

FOOTBALL MALAYSIA

FA makes massive gains but rights sales process creates problems

By Richard Welbirg

The Football Association of Malaysia last week secured an extraordinary deal for the rights to the M-League, the country's top football league, and other association rights. The average annual value of the 15-year deal with the MP & Silva agency is 20 per cent higher than the second highest bid for the rights and 180 per cent greater than the league's current annual value.

Yet the way the association handled the process has almost certainly antagonised the long-term broadcast partner of the M-League, pay-television platform Astro.

This looks set to throw up two problems: a short-term problem for the association, and a longer-term problem for the agency.

MP & Silva will act as an advisor to the association on the sales of all media and commercial rights from 2016 to 2030 (see panel, page 3). It is guaranteeing the

association RM1.26bn (\$350m) over the 15 years, an average of RM84m per season. The value of the rights in the association's current deal with Astro is RM30m per season.

The agency beat a dramatic last-minute bid from a consortium of Malaysia's sports broadcasters, who would have shared the rights non-exclusively. Their offer was about RM70m per season.

In order to agree the MP & Silva deal, the association and the agency had to come up with a deal structure which would enable the association to get around the matching-rights clause held by Astro. Local media sources say the broadcaster is unhappy about being priced out. It has been the main financial backer of the league for years.

The association also had to accede to the agency's desire to start the contract

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FOOTBALL AFRICA

Infront set to challenge Sportfive

By Frank Dunne

The Infront Sports & Media agency is understood to be the strongest challenger to the Sportfive agency for the rights to the events of the Confédération Africaine de Football, including the flagship Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) tournament.

Sportfive holds all Caf media and marketing rights in an eight-year deal, from 2009 to 2016. The agency pays \$160m

(€138m) over the eight years, or \$20m per year. It is understood to have made a substantial profit on the contract.

The confederation was in talks with interested parties before the Afcon began earlier this month and will resume once it is over. There has been no formal tender process and none is expected.

There is strong interest in the rights. In


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FASTRACK 1

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mediaset forced to pay more in open tender

Spanish commercial broadcaster Mediaset was forced to increase its fee to keep the rights for Spanish national team football friendlies in a deal agreed last week following a formal tender ordered by the country's competition regulator.

Mediaset agreed to pay about €35m (\$40m) for rights to events run by the Real Federación Española de Fútbol, the Spanish football federation, for three years from 2015 to 2017.

The key properties included in the package are Spanish national team friendlies, the final of the Copa del Rey, and the Supercopa two-legged match between the winners of the Copa del Rey and the Primera Liga.

Spanish law mandates these events be broadcast on free-to-air television.

It is understood the federation and Mediaset had agreed on a deal worth about €30m in June 2014. Rival commercial broadcaster Atresmedia complained to the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia, the competition regulator, which ordered the association to hold a formal tender process.

The tender was opened late last year. Atresmedia, public-service broadcaster TVE and Mediaset bid.

Atresmedia has a policy of only acquiring rights on which it is certain to turn a profit or at least break even. It is understood to have bid about €20m.

TVE is struggling with government-imposed budget cuts and is thought to have offered even less.

Spain's friendly calendar across the three-year period is yet to be arranged. The federation's tender promised a minimum of 10 matches across three years. The broadcasters anticipate around 15 will be scheduled.

Mediaset's previous deal, covering 2013 and 2014, was worth between €17m and €19m. That deal included Spanish qualifiers for the 2014 World Cup (*TV Sports Markets* 17:3).

Spain's qualifiers from 2014-15 to 2017-18 are held by TVE in a deal worth €38m, or €9.5m per season. ■ [www.](#)

NBA value up in UK renewal

The National Basketball Association secured a rights-fee increase of about 12 per cent in its extension with UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport earlier this month. Some sources claim the fee increase was greater.

The new deal is for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and is worth about \$1.9m (€1.6m) per season. It covers the UK and Ireland. The existing two-year deal, covering the 2013-14 and 2014-15 seasons, is worth about \$1.7m per season. Rival pay-television operator BSkyB is not thought to have bid.

The value of the deal has increased for two reasons. First, more content is included. BT will show 240-250 games per season, up from about 200 games per season in the current deal. It will show up to seven regular-season games per week in the new deal, up from five per week in the current contract.

The deal also covers the first and second rounds of the play-offs as well as the Conference finals and NBA finals – the same as the existing deal.

Second, the deal is for a longer period. Both BT and the NBA were keen to renew the deal. The NBA is pleased with the coverage BT provides, and prefers that its matches are shown by one broadcaster. This was not the case in previous UK deals.

BT also produced the London Global Game this month between The New York Knicks and the Milwaukee Bucks in 4K. It was the first NBA match produced in 4K.

The NBA is not a ratings driver in the UK, but provides BT with live sport late at night. It is also a prestigious brand which is popular with a younger demographic. The deal provides a large volume of content for a relatively low rights fee.

BT first acquired NBA rights in December 2013, picking up rights that

had previously been shared by pay-television broadcasters BSkyB and ESPN (*TV Sports Markets* 17:22).

Rights fees are not always the driving factor behind the league's international deals, one source said, because of the extremely lucrative deals the league has in its domestic US market. More emphasis is often placed on building a partnership with a broadcaster.

In October, the league renewed with incumbent US rights-holders Disney and Turner Broadcasting for nine years, from 2016-17 to 2024-25, for a total rights fee of between \$2.6bn and \$2.7bn per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:19). ■ [www.](#)

No competition for Sky PerfectTV

Uefa earned a decent increase in the value of its club tournaments in Japan this month despite the minimal level of competition in the market.

Japanese pay-television broadcaster Sky PerfectTV renewed its deals for the Champions League and Europa League for the next three-year cycle, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

It is paying about \$21.5m (€18.1) per season for the Champions League, and about \$5.5m for the Europa League. The deals were agreed with Uefa's marketing agent Team Marketing.

The \$27m per season total is a 15-per-cent increase on the \$23.5m Sky PerfectTV pays in the current cycle, from 2012-13 to 2014-15. Of that, \$20.5m per season is for the Champions League and \$3m per season for the Europa League.

In the previous cycle, from 2009-10 to 2011-12, Sky PerfectTV paid \$19m per season for the Champions League and \$2m per season for the Europa League – \$21m per season in total.

Uefa is understood to be pleased with the size of the increase in an often collusive market that has proved difficult for many rights-holders. The governing body believes the strength of its long relationship with Sky PerfectTV was key to the fee increase. ■ [www.](#)

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FA makes massive gains but alienates long-term partner

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from next season, 2016. MP & Silva did not want to sign a contract which gave it only days to secure domestic broadcast deals. The 2015 M-League season begins this Saturday, January 31.

This leaves the association without a broadcast partner for the 2015 season. The obvious choice would be to extend Astro's four-year deal, which ran from 2011 to 2014, by one more season. But the broadcaster sees little value in a one-year deal and is understood to have rebuffed the association's initial advances.

