ITV may bid for marquee events in conjunction with sports broadcaster Eurosport, owned by media and entertainment company Discovery Communications. The Grand National and the Derby are covered by listed-events legislation and must be shown free-to-air.

The rights fee is expected to increase due to the level of competition. The last time the rights were sold the only rival to Channel 4 was public-service broadcaster the BBC. ■

FOOTBALL

Euro 2016 grows reach with TF1 sublicensing deal

By Robin Jellis

French commercial broadcaster TF1 has finalised a deal worth about €15m (\$17m) to show a further 11 matches from Euro 2016, enhancing the tournament's free-to-air reach.

The sublicensing deal was agreed this month with pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports, which has the rights in France to show all matches.

There were two rounds of bidding. Public-service broadcaster France Télévisions is understood to have bid strongly, having recouped some of its rights fee for the Olympic Games. It paid €171m for the four Games from 2014 to 2020 and in June agreed a sublicensing deal with pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus worth about €30m for the 2016 and 2020 Games (*TV Sports Markets* 19:12).

Uefa, European football's governing body, is earning a total of €110m from Euro 2016 in the French market.

BeIN is paying €60m to show coverage of all matches from the tournament. It will have exclusive rights to 18 of the 51 matches at Euro 2016. TF1 and fellow commercial broadcaster M6 each has a deal with Uefa worth €25m for non-exclusive rights to 11 matches. These matches will also be shown by beIN.

The latest deal with TF1 means 33 matches from Euro 2016, which will be hosted in France, will be available on free-to-air television. Uefa and the French government were keen for as many matches as possible to be made available to a wide audience. BeIN Sports currently has about 2.5m subscribers in France.

TF1's latest deal is worth less than the other two free-to-air packages because fewer big matches are included.

The deal covers six group-stage matches, four round-of-16 matches, and one quarter-final. The other two packages contain matches of greater importance, including French national team matches and more knockout matches. ■

FOOTBALL

CSM taking big gamble with massive Super League deal

By Richard Welbirg

China Sports Media's huge deal with the Chinese Super League is a gamble on the expansion of the country's digital rights market and the government's plans to build football into a major national sport.

Last month the agency won the CSL tender for production and global broadcast rights with an offer of CNY8bn (€1.11bn/\$1.26bn) over five years from 2016 to 2020, or CNY1.6bn per year – the biggest rights deal ever signed in China.

CSM will pay CNY1bn in each of the first two years, then CNY2bn in each of the three remaining years. Experts have questioned how CSM can refinance its investment purely from distribution.

Even in the first year, its fee will be more than 14 times the CNY70m the league earned in 2015 from deals with state broadcaster CCTV, provincial sports channels and new media companies. The league's entire commercial income in 2014 is said to have been CNY440m.

CSM's distribution options will be limited by the conditions of the deal, which mandate that matches are shown on CCTV, at least 12 of the local channels of the 16 CSL clubs, and at least two new media platforms.

Media rights revenue from CCTV and the provincial sports channels is small and slow-growing. In comparison, media rights spending by new media companies has exploded over the past 18 months. Fee growth can only be driven by this sector.

Six major new media companies – LeTV Sports, NetEase, PPTV, Sina, Sohu and Tencent – had deals to show CSL coverage in 2015. Sina paid about CNY7m and fees for the others are believed to be similar.

The quality of the CSL and of its broadcast coverage have been improving, but new media companies are thought unlikely to increase their year-on-year spend to the extent required for CSM to break even in 2016.

CSM is thought likely to adopt the model by which the Super Sports Media Group sells England's Premier League in China: agreeing single-season deals with new media companies so the market's rapid growth can be factored into rights fees.

The entire Chinese sports market was worth \$63bn in 2014. The Chinese State Council estimates it will be worth \$790bn by 2025. Football, in particular, is set to grow massively, as a consequence of a government reform programme unveiled in March to promote the sport at all levels.

Investment

CSM is backed by private equity firm China Media Capital. CMC's investments include a jointly-held five-per-cent stake in the Infront Sports & Media agency, film and television content partnerships, and smart TV manufacture.