One local agency executive suggested the association may end up having to place M-League matches with willing broadcasters for little or no rights fee. He said it might be prepared to take a hit in income this season with the knowledge that the sizeable new deal will commence in 2016.

Astro still needed

An unhappy Astro could also represent a long-term problem for MP & Silva. Astro's dominance of the pay-television market means MP & Silva will have to deal with it when it comes to selling broadcast rights. Astro had 4.16m subscribers in September. Telekom Malaysia's IPTV service HyppTV and digital cable operator ABNxcess have fewer than 1m combined.

Astro made a joint bid for the association's rights with Fox International Channels which was well below MP & Silva's valuation. This suggests the agency will struggle to recoup its investment from an exclusive deal with the platform.

If, as some expect, the agency were to sell the rights to beIN Sports, allowing the broadcaster to launch its premium sports channels in Malaysia, it would merely be passing the problem on.

The Qatari broadcaster is said to have targeted Singapore and Malaysia as its next ventures in Southeast Asia, after

Agency hails 'most important contract' in Southeast Asia

MP & Silva's advisory deal with the Football Association of Malaysia is "probably the most important contract" signed in Southeast Asian football in recent years, according to the agency's co-founder Andrea Radrizzani.

Radrizzani told *TV Sports Markets* that the deal had great strategic importance for the agency. "We believe interest in football in Asia and the league's popularity are growing. For fans in Malaysia, the most important content is the English Premier League and the M-League," he said.

The agency will be tasked with improving the quality of the product from a broadcast and commercial perspective. Presently all matches are played in the same time slot each weekend. The agency wants to have four time slots. It plans to increase the

number of cameras used on match coverage from the current eight to 12 and for big matches to be filmed in HD. In order to ensure high-quality HD images, the agency also wants improved lighting at the stadiums.

"Working on the quality is the first and most important thing," Radrizzani said. "We want the league to control the production, and we want alignment with global standards and with digital media."

The agency also hopes to increase income from the international rights. The M-League has little value outside Malaysia and Singapore, whose LionsXII plays in the league. Radrizzani believes the proposed improvements can help make it the top football content in Southeast Asia. ■

[www.](#) For the full interview with Andrea Radrizzani visit our website.

MP & Silva deal breakdown

MP & Silva has guaranteed the Malaysian football association at least RM1.26bn over 15 years, from 2016 to 2030.

The agreement covers the media and marketing rights to the top-tier Malaysia Super League (known as the M-League), the second-tier Malaysia Premier League, the country's domestic cup competition and the annual Piala Sumbangsih match between the M-League and cup winners.

MP & Silva will be a partner in Football Malaysia LLP, the administrative body which will run the M-League from 2016.

The deal includes a clause allowing the association to end the agreement after six years. Thereafter, further clauses allow it to

review the contract every three years until the 15-year term is completed.

MP & Silva's guarantee increases in each cycle, as follows:

- RM70m per year from 2016-2021
- RM85m per year from 2022-2024
- RM92m per year from 2025-2027
- RM103m per year from 2028-2030.

The deal is an advisory deal based on the same model as the agency's deals for the top-tier leagues in Poland and Belgium.

The agency will be paid commission if sales meet the targets but will be liable for any shortfall. Revenue above the target will be shared between MP & Silva and the association.

launching in Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

There are few better properties with which the broadcaster could make its entry. However, it would have to agree favourable carriage terms with Astro, which would have a strong negotiating position.

An alternative for the agency would be to offer the rights non-exclusively to several broadcasters, probably with some rights being made available to

free-to-air television. The M-League achieves high ratings on Astro's basic-tier pay-television package and would be a very strong property on free-to-air. The agency has done something similar in Belgium with the Pro League, agreeing non-exclusive deals with each of the main pay-television operators.

This would also maximise the value of advertising and sponsorship, which experts agree will represent a large part of the value of this deal.

Late drama

The deal with MP & Silva came as a surprise to many, as the agency was not among the group of firms initially considered to be in the running.

The association solicited expressions of interest for its rights in February 2014, though there was no formal tender process. Discussions between the association and various parties took place throughout 2014, and by the last quarter the association had received three joint bids. These were from:

(1) agencies Zenith Media and IMG Events & Media;

(2) Astro and pay-television network Fox Sports; and

(3) Telekom Malaysia and media company Media Prima.

Zenith and IMG offered about RM70m per season for 20 years, in the form of two 10-year deals. Like MP & Silva's agreement, this would have included administering the

M-League via a joint venture with the association (see box, page 3). The bid included running costs for the league.

Astro and Fox offered between RM45m and RM50m per season over 10 years. Fox is understood to have been keen to acquire the rights as it lacks top-tier content in Malaysia. The bid also included a request for involvement in the running of the M-League.

Telekom Malaysia and Media Prima offered RM68m per season for all commercial rights to the league.

By November, MP & Silva had also made its intent known to the league, though it had not made a formal offer.

The association chose not to accept any of the proposals. It is understood one sticking point was the association's desire to ensure any agreement would avoid Astro invoking its matching-rights clause.

Bidders were in the dark about their progress until January, when the

association put its rights to open tender with a four-day turnaround time for bids.

Three packages of rights were offered for the three seasons from 2015 to 2017: two for broadcast rights, each containing a set of exclusive matches with some non-exclusive content, and one for marketing rights. The base price for the two broadcast packages combined is thought to have been RM60m per season.

There were no responses to the tender. It is understood the previous bidders were not keen on any single package, and found the cost of all three prohibitive. At this point the association turned to MP & Silva.

A deal was agreed at the turn of the year but there was late drama when a consortium of the domestic broadcasters – Astro, Fox Sports, Media Prima and Telekom Malaysia – made a bid two days before the association unveiled its deal with MP & Silva. 

FOOTBALL AFRICA

Infront the favourite in challenge to Sportfive for Afcon

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addition to the incumbent, Sportfive, and Infront, approaches are thought to have been made by Marco Bianchi's B4 Capital agency, and the beIN Media Group. The IMG Events & Media agency is also thought certain to be interested in expanding its operations in Africa.

Sportfive is determined to hang on to the rights and insiders say its parent company Lagardère Unlimited has the appetite to hold off aggressive rivals. This is despite having largely retreated from major rights deals over the last two years in a bid to stem losses.

The contract has been one of Sportfive's most profitable. Losing it would mean that an agency which a few years ago dominated the market for football federation media rights, was now heavily dependent on club marketing.

The new Lagardère Unlimited management team is said to be strongly

focused on the deal. In May last year, day-to-day control of the group was put in the hands of Seamus O'Brien, who was made deputy chairman, and Andrew Georgiou, who was made chief operating officer. Both come from Lagardère Unlimited's World Sport Group agency, which has a lucrative long-term deal with the Asian Football Confederation.

The managing director of Sportfive Africa, Idriss Akki, has the benefit of having created strong personal relationships with senior Caf officials over many years.

The agency's relationships and local presence mean it understands the characteristics of a complex media market. As one insider put it, "relationships are very important in Africa, which makes it difficult to penetrate for a newcomer. Even something as banal as having French-speaking staff makes a big difference."

He said Sportfive's handling of the last-minute switch of the current Afcon from Morocco to Equatorial Guinea due to the Ebola scare would have been a strong reminder to Caf that the agency knows how to handle problems in Africa.

Infront threat

Infront is said to be the strongest rival to Sportfive for two reasons, one

commercial and one political.

On a commercial level, Infront has identified Africa as an important growth market and has the financial resources to expand there. In January 2014, for example, it acquired the rights to the Olympic Games of 2014 and 2016 in sub-Saharan Africa in a deal with the International Olympic Committee.

On a political level, the relationship between long-term Caf president Issa Hayatou and Fifa president Sepp Blatter is said by those close to the proceedings to be important. Hayatou unsuccessfully stood against Blatter in the 2002 Fifa presidential elections but has since become a solid backer of the Swiss.

Blatter's nephew Philippe is the president and chief executive of Infront. With Fifa presidential elections due in May, Blatter will be counting on Hayatou's support and influence. Each of the 56 African federations has a vote.

Other bidders

The Afcon property would have great strategic value for beIN. The broadcaster already holds the broadcast rights in the Middle East and North Africa, having inherited them when its parent company Al Jazeera took over pay-television

broadcaster ART.

After sub-Saharan Africa, two of the biggest markets for the Afcon are Mena and France – both key markets for beIN. The company has a track record of bidding aggressively for strategically important rights.

B4 is also very interested. It already has a relationship with Caf through its joint selling of the rights to the 2014 World Cup qualifiers and has strong relationships in Mena.

Both are considered outsiders, however. Caf does not want to split the contract into separate deals for media and marketing and wants to continue with a single deal with an agency which has a strong track record in both areas.

This would also rule out any bid for the rights by the MP & Silva agency, which has very limited sponsorship activities, as well as media groups such as Fox International Channels and the Discovery-owned pan-regional broadcaster Eurosport.

Some experts familiar with the property believe that Caf could earn an increase in the value of its rights of about 50 to 60 per cent. ■

[www. Why there are limits to growth for the value of the Caf rights portfolio.](#)

RUGBY UNION

LNR 'satisfied' despite modest rights fee increase

By Robin Jellis

The Ligue Nationale de Rugby last week secured an increase of 4.2 per cent in the value of the media rights of the top-tier domestic league, the Top 14, despite limited competition.

Pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus retained the exclusive rights in a four-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2018-19, for €74m (\$82m) per season.

This is up from the average of €71m per season which Canal Plus agreed to pay in the five seasons from 2014-15 to 2018-19 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:2).

That deal was thrown out by the French competition authority, the Autorité de la Concurrence, following a complaint from

rival pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports. BeIN said the league had not followed a transparent tender process after it agreed a deal in direct talks with Canal Plus. The rights were deemed too important to be sold without a competitive auction and the LNR was ordered to re-tender them.

The increase is small but it is a good result for the league compared to the €31.7m per season it earned in the previous cycle, from 2011-12 to 2013-14.

Emmanuel Eschalié, league chief executive, told *TV Sports Markets* this week that the league was "satisfied" with the new agreement for two reasons.

"First, because the rights fee, which went from €30m per season to €71m per season in the previous deal, continues to progress. This is extremely important," he said.

"Second, the deal allows the league to reach a new level of exposure with two matches per match day on the generalist Canal Plus channel, instead of one match per match day currently."

As well as the increased live coverage on its main channel, Canal Plus will show a second magazine dedicated to the Top 14, which will be available free-to-air.

In previous deals, the league has included a break clause, allowing it to end the contract early. The new deal, however, is for a fixed term of four years.

A tender was launched on December 18. Bids were received on January 19 and examined on January 20.

The new deal does not include international rights. These were included in the Canal Plus deal which was ended early, so the increase is larger than it appears at first sight. Canal Plus will continue to sell Top 14 rights outside France until at least the end of the 2014-15 season. No decision has been made as to when the rights after that will be put on the market.

The rights-fee increase must also be considered in the context of what has happened in the French market since the last Canal Plus deal was agreed, last January. Then, deals for Ligue 1 and Uefa Champions League football were yet to be agreed, arguably increasing the importance of the Top 14.

The league could have achieved a far greater increase had beIN Sports bid aggressively against Canal Plus, but the

broadcaster is thought to have bid below the league's reserve price of €71m per season for exclusive rights.

The low bid puzzled some in the market because beIN had fought the award of the rights to Canal Plus for about a year. One insider view is that, in challenging the previous rights deal, beIN Sports was fighting to be treated fairly rather than because of a strong desire to win the rights.

Key deal

The Top 14 is a key renewal for Canal Plus. It has about 5m subscribers in France, of whom more than 500,000 are understood to be keen rugby fans. It risked losing these if it did not renew its rights.

The broadcaster shares the biggest subscription-driving properties, Ligue 1 and the Champions League, with beIN Sports. But the Top 14 provides Canal Plus with vital exclusive content, alongside the English Premier League and Formula One motor racing.

Not winning is a blow for beIN, but the broadcaster has some good rugby union rights – it shows the European Rugby Champions Cup and Challenge Cup in a four-season deal from 2014-15 to 2017-18, for between €14m and €15m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:19).

Coverage

The deal covers all matches of the regular season, play-offs, semi-finals and magazine programmes dedicated to the Top 14.

Pay-television rights for the Top 14 final are not included, but it is understood Canal Plus will acquire these in a separate deal with the league.

Canal Plus will show a minimum of three matches each match day across its flagship Canal Plus channel and the Canal Plus Sport channel. Other matches will be shown on the Rugby Plus channel.

The broadcaster will show a weekly highlights programme free-to-air on Sundays at 6.30pm, as well as its weekly *Jour de Rugby* magazine programme. Its main Canal Plus channel is available free-to-air every day from 6pm to 8pm.

Canal Plus will cover production costs on top of the rights fee but the total cost is difficult to predict. There are six different production standards dependent on the level of the match.

Other rights

The free-to-air rights to the Top 14 final, and the free-to-air and pay-television rights to the second tier, the Pro D2, are also on the market. The LNR is in advanced negotiations with broadcasters for both properties.

The Top 14 final is currently shown by state broadcaster France Télévisions in a three-year deal, from 2011-12 to 2013-14, thought to be worth close to €1m per season. The new deal will cover 2014-15 and will run for five years to 2018-19.

Pro D2 coverage is split between Canal Plus, basic-tier broadcaster Eurosport, and France Télévisions. The four-year deals, from 2011-12 to 2014-15, are worth €1.1m per season. A new deal will cover five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

The league hopes to agree a new deal with one pay-television broadcaster and one free-to-air broadcaster, rather than the current three broadcasters, Eschalier said. It believes increased exclusivity will help increase the existing rights fee.