CSM could, in theory, use the CSL rights to drive its own subscription streaming service, or even a hardware-based content business like PPTV and LeTV Sports. The consensus is that subscription models will eventually be necessary to sustain new media companies' investment in sports rights.

However, it seems unlikely that CSM will go down this route, for two reasons. First, CSM's other major property is Chinese Football Association rights, which it acquired in May this year in a four-season production and distribution deal, from 2015-16 to 2018-19, worth CNY70m. General manager Zhao Jun said at the time that CSM would not exploit the rights through a pay model.

Second, most experts believe it will take years to overcome Chinese consumers' expectations of watching sport for free.

Existing deals

The CSL's single deal with CSM replaces the patchwork of agreements in place up to 2015.

CCTV broadcasts up to four CSL matches per week on its CCTV 5 and CCTV 5 Plus sports channels. It paid between CNY5m and CNY8m for rights covering the 2015 season.

Sina held exclusive new media rights to the league for six years, from 2008 until 2013. Thereafter, direct deals were agreed

between the league and four internet portals: NetEase, Sina, Sohu and Tencent.

The league has an existing relationship with CSM. The agency had a five-year deal, from 2011 to 2015, to distribute rights to provincial sports channels and, in 2014 and 2015, to other new media companies including LeTV Sports and PPTV. It paid a minimum guarantee, thought to be less than CNY5m, and shared revenue above this with the league.

Deals with the major provincial sports broadcasters can earn up to CNY1m to CNY2m per year. The broadcasters show home and away matches of their local teams, plus important matches where scheduling allows. The three largest – Guangdong TV, Beijing TV and Shanghai Media Group – also cover production costs of local teams' home games.

CSL production costs are estimated at \$50,000 per match. CSM will produce about 170 of the 224 annual matches under the new deal.

Tender

Rights were sold through a formal tender for the first time. It was run by the league executive, which has gained greater independence from the CFA since the association's relationship with the government was restructured in August.

The league invited expressions of interest in early September and received eight responses, from: international agencies IMG Events & Media and Infront Sports & Media; CSM; CCTV; provincial broadcasters Great Sports and Guangdong TV; production company Beijing Evertop; and distributor Double Edge.

The first six were invited to present financial terms to the league on September 25, but IMG and Infront were disqualified from the proceedings shortly beforehand. The league decided that neither agency satisfied its production requirement of at least 200 domestic or international football matches over at least 3 years.

The remaining four bidders presented financial terms. Great Sports bid CNY4.3bn, CCTV bid CNY4bn and Guangdong TV bid CNY1.75bn.

CSM's bid received a majority of club votes. A minority backed Great Sports. There was no support for CCTV or Guangdong TV. ■