The league has received bids for pay-television rights from Canal Plus,

Canal Plus secures share of Rugby World Cup rights

Canal Plus bolstered its rugby union coverage earlier this month in a sublicensing deal with commercial broadcaster TF1 for the 2015 Rugby World Cup.

It is understood Canal Plus will pay close to €15m (€17.4m) for rights to some matches. It will show 27 games exclusively, and two quarter-finals non-exclusively with TF1. TF1 has retained rights to all France matches, as well as two quarter-finals, the semi-finals and the final.

It is thought that pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports was interested in the rights, but wanted to secure rights to the whole tournament, as it did for

the 2014 Fifa World Cup (*TV Sports Markets* 18:5).

Canal Plus was keen to get the rights because of the big audiences the competition will attract. It is also, in part, a defensive move. BeIN Sports was able to expand its subscriber base significantly with the Fifa World Cup last summer. Canal Plus wanted to prevent it from achieving similar results with the Rugby World Cup.

In November 2013, TF1 finalised a deal for all Rugby World Cup rights for about €50m (*TV Sports Markets* 17:21). The tournament will be hosted in England and Wales in September and October this year. ■

Eurosport and basic-tier sports broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport. A pay-television broadcaster would have the rights to all matches.

It has received bids for free-to-air rights from France Télévisions and digital-

terrestrial broadcaster L'Équipe 21. A free-to-air broadcaster would have non-exclusive rights to eight regular-season matches, one semi-final and the final. ■

[www. For the full interview with Emmanuel Eschalier visit our website.](#)

FOOTBALL UKRAINE

Political crisis means struggle ahead for clubs

By Robin Jellis

The value of domestic broadcast rights to Ukraine Premier League football could take a big hit in the forthcoming round of deals due to the economic crisis brought on by the political conflict in the country over the last year.

Broadcasters are expected to agree deals with clubs in the coming months against a background of plummeting sports-rights fees since the conflict began in early 2014.

This season, Media Group Ukraine holds rights to the matches of nine clubs, paying a total of about UAH45m (€2.4m/\$2.8m). 1+1 Media Group holds the rights to the matches of the other five clubs, paying a total of about UAH30m (see panel). Both deals cover domestic and international rights.

Media Group Ukraine operates

Ukraine Premier League rights deals	
<p>2014-15: Media Group Ukraine (9 clubs): Hoverla Uzhhorod, Illichivets Mariupol, Metalist Kharkiv, Metalurh Donetsk, Metalurh Zaporizhyya, Olimpik Donetsk, Shakhtar, Vorskla Poltava and Zorya Luhansk. Total outlay: UAH45m</p>	<p>2013-14: Media Group Ukraine (10 clubs): Chornomorets Odesa, Hoverla Uzhhorod, Illichivets Mariupol, Metalurh Donetsk, Metalurh Zaporizhyya, Sevastopol, Shakhtar, Tavrya Simferopol, Vorskla Poltava and Zorya Luhansk. Total outlay: UAH30m</p>
<p>1+1 Media Group (5 clubs): Chornomorets Odesa, Dnipro, Dynamo Kyiv, Karpaty Lviv and Volyn Lutsk. Total outlay: UAH30m</p>	<p>1+1 Media Group (6 clubs): Arsenal Kyiv, Dnipro, Dynamo Kyiv, Karpaty Lviv, Metalist Kharkiv and Volyn Lutsk. Total outlay: UAH30m</p>

commercial channel TRK, and pay-television channels Football 1 and Football 2. 1+1 Media Group operates commercial channels 1+1 and 2+2.

Broadcast rights for the Ukraine Premier League were sold individually by the clubs this season, 2014-15. Previously, the situation was mixed, with some clubs selling individually and others pooling rights which were sold centrally by the league.

A complicating factor in the market is that deals are not about which

broadcaster offers the highest fee, or certain guarantees of coverage. One local expert said clubs had "internal interests" for rights to be shown by a particular broadcaster. "There is not a real commercial model, it is more political," he said. This is why a pure collective selling model does not work.

The president of Dnipro, Ihor Kolomoyskyi, for example, owns 1+1 Media Group. Shakhtar Donetsk president Rinat Akhmetov owns holding

company System Capital Management Group, of which Media Group Ukraine is a subsidiary.

Media Group Ukraine used to buy rights from the league, which sold them on behalf of some clubs. It had a two-year deal for 2011-12 to 2012-13, worth about UAH30m per season. This was extended to cover 2013-14, for a similar fee, when it had rights to the matches of 10 clubs. 1+1 Media Group bought rights directly from clubs.

The Ukraine Premier League launched in 2008-09 after splitting from the national football body, the Professional Football League of Ukraine. There are 14 clubs in 2014-15, down from 16 clubs in 2013-14.

Falling income for professional football clubs is unlikely to register as a major issue in a country whose economy has been devastated by internal upheaval and incursions by Russian troops.

GDP fell by about 10 per cent in 2014, the value of the local currency, the hryvnia, fell by 50 per cent against the dollar and inflation is at nearly 20 per cent. This week the International Monetary Fund was under pressure to expand its \$17bn rescue programme.

International rights

Nobody is currently able to sell the international rights to the entire league. The IMG Events & Media agency has a deal for the home matches of the clubs whose domestic rights are held by Media Group Ukraine. There is no deal in place for the international rights to the other clubs.

The IMG deal ran until the end of the 2014-15 season but the agency is understood to have recently finalised a three-year extension, covering 2015-16 to 2017-18. The deal was agreed with Media Group Ukraine's TRK.

It is understood that betting rights is one of the more valuable revenue streams for IMG. There is also interest in the rights in Brazil – Shakhtar Donetsk, which has won the last five Ukraine Premier League titles, has several Brazilian players in its team.

There are some quite valuable deals in Eastern Europe – in Poland, Romania, Croatia and Serbia – as well

as deals in the Middle East and Central and South America.

In IMG's existing three-year deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, it pays a minimum guarantee with a 50:50 share of revenues above the guarantee. IMG also held the rights in a two-year deal from 2010-11 to 2011-12, after replacing the Sportsman Media Group agency as the league's international rights partner.

IMG's rights cover broadcast and online. Sportsman's deal, from 2008-09 to 2009-10, had only been for online rights. ■ [www](#)

TV NEW ZEALAND

Coliseum adds Spark in rights battle with Sky

By Richard Welbirt

Lightbox Sport, the joint venture between New Zealand online subscription services Coliseum and Lightbox launched last month, will be an aggressive competitor for sports rights, according to Coliseum founder Tim Martin.

Lightbox Sport marks the entry of former state telco Spark into the sports rights market – Lightbox is Spark's on-demand service.

Martin told *TV Sports Markets*: "It doesn't signify the beginning of crazy town down here but it's a real statement of intent."

The key properties in the market, New Zealand's national cricket and rugby matches, are off the table until beyond 2020, but Martin made it clear that Lightbox Sport would bid for the biggest properties that are available.

"There are some big ones coming up; I think what works in this model are the big blue-chip rights that you need if you're going to drive subscriptions."

National Rugby League rights, expected on the market late next year, would be an obvious acquisition for the joint venture. The NRL is a strong property in New Zealand, but only features one local team – New Zealand Warriors – meaning production costs would be relatively small.

This is important, as Sky will retain a long-term competitive advantage in large-scale, high quality production through its ownership of OnSite Broadcasting NZ. OSB has a monopoly on high-definition outside broadcast production in the country.

Spark is moving into sport in the search for content which can drive broadband subscriptions. Lightbox Sport will have greater financial muscle than Coliseum, and access to Spark's existing 600,000 broadband customers.

Investment in Lightbox Sport is split 50:50 between Coliseum and Lightbox. Coliseum's New Zealand operations will be wholly subsumed into the Lightbox Sport brand, of which Martin will become managing director.

There is currently no timetable for the integration of the two parties' back-end infrastructure, and sport content will continue to be delivered through the online portals created by Coliseum, such as premierleaguepass.com.

Monopoly broken

Coliseum broke up Sky's near-monopoly over the New Zealand pay-television market when it bought English Premier League rights from the MP & Silva agency in 2013, for a fee of about \$1.5m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:12).

In October 2014, it launched a golf portal following a deal for the US PGA Tour worth about \$1m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:19).

In November, it agreed a deal for French Top 14 rugby union worth about \$50,000 per season. The following month, it signed a deal with the IMG Events & Media agency expanding its golf offering to include the European Tour, Ryder Cup, USPGA Championship, Asian Tour and LPGA Tour.

However, it has been unsuccessful in head-to-head bidding with Sky over several of New Zealand's top properties, including national team cricket, Sanzar rugby packages and the 2015 Rugby World Cup.

"Up against Sky, Coliseum sometimes just got burned off, and that's a viable long-term strategy for Sky," said Martin. "It's a bit harder for Sky to burn off Spark, because they're a bigger company." ■ [www](#)

FASTRACK 2

NEWS IN BRIEF

MCS bounces back with South American football

French basic-tier broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport has bounced back from losing several rights properties in recent months by agreeing deals for football and tennis competitions.

MCS agreed a two-year deal, covering 2015 and 2016, for Copa Libertadores, Copa Sudamericana and Copa do Brasil rights. The deal is worth about €500,000 (\$580,000) per year.

The deal was agreed with the Traffic Sports agency, which sells the rights outside the Americas on behalf of Conmebol, South American football's governing body.

The same set of rights was previously held by pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports in a three-year deal, from 2012 to 2014, worth close to €400,000 per season. The Copa do Brasil rights covered 2013 and 2014 only.

MCS was prepared to increase the existing rights fee by around 25 per cent due to the losses it has suffered in recent months. MCS was not allowed to bid to retain its Argentinian Primera División rights in September, with beIN winning them. MCS also lost the rights to the Dutch Eredivisie, which were awarded to pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus (*TV Sports Markets* 18:14; 18:16).

South American football does not provide particularly good ratings in France, but it does offer live football late at night when there is little other sport.

MCS has also secured rights to two tennis tournaments held in France: the ATP 250 in Montpellier and the WTA International in Strasbourg. Both deals cover two seasons, 2015 and 2016, and were agreed with local organisers.

MCS will pay a rights fee of about €50,000 per year for each tournament. Production costs will be an additional €50,000 to €70,000 per year. The deal for Strasbourg is an extension. The deal for Montpellier is a new addition: it was previously shown by Canal Plus. [www.](#)

CBS deal shows power of the NFL

The CBS network's renewal of its deal with the US National Football League for its Thursday Night Football package underlines the incredible power of the league in the US television market.

CBS is reportedly paying \$300m (€259m) for the rights to the first eight Thursday night games of the 2015-16 season, or \$37.5m per match. The rights are non-exclusive. The games will also be shown live on the league's own NFL Network pay-television channel.

The NFL Network will show the remaining eight Thursday games exclusively, but CBS will produce and promote all 16 games. The NFL has an option to extend the deal for the 2016-17 season.

In the current season, 2014-15, the first in which the NFL sold Thursday night rights, CBS paid \$275m for non-exclusive rights to eight games: seven early-season games and one late-season Saturday game.

The deal is a very good one for the league. It has earned an additional \$300m without giving away any games from the NFL Network, and accrues several other benefits.

Thursday night games on CBS reach a much larger and broader viewership than those on NFL Network. The eight games on CBS this season averaged 16.1m viewers, 89 per cent more than the comparable games shown exclusively on the NFL Network in 2013-14.

CBS's commitment to promote the exclusive NFL Network games also drives viewers to the channel. This season, those eight games averaged 8.5m viewers on NFL Network, up eight per cent from 2013-14.

US commentators insist, however, that the deal is also a very good one for CBS. "Consider the relative costs and benefit of carrying NFL over some sitcom or cop show," US sports-rights expert John Mansell said. "It certainly gets higher ratings than any other programming they have on Thursday nights."

Doug Perlman, owner of US media

consultancy Sports Media Advisors, said: "It's a good deal for both parties. The NFL operates on its own plane here in the US. It's powerful programming in its own right but also a great platform for other stuff. And they earned it – they did a great job in production terms."

The NFL is the strongest driver of ratings in US television. All eight games broadcast on CBS this season were the most-watched programmes in primetime for that night across all networks. [www.](#)

Red Bull takes to the beach

Red Bull Media House is understood to be in advanced talks with volleyball's world governing body, the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB), to take over the rights to the beach volleyball events which are currently part of an eight-year global deal, from 2013 to 2020, with the IMG Events & Media, Dentsu and Grupo ABC agencies.

Red Bull, which is heavily involved in youth-oriented and adventure sports is understood to have approached the federation with an unsolicited offer for the rights. Insiders say that the governing body felt it had little choice but to accept the offer, for two reasons.

First, it is understood that Red Bull's overall financial commitment – in a deal encompassing media rights distribution, sponsorship and television production – will be greater than IMG's. The company will look to standardise and improve production standards across all events. One source said the Austrian company would be investing over \$750,000 (€647,000) per season in the deal.

Second, volleyball insiders say the deal – which will lead to a massive increase in prize money for competitors – will probably help the governing body head off a breakaway series which has been mooted by a small handful of event organisers.