TVSportsMarkets RIGHTSTRACKER

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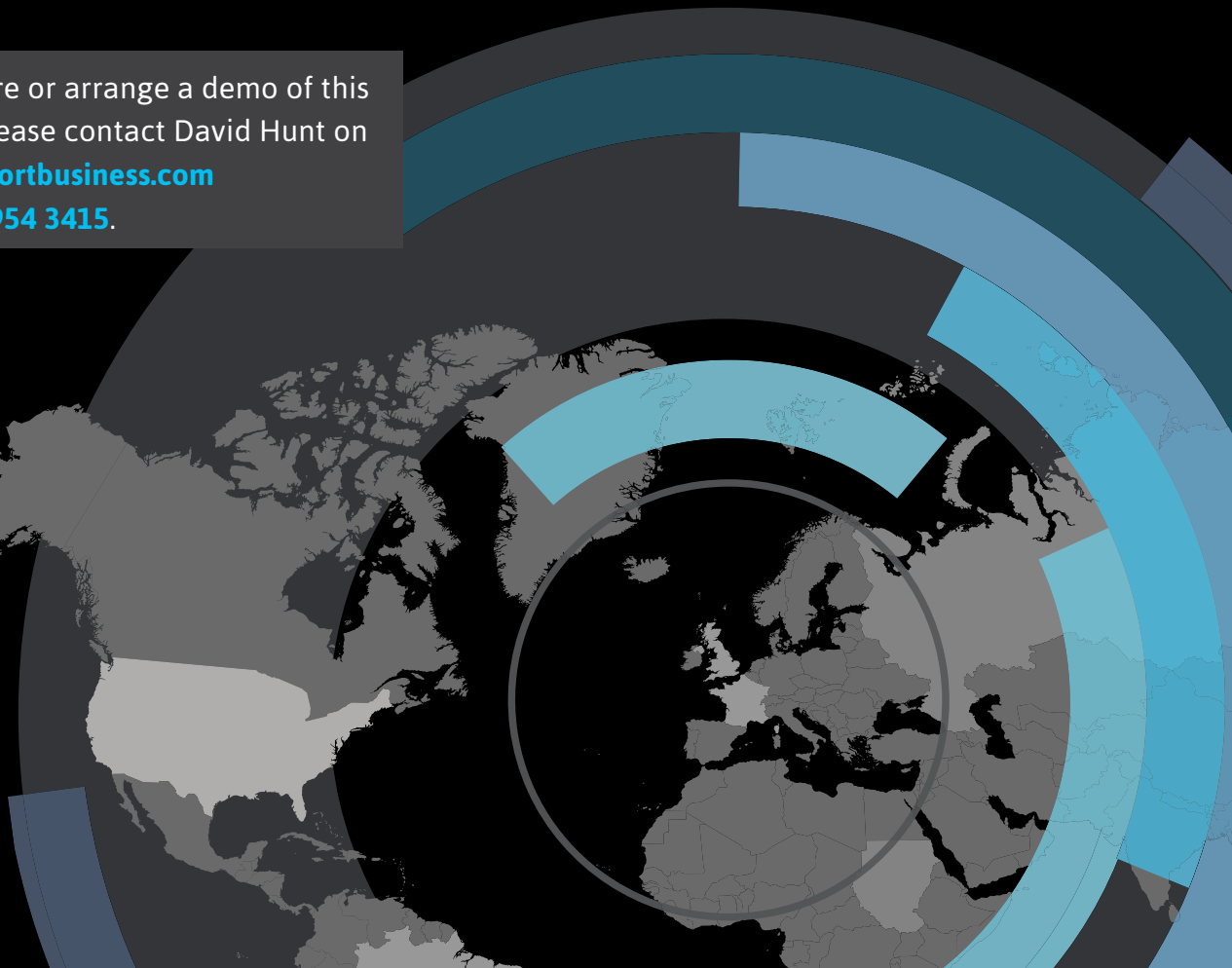
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 8 to 21

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: Euro 2020, LaLiga, Serie A, Ligue 1, Premier League and more