The three agencies are understood to have agreed to cede the rights to FIVB to enable the deal to take place. [www.](#)

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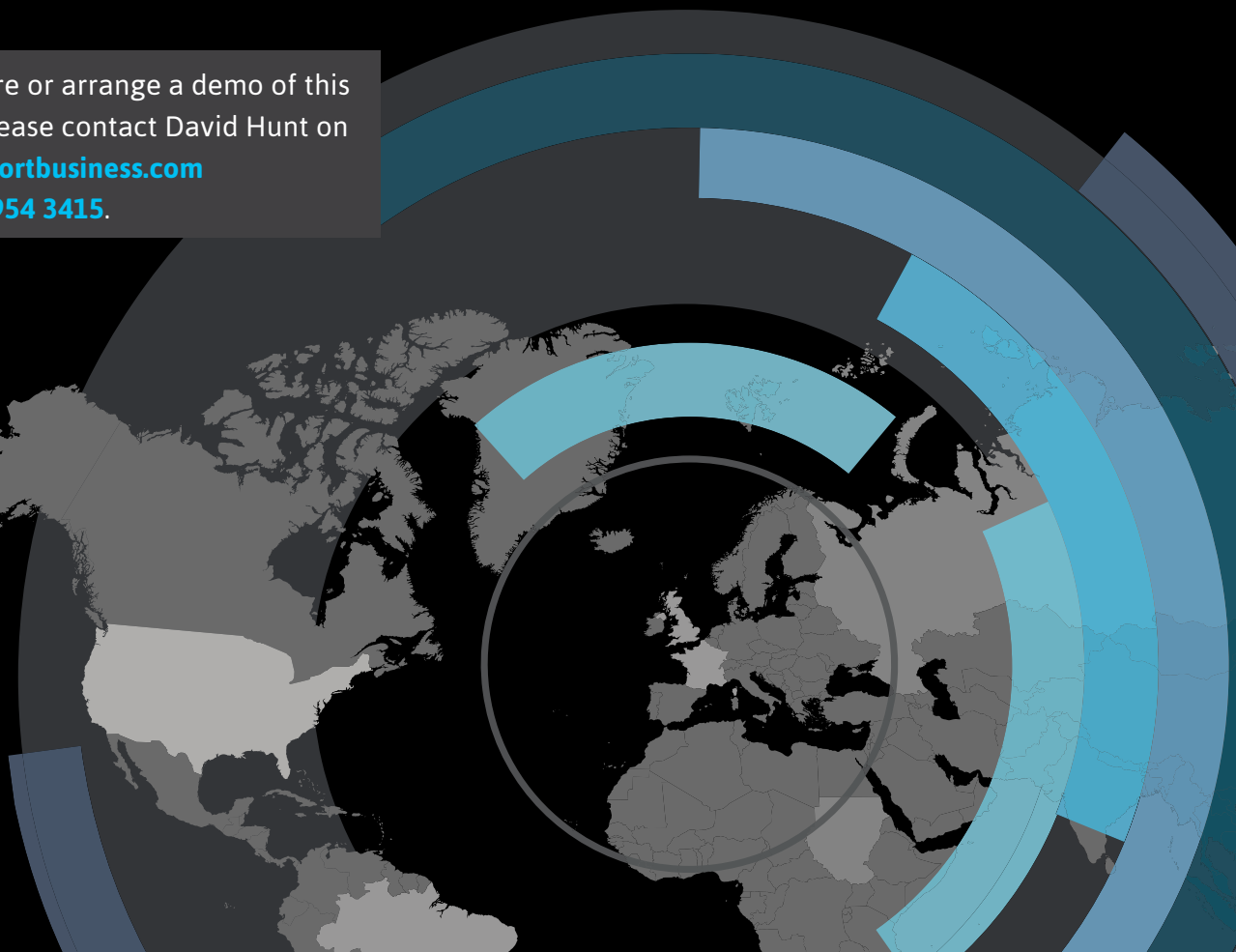
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 15 to January 28**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: Spanish national team, Malaysian Super League and more**

- **Football:** Spanish commercial broadcaster Mediaset sealed a three-year rights deal, from 2015 to 2017, with the Spanish football federation. The deal includes all friendly games featuring the men's, women's and U-21 national teams, plus the final of the Copa del Rey and the annual Supercopa de España (page 2).
- **Football:** The MP & Silva agency agreed a 15-year deal, from 2016 to 2030, with the Football Association of Malaysia, to act as its global adviser for all media and commercial rights relating to various club competitions (page 1).
- **Football:** The Dentsu agency struck a six-year extension, from 2016 to 2021, to its exclusive global rights deal for all tournaments hosted by the East Asian Football Federation. The agreement, which includes marketing rights, covers the East Asian Cup and Women's East Asian Cup national team tournaments plus qualifying and youth events.
- **Football:** French basic-tier sports broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport acquired rights for the Latin American Copa Libertadores and Copa Sudamericana club tournaments. The deal, with the Traffic Sports agency, covers 2015 and 2016 (page 8).
- **Football:** French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports acquired rights for all 26 games of the 2015 Copa América national team tournament, as well as the 2019 edition.
- **Football:** Media company Football Pro Media acquired domestic rights for the Bulgarian top tier, the A PFG. The deal will run for five years, from 2016 to 2020, and is worth a total of BGN30m (€15.3m/\$17.5m). The clubs will receive BGN5.5m in the first two years, BGN6m in the third year and BGN6.5m in the final two years.
- **Football:** Romanian pay-television broadcaster RCS-RDS agreed a sublicensing deal with media company Intel Sky Broadcasting for rights to the country's top-tier Liga 1 and the Cupa Ligii knockout club tournament. The deal, which started immediately and is worth €12m (\$14m) for the remainder of the 2014-15 season, will run until the end of the 2018-19 season. RCS-RDS will exploit the rights via its Digi Sport platform.
- **Football:** Major League Soccer club Real Salt Lake signed a multi-year local rights deal with US media company Sinclair Broadcasting Group. Sinclair's KMYU Utah-based channel will broadcast 26 live regular-season games plus a weekly magazine programme during the 2015 season. Up to six of the team's pre-season matches will be streamed via the KMYU.tv website.
- **Football:** Major League Soccer's Chicago Fire agreed a regional rights deal with regional US pay-television broadcaster Chicago Comcast SportsNet. The deal will run for three years, from 2015 until 2017. Chicago Comcast SportsNet will broadcast live coverage of all Chicago Fire MLS games, with additional programming available online.

SINCE LAST TIME

- American football league the NFL signed a multi-year partnership with YouTube to create an official channel on the video-sharing online platform. The deal with YouTube parent company Google also includes clips on the latter's search engine. Google, which will pay the NFL a multi-million-dollar fee each year to host the channel, will be responsible for advertising sales.
- Digital sports media company Perform struck a long-term strategic partnership with the Reuters news agency to syndicate and distribute content across the two parties' platforms. Reuters' sports footage will be integrated into Perform's Omnisport Ready digital sports video news service, with content also available via the ePlayer, Perform's video player for publishers. Reuters' broadcast news customers will have access to Omnisport Uncut, Perform's sports video news service, which produces about 10,000 clips per year across all major sports.
- Pan-Nordic basic-tier and pay-television broadcaster SBS Discovery Media asked the Norwegian Competition Authority to intervene in the proposed takeover of pan-Nordic pay-television broadcaster C More by Norwegian commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2. It would have an adverse impact on competition for sports-rights, according to SBS director and chief editor Harald Strømme.
- Pan-regional media company Turner Latin America is set to secure complete ownership of Brazilian commercial sports channel

Esporte Interativo. Turner will increase its stake from 20 per cent to 100 per cent by buying out the Top Sports agency's shareholding.