- **Football:** Public-service broadcaster the BBC and commercial broadcaster ITV acquired rights in the UK for the next two editions of the Uefa European Championship national team tournament in 2016 and 2020 (page 5).
- **Football:** Modern Times Group, the multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster, acquired exclusive rights across the Nordic region for Spain's LaLiga and Italy's Serie A. The rights cover Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden and will run for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Under the agreement with the MP & Silva agency, MTG also acquired exclusive rights for France's Ligue 1 in Denmark and Norway for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and in Finland and Sweden for two seasons, from 2016-17 to 2017-18 (page 1).
- **Football:** International pay-television broadcaster DirecTV extended its deal with the English Premier League in Latin America, excluding Brazil, by three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19.
- **Football:** Multinational telco Cable & Wireless Communications agreed an exclusive deal in 32 Caribbean territories for the English Premier League covering three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19.
- **Football:** The Fox Sports division of US network Fox expanded a deal for the German Bundesliga. From January 30, Fox Sports will show live multi-platform coverage of eight additional games on Saturdays through to the end of the 2015-16 season.
- **Football:** The Perform Group acquired digital clip rights in the Netherlands for the Uefa Europa League club competition. The deal will run for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Highlights will be shown on Perform's ePlayer service.
- **Football:** The B4 Capital agency acquired international rights for games featuring Bahrain's national team. The deal covers 2018 Fifa World Cup qualifiers, 2019 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers and home friendly matches.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Italian media company Mediaset denied any wrongdoing after details emerged about an investigation into the allocation of rights for Italy's Serie A over three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The investigation is focusing on sublicensing deals between Sky Italia and Mediaset Premium's parent company, RTI. Infront Sports & Media, Serie A's exclusive adviser for national and international rights, confirmed that the prosecutor of Milan was investigating Marco Bogarelli, the president of the agency's Italy division, and associates Giuseppe Ciochetti and Andrea Locatelli. Tax consultant Andrea Baroni was arrested on charges of criminal association aimed at money laundering and tax evasion in relation to the case, but Infront denied having had a business relationship with him. Documents were also confiscated from Lega Serie A offices and several clubs, including Genoa and Lazio, as part of the investigation by the financial police, the Guardia di Finanza.
- Conmebol, the South American football confederation, took control of the broadcast and sponsorship rights for the 2016 Copa América Centenario national team tournament after curtailing a partnership with Datisa, the joint venture established by the Traffic, Full Play and Torneos agencies. Three of the main stakeholders in Datisa – Alejandro Burzaco, Hugo Jinkis and Mariano Jinkis – were among those indicted by the US in May during the crackdown on corruption in world football.
- José Hawilla, the founder of the Traffic agency, admitted to a judge in December 2014 that he paid bribes regularly from as early as 1991, according to unsealed court papers. Hawilla pleaded guilty at the hearing to four corruption-related counts. He told US District Judge Raymond Dearie in New York that bribes had been necessary to secure contracts for Traffic. The earliest alleged bribe involved "an official associated with" football's global governing body Fifa for rights to the Copa América national team tournament, Hawilla said. Hawilla will forfeit over \$151m (€133m) and sell his shareholding in Traffic under an agreement with US authorities.
- International sports broadcaster ESPN joined beIN Media Group and pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports in submitting investment proposals for Canal del Fútbol, the broadcaster that has exclusive rights to domestic club football in Chile, according to Chilean newspaper *Diario Financiero*. The Chilean Football Association (ANFP) has an 80-per-cent shareholding in the channel, with Jorge Claro controlling the remaining stake. ESPN and Fox are interested in acquiring the ANFP's shareholding, while beIN is seeking outright ownership.
- Media company Liberty Global acquired a stake in London-based digital media company Copa90, which specialises in producing football content. The *Financial Times* newspaper said Liberty had invested £7m (€9.5m/\$10.7m), along with venture capital fund eVentures, for a combined 14-per-cent stake in Bigballs Media, Copa90's parent company. The deal includes an option to make a further investment in six months.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- Endemol Beyond USA, the digital division of media group Endemol Shine North America, launched Smasher, a digital channel dedicated to eSports and gaming. Smasher's video content will feature eSports competition show *Legends of Gaming* as well as seven original series. It will be available across more than 20 platforms in the US.
- The NBC Sports Digital division of media company NBCUniversal launched a new project called NBC Sports Digital Shorts to produce short-form original content such as interviews, highlights and clips.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 8 to 21**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****European badminton, Premier12 baseball, NBA, Euroleague and more**

- **Badminton:** The Sportsman Media Group agency signed a deal with the Badminton Europe Confederation through which it will market the worldwide rights to the governing body's European Championships. The deal covers the men's and women's European team championships in 2016, as well as the European mixed team championships and European individual championships in 2017.
- **Baseball:** The World Baseball Softball Confederation awarded exclusive rights in South Korea for its new Premier12 national team competition to media group SBS.
- **Basketball:** North America's NBA extended its deal with Sony-owned Indian broadcaster Multi Screen Media by five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20. It is worth between R220 crore (€29.7m/\$33.8m) and R250 crore.
- **Basketball:** The Euroleague club competition agreed a five-season extension, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, to a rights deal with Viasat, the pay-television broadcaster operated by Modern Times Group. The agreement, brokered by the Mediapro agency, covers pay-television and free-to-air rights. The deal is exclusive in the Baltic territories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and the Nordic territories of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. In Lithuania, Viasat will broadcast live coverage of all games featuring Lithuanian teams throughout the regular season, along with the Top 16, playoffs and Final Four. In the other markets, Viasat will show live coverage of at least one game per week during the regular season, plus the Top 16, playoffs and Final Four (page 1).
- **Basketball:** Russian pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus extended a deal for the Euroleague for one season, covering the 2015-16 campaign. Under the deal, which was brokered by the IMG Events & Media agency, NTV Plus will produce coverage of all home games for the three Russian teams in the Euroleague – CSKA Moscow, Khimki Moscow Region and Lokomotiv Kuban Krasnodar. Free-to-air terrestrial channel Match TV, also owned by Gazprom Media, will also provide coverage of Russian clubs and Final Four fixtures in the 2015-16 season.
- **Basketball:** French digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 acquired rights for Liga ACB, the sport's top division in Spain. The deal will run for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Coverage will be available in France, Monaco and French overseas territories.
- **Basketball:** Latvian pay-television channel Best4sport renewed a deal for the 2015-16 season of Spain's Liga ACB, Copa del Rey and Supercopa tournaments. Best4sport will show two games per round of the league.
- **Basketball:** Lithuanian terrestrial sports channel Sport1 extended a deal for the Liga ACB, Copa del Rey and Supercopa tournaments for one season, covering the 2015-16 campaign.
- **Basketball:** International pay-television operator Eleven Sports Network acquired Liga ACB rights in Belgium and Singapore for the 2015-16 season. It will show two games per round plus coverage of the Supercopa and Copa del Rey.
- **Basketball:** Cypriot IPTV operator CyTAVision renewed a deal for the Liga ACB, Copa del Rey and Supercopa for the 2015-16 campaign.
- **Golf:** The NBC Sports Group division of media company NBCUniversal struck a deal to assume live coverage in the US of the Open Championship from the 2016 edition of the British event – a year earlier than planned. In June, NBC Sports Group acquired rights for the championship for 12 years, from 2017 to 2028, in a deal with the R&A, which operates the Open. It brokered a deal with the R&A and pay-television broadcaster ESPN, which was due to show the 2016 tournament, to begin its coverage a year early.
- **Golf:** US network ABC struck a deal to broadcast the final round, on November 22, of the final event of the Ladies Professional Golf Association Tour's 2015 season, the Group Tour Championship in Florida, USA.
- **Horse Racing:** Gambling services provider Betgenius agreed a distribution deal with Racecourse Media Group, which manages the media rights of 34 UK racecourses. Betgenius will distribute content from RMG-owned pay-television channel Racing UK to online betting operators in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Africa acquired rights for the Ultimate Fighting Championship in a three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018 (page 6).
- **Motorsport:** Pay-television broadcaster Arena Sport TV extended a deal for the Formula E electric car-racing championship for two seasons, from 2015-16 to 2016-17. The deal covers Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.
- **Motorsport:** Albanian pay-television broadcaster Tring TV extended a deal for the Formula E championship for the 2015-16 campaign.
- **Motorsport:** The Formula E championship renewed a deal with public-service broadcaster CyBC in Cyprus covering the 2015-16 season.
- **Motorsport:** Icelandic media group 365 Media acquired rights for the 2015-16 Formula E championship.
- **Motorsport:** The Formula E championship renewed a deal with telco Telekom Romania for two seasons, from 2015-16 to 2016-17.
- **Motorsport:** German public-service broadcaster ZDF acquired rights for the 2015 Race of Champions, which will take place in London on November 20-21. ZDF will provide six hours of live coverage from the event.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 8 to 21