FOOTBALL

- An increase in media-rights income established the English Premier League as the dominant force in the latest Football Money League, the annual ranking of global clubs' turnover by business advisory company Deloitte. Spanish Liga club Real Madrid remained the world's most valuable for the 2013-14 season, with media-rights income of €204.2m (\$237m), accounting for 37 per cent of its total revenues of €549.5m. All 20 Premier League clubs were in the top 40 worldwide rankings for the first time. Manchester United was second overall with media-rights income of €162.3m representing 31 per cent of its total turnover of €518m.
- A start-up company called Novyye Media submitted a proposal to establish a new online channel for Russian football's Premier League. According to Ilya Rustamov, the company's chief executive and a former executive at the league, the channel would have non-exclusive rights for the league's games.
- The Hong Kong Football Association warned ATV it could be stripped of its domestic one-year rights deal for the domestic Premier League football competition due to the free-to-air broadcaster failing to produce the agreed support programming to promote clubs.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 15 to January 28

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

American football, marathon, Aussie Rules, NBA, bobsleigh, boxing and more

- **American Football:** The NFL extended a rights deal for the Thursday Night Football programme with the CBS network in the US. The deal will run for the 2015-16 season, with the league having an option to extend by one season (page 8).
- **American Football:** US pay-television broadcaster CBS Sports Network extended a rights deal for games operated by the Army Athletic Association for five years, from 2015 to 2019. The deal includes coverage of every Army home game and selected neutral fixtures in which the Army is the home team.
- **Athletics:** The TCB Sport Media agency, which launched in September, agreed a three-year deal, from 2015 to 2017, to distribute international rights for the London Marathon.
- **Athletics:** The IEC in Sports agency agreed a four-year deal, from 2015 to 2018, to distribute the global rights for the Dubai Marathon on an exclusive basis, with an option to extend the deal by four years, from 2019 to 2022. IEC will also provide production support to the host broadcaster, state-owned Dubai Sports Channel.
- **Aussie Rules:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven acquired rights for the 2015 West Australian Football League in a deal with the West Australian Football Commission. Seven will provide free-to-air coverage in Western Australia.
- **Basketball:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport sealed a three-year extension of its rights deal with the NBA, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 2).
- **Bobsleigh:** The International Bobsleigh and Tobogganing Federation renegotiated a rights deal for Canadian pay-television broadcaster Rogers Sportsnet to show same-day coverage of all heats during the remainder of the 2014-15 Bobsleigh and Skeleton World Cup.
- **Boxing:** The NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal struck a multi-year rights deal to show the new Premier Boxing Champions series. The NBC network and pay-television channel NBCSN will show live coverage of 20 events on Saturdays in 2015. New Spanish-language channel NBC Universo will show repeats. The deal with the Haymon Boxing management company, the series' promoter, includes online coverage.
- **Boxing:** US pay-television broadcaster Spike TV acquired rights for the Premier Boxing Champions series in a deal with Haymon Boxing. Spike TV will show a total of 33 monthly cards over three years, from 2015 to 2017. More cards could be added to the schedule.
- **Boxing:** UK commercial broadcaster ITV acquired live rights for International Boxing Federation super bantamweight champion Carl Frampton's title defence against Chris Avalos on February 28 in a deal with event promoter Cyclone Promotions. The fight will be shown live on main channel ITV, with the undercard broadcast live on digital channel ITV4.
- **Cricket:** ITV acquired highlights rights of the 2015 Cricket World Cup. ITV's main channel will show highlights of every England match at the One-Day International tournament plus the semi-finals and final. Highlights of other matches will be shown on ITV4.
- **Cycling:** Pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport extended a rights deal for the Vuelta a España for five years, from 2016 to 2020, in a deal with the European Broadcasting Union consortium of free-to-air broadcasters, after the EBU renewed an agreement with Unipublic, the operator of the race, for the same five-year period. Eurosport's deal covers 54 territories in Europe and includes exclusive rights in France, Germany, Italy, Poland and the UK.
- **Cycling:** US pay-television sports broadcaster Universal Sports Network extended a rights deal with the International Cycling Union for four years, from 2015 to 2018. The agreement includes exclusive television and digital rights for the Road World Championships and the World Championship and World Cup events in track cycling, BMX, mountain bike and cyclo-cross.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- US telco AT&T struck a deal to carry new Latin American action sports channel PX TV on its U-Verse pay-television service.
- BT Sport and international pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN signed a seven-year agreement, from 2015 to 2021, to expand the range of ESPN content on the UK pay-television broadcaster's platforms. BT Sport will show up to 5,000 hours of ESPN programming per year, including coverage of the IndyCar US motorsport series, college American football and basketball, the X Games action sports series and the AFL Aussie rules tournament. The agreement includes possible digital media joint ventures.
- Media company CSI Sports struck a deal for its Fight Sports pay-television channel to be carried on telco TeliaSonera's platform in Sweden.
- The Slovak Sport.TV 3 channel ceased broadcasting on January 15, with operator Slovak Sport.TV opting to shift programming onto its other two channels.
- Australian television content group DSI by Inverleigh sealed a three-year partnership, from 2015 to 2017, with De La Hoya TV ahead of the US channel's spring 2015 launch. DSI, the television content arm of sports media company Inverleigh Media Holdings, will provide more than 500 hours of sports entertainment and lifestyle shows to complement De La Hoya TV's original programming.
- Pan-European motorsports channel Motors TV expanded into North and Latin America after striking carriage deals with satellite-television provider Eutelsat and channel distribution agency Thema. Eutelsat's Alterna'TV service will carry Motors TV's main and Spanish-language channels in Latin America, while Thema will distribute the channel in North America.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 15 to January 28