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

Olympics, Rugby league, Sanzar rugby, English Premiership and surfing

- **Olympic Games:** Canadian public-service broadcaster CBC acquired rights for the 2022 and 2024 Games in partnership with telcos Rogers Communications and Bell Media. The CBC extended a deal to serve as the lead broadcaster for the Games from 2016 until at least 2023. Bell's pay-television broadcasters TSN and RDS and Rogers' pay-television broadcaster Sportsnet will carry secondary coverage.
 - **Rugby League:** BeIN Media Group agreed a two-year deal in France, for 2015 and 2016, with the Rugby League European Federation. The deal covers the 2015 Rugby League European Championship national team tournament and French national team games.
 - **Rugby Union:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky agreed a five-year extension, from 2016 to 2020, to its rights deal with Sanzar, the umbrella body for the sport's national unions in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The deal includes at least 150 fixtures per year from domestic and international competitions, including the annual Rugby Championship national team event between Argentina, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The agreement includes England's tours to Australia in 2016 and South Africa in 2018, and Ireland's tours to South Africa and Wales to New Zealand in 2016. Sky will also show the Super Rugby club competition, New Zealand's ITM Cup, South Africa's Currie Cup and Australia's National Rugby Championship. The deal was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* on October 31, 2014.
 - **Rugby Union:** Irish pay-television broadcaster Setanta Sports agreed a two-season deal, for 2015-16 and 2016-17, for highlights from the English top-tier Premiership.
 - **Surfing:** The World Surf League agreed a deal with US pay-television broadcaster Universal Sports Network, which will show four Big Wave Tour events live or delayed during the 2015-16 season.
-
- European Tour Productions – a joint venture between golf's European Tour and the IMG Events & Media agency – was appointed by the R&A to produce coverage of golf's Open Championship in Britain for two years, from 2016 to 2017.
 - The Premier League signed a multi-year partnership with Pulselive, the digital division of sports technology firm Hawk-Eye, to overhaul the official online and mobile properties of the top division of English club football. Pulselive will re-launch the league's official website and build a single mobile application to consolidate key features. The new digital services will launch ahead of the 2016-17 season.
 - New ice hockey-dedicated online channel IceTimeTV agreed a deal to invest in British Elite Ice Hockey League club Cardiff Devils' video production and live streaming services. IceTimeTV will stream live coverage of Devils games, operate in-arena television screens and introduce on-demand content and weekly behind-the-scenes programmes.
 - The European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters agreed a digital and television content partnership with sports media and technology company Deltatre. The two parties will deliver television and digital content to sports federations and rights holders.
 - Deltatre struck a deal with BT Sport to support the UK pay-television broadcaster's coverage of the Uefa Champions League and Europa League European club football tournaments. Deltatre's Diva video multiplatform service will enable BT Sport customers using the broadcaster's official mobile application to access additional content.
 - UK commercial broadcaster ITV struck a £100m (€137m/\$155m) deal to acquire 100 per cent of Irish commercial broadcaster UTV, which owns the television assets of UTV Media. Under the deal, which remains subject to regulatory and shareholder approval, ITV will take control of all UTV Media television channels in Ireland and Northern Ireland.
 - North American basketball league the NBA agreed a partnership with French sports daily newspaper *L'Équipe* to launch a new online platform for the 2015-16 NBA season. The nba.com/france website will be hosted in a dedicated section of lequipe.fr.
 - French Ligue 1 football club Angers is set to conclude a takeover deal for regional broadcaster Angers TV. Angers TV broadcasts in Angers and Maine-et-Loire via digital-terrestrial television.
 - Pan-European club ice hockey competition the Kontinental Hockey League expanded the reach of its KHL-TV channel through a carriage deal with new Russian-language pay-television service TeRus. The deal covers Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Slovakia, Turkey, the UAE, and some Balkan countries.
 - The Mediapro agency reached a carriage deal for its Formula One channel to be available in more homes in Mexico via pay-television provider Axtel.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- RTL will explore a possible bid for the next cycle of domestic rights to the German Bundesliga, according to the commercial broadcaster's programme director, Frank Hoffmann. RTL's interest has been stoked by impressive viewing figures for its coverage of the German national team's qualifiers for the Uefa Euro 2016 national team tournament. A tender for the next four-season cycle of Bundesliga rights, from 2017-18 to 2020-21, is expected to be launched by the middle of 2016.
- Internet streaming service Netflix has no interest in bidding for sports rights, according to chief content officer Ted Sarandos. "Sport on demand is not as exciting as sports live," he said.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from October 8 to 21

■ A deal with an as-yet unnamed broadcaster has been reached in Russia for football's Uefa Euro 2016 national team tournament, according to Russian Football Union president Vitaly Mutko.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

■ UK pay-television operator Virgin Media commissioned a study that found 77 per cent of football supporters in the country want more games from the English Premier League to be shown on television. Of 1,000 supporters surveyed, only six per cent said they were able to watch every game they wanted on television at home. Virgin Media chief executive Tom Mockridge said UK media regulator Ofcom should decide "whether an auction structure based on now-expired commitments agreed in 2006" for the league's domestic media rights "justifies a self-determined exemption from competition law".

■ UK public-service broadcaster the BBC moved into eSports broadcasting by covering the League of Legends World Championships live from London. Action from all four days of the quarter-finals, which began on October 15, was streamed online via the BBC Three channel.

■ The Premiership, rugby union's top division in England, will receive free-to-air domestic exposure in the opening weeks of the 2015-16 season, with pay-television broadcaster BT Sport airing three games via its BT Sport Showcase channel.

■ UK pay-television broadcaster Sky claimed a world first for golf coverage by introducing a live player microphone service during the British Masters tournament. Nick Dougherty wore a microphone during the tournament, through which he spoke directly to Sky Sports commentators at various points during play.

■ Social media platform Twitter suspended the accounts of websites Deadspin and SB Nation after American football's NFL filed notices relating to their use of copyrighted video highlights.

■ US pay-television operator DirecTV launched an application, Big Knockout Boxing VR, to allow users to watch a boxing event in virtual reality from a ringside seat. The application is available for Samsung Gear VR Innovator Edition headsets and Google Cardboard headsets with Android and iOS devices. DirecTV is also making the event available through Samsung's Milk VR service.

■ The Formula E electric car-racing championship agreed a content partnership with social media website Facebook. The platform will stream live coverage in Spain of the season-opening race in Beijing, China, on October 24 and exclusive near real-time highlights of race action throughout the 2015-16 season. Drivers will provide exclusive live streams from the Facebook Mentions application to capture behind-the-scenes moments.

■ Formula E sealed a one-season extension to its partnership with social video production company Grabby, covering the 2015-16 campaign. The deal will allow the championship to provide behind-the-scenes footage and produce in-race highlights for distribution to social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter, and video-sharing website YouTube.

■ Online video distribution and marketing company Rightster began a strategic review of its operations in a move that could lead to the sale of the business. Raine Advisors was appointed to assist the review.

■ Lagardère Sports, the sports marketing division of media conglomerate Lagardère, was appointed as the host broadcaster of five sporting events taking place in November: the International Weightlifting Federation's World Championship, the World Wushu Championships, the Race of Champions motorsport event, the International Cycling Union's Tour of Taihu road race and the Scottish Open Badminton Grand Prix.

■ The Football Association of Malaysia hit back at criticism of its plan to distribute the media rights income from its 15-year advisory deal with the MP & Silva agency, from 2016 to 2030. In January, the agency agreed to act as the association's global adviser for all media and commercial rights for club competitions in a deal worth about MYR1.26bn (€268m/\$304m), with the two parties creating the Football Malaysia Limited Liability Partnership. FAM secretary general Datuk Hamidin Mohd Amin said the association requires 40 per cent of the income to operate effectively with 30 per cent given to the clubs, 20 per cent towards Football Malaysia LLP for operational costs and management of the competition, and 10 per cent towards football development. Tunku Ismail ibni Sultan Ibrahim, president of Malaysian Super League champion Johor Darul Ta'zim, earlier called on football's world governing body Fifa to investigate the association.

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