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

Handball World Championships, MMA, motorcycling, world rally and more

- **Handball:** French commercial broadcaster TF1 acquired rights for the 2015 men's World Championship, while public-service broadcaster France Télévisions struck an deal for the women's World Championship later this year, in deals with tournament rights-holder beIN Media Group. Each will co-broadcast the semi-final and final if the French national teams feature.
- **Handball:** German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF acquired rights for extracts of coverage from the 2015 men's World Championship. Under the deal with beIN Media Group, clips of games can be shown in news and sports programmes.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** International pay-television channel RTL9 acquired rights for the Bellator series. Luxembourg-based RTL9 is available in France, Belgium and Switzerland. The length of the deal was not disclosed, but RTL9 will show 16 events this year.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** Russian state broadcaster VGTRK acquired multi-platform rights for the Ultimate Fighting Championship in a one-year deal covering 2015.
- **Motorcycling:** Pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports, which operates in the Indian subcontinent, agreed a five-year deal, from 2015 to 2019, for exclusive rights to the MotoGP series.
- **Motorcycling:** The Dorna Sports agency struck a two-year deal, from 2015 to 2016, to distribute rights for several championships operated by the International Motorcycling Federation, the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme. The deal covers the FIM Trial, X-Trial, Ice Speedway, Speedway GP Challenge, Sidecar and Cross-Country Rallies World Championships plus the International Six Days' Enduro.
- **Motorcycling:** SuperSport, the pay-television broadcaster which operates in sub-Saharan Africa, renewed an exclusive rights deal for the Superbike World Championship. The five-year agreement with the series' commercial rights-holder, Dorna WSBK, runs from 2015 to 2019. The deal includes pre-race programming and, for the first time, qualifying sessions from the championship's support series.
- **Motorsport:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport and commercial broadcaster ITV struck deals for the 2015 World Rally Championship with the series' commercial rights-holder, WRC Promoter. BT Sport's deal comprises live coverage of all 13 rounds plus previews, highlights and archive programming. ITV will show highlights on Tuesday evenings on ITV4 and will increase its online coverage of the series.
- **Motorsport:** Polish commercial and pay-television operator Polsat sealed a two-year deal with WRC Promoter to cover the 2015 and 2016 editions of the World Rally Championship.
- **Motorsport:** StarSat, the South African satellite-television platform operated by pay-television broadcaster On Digital Media, acquired rights for the 2015 and 2016 editions of the World Rally Championship in a deal with WRC Promoter.
- **Motorsport:** Dutch pay-television broadcaster Sport1 acquired rights for the 2015 seasons of the Nascar and IndyCar North American series.
- **Rugby League:** French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports agreed a three-year extension, from 2015 to 2017, to its rights deal for the Super League, which comprises clubs from England and the Catalan Dragons from France. The broadcaster will show all games featuring the Dragons plus other selected fixtures.
- **Rugby League:** French pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports extended a rights deal for the Australian National Rugby League until at least the end of the 2015 season. The broadcaster will show up to two regular season games per day plus the finals.
- **Rugby Union:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus was awarded exclusive Top 14 rights by the Ligue Nationale de Rugby for four seasons, from 2015-16 to 2018-19 (page 5).

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- Media group Discovery Communications, the parent company of pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport, will submit a bid for the next cycle of domestic rights to football's English Premier League. Bids for the three-year cycle, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, are due in early February, with Discovery set to face intense competition from pay-television broadcasters BSkyB and BT Sport, the incumbent rights-holders.
- The German Football Association, the Deutscher Fußball Bund, plans to appoint the Infront Sports & Media agency as the governing body's domestic and international rights distribution partner for the DFB Cup club tournament. The deal will also include marketing rights.
- Italian media group Mediaset denied media reports that it would seek to sublicense some of its exclusive rights to European football club tournament the Uefa Champions League over three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Mediaset described the reports of a possible deal with pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia as "fanciful hypotheses."
- The Ligue Nationale de Rugby, which operates the French rugby union leagues, is considering bids for rights to the final of the top-tier Top 14 and the second-tier Pro D2 leagues. The body received "several offers...for free-to-air and pay-television coverage" of the Top 14 final over five seasons, from 2014-15 to 2018-19. The LNR received five offers for Pro D2 rights over five years, from 2015-16 to 2019-20.
- The Board of Control for Cricket in India launched a tender encompassing digital and television rights for the 2015, 2016 and 2017 seasons of the Indian Premier League Twenty20 tournament. The tender comprises online and mobile rights in the Indian subcontinent plus television, audio, internet and mobile rights in

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 15 to January 28

MEDIA RIGHTS 4

Rugby World Cup, skiing, Squash World Tour, university sport and more

- **Rugby Union:** Canal Plus acquired rights in France for the 2015 Rugby World Cup in a sublicensing deal with commercial broadcaster TF1. Canal Plus will show 29 of the tournament's 48 matches, including 27 on an exclusive basis. TF1 has retained exclusive rights for the remaining games, including all France national team contests, the opening match, the semi-finals, the bronze medal game and the final (page 5).
- **Skiing:** Eurovision, the production division of the European Broadcasting Union consortium of free-to-air broadcasters, and national governing body Alpine Canada jointly struck a deal with Rogers Sportsnet. Sportsnet will broadcast live coverage of the International Ski Federation's ongoing Ski World Cup and the 2015 Alpine World Ski Championships in the Pacific, West, Ontario and East regions of Canada.
- **Squash:** Malaysian pay-television operator Astro acquired live rights for the Professional Squash Association World Tour. The deal, which was brokered by the Broadreach Media agency, will run for three years, from 2015 to 2017.
- **Squash:** Digital sports media company Perform extended a deal to stream live coverage of events on the Professional Squash Association World Tour for three years, from 2015 to 2017.
- **University Sport:** Digital sports content provider Perform agreed a four-year extension, from 2015 to 2018, to its partnership with the International University Sport Federation (Fisu). Perform will provide live and on-demand coverage of Fisu's 2015 winter Universiade multi-sport event. Perform will build and manage an online Fisu TV service, with footage also distributed via Perform's ePlayer video-on-demand platform.
- **Volleyball:** The men's and women's finals of the German Volleyball Federation's DVV Cup club competition will be broadcast live on free-to-air television for the first time after the governing body agreed deals with sports broadcaster Sport1 and regional public-service broadcaster NDR. Sport1 will show the women's final and NDR the men's.

"certain territories" worldwide. Bids must be submitted by February 10 after the board extended the deadline by one week.

Bobsleigh and Skeleton World Cup via its official channel on video-sharing website YouTube.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- US media company NBCUniversal will provide 11 consecutive hours of live streaming content free of charge for the NFL American football Super Bowl between the New England Patriots and the Seattle Seahawks on Sunday, February 1.
- Host Broadcast Services was awarded the production rights for the 2015 Southeast Asian Games multi-sport event in Singapore. HBS will produce live coverage of the 16 sports and disciplines as well as highlights, vignettes and graphics. HBS will work alongside Singapore media company MediaCorp, which was appointed as host broadcaster by Singsoc, the Games' organising committee.
- The International Bobsleigh and Tobogganing Federation will stream live coverage of all remaining events during the 2014-15 Bobsleigh and Skeleton World Cup via its official channel on video-sharing website YouTube.
- German public-service broadcaster ARD called for the handball World Championships to be added to the list of protected sports events reserved for free-to-air coverage in Germany.
- The Infront Sports & Media agency secured coverage with 30 broadcasters covering almost 100 territories for the International Ski Federation's 2015 Freestyle and Snowboard World Championships.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Fox International Channels, the broadcast division of media company 21st Century Fox, appointed Vera Pinto Pereira as the new managing director of its Iberia division. • UK sports production and media company Sunset+Vine appointed John Perera as a commercial consultant.

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