

RUGBY UNION

English hosting pushes Rugby World Cup global media rights revenue up by 50%

By Robin Jellis

Holding this year's Rugby World Cup in England helped World Rugby earn an increase of about 47 per cent in total media rights revenue compared to the 2011 tournament.

World Rugby earned just under £140m (€197m/\$212m) for global television rights to the 2015 tournament. For the 2011 tournament it earned about £95m.

The increase in revenue was driven by two main factors. First, the tournament was held in a more favourable time zone for the lucrative French and UK markets – the 2011 tournament was held in New Zealand. Second, England has an excellent reputation for hosting sporting events and providing top-quality broadcast coverage.

A third factor is the general buoyancy

around rugby union. Rights fees for most top properties have increased in recent times, including: the English Premiership's domestic and international rights; the French Top 14 and ProD2's domestic rights; the Six Nations in the UK and Ireland; and Europe's club rugby competitions in deals around the world.

Global Rugby World Cup television rights are sold by Rugby World Cup Limited, the tournament organisers. RWCL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of World Rugby, the sport's governing body. RWCL is advised on its media rights sales by the IMG Events & Media agency.

After RWCL and IMG agreed on a sales strategy for a respective market, IMG

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EUROLEAGUE

IMG: joint venture is aggressive but realistic

By Callum McCarthy

The IMG Events & Media agency said this week the income projections behind its newly-created 10-season joint venture with basketball's Euroleague were "aggressive, but realistic". The deal will be worth a minimum of €630m (\$679m).

Adam Kelly, senior vice president, head of sales EMEA, and global business development worldwide at IMG, told *TV Sports Markets*: "This is a ground-breaking deal – one of the most significant deals we've done in a number of years. It has the highest possible profile in our

company and we have an elite team working on this."

The joint venture will operate for 10 seasons, from 2016-17 to 2025-26, with the option of being extended for a further 10 seasons until 2035-36.


IMG, supported by the Euroleague, will seek to increase revenue across all aspects of the business: media rights, digital rights, sponsorship rights, licencing, ticketing and merchandising.

The agency will also provide its

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RUGBY UNION

UK and France were main drivers of World Cup revenues

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would hold talks with local broadcasters. RWCL remained the signatory to all deals.

Commercial broadcaster ITV acquired UK rights to both the 2011 and 2015 tournaments for about £80m. The 2011 tournament was worth £32.5m, while the 2015 tournament was worth £47.5m. ITV paid another £25m in production costs for 2015 (*TV Sports Markets* 15:21).

A deal in France with commercial broadcaster TF1, worth €50m, was the second most valuable for 2015. These two deals account for about 64 per cent of the total global value of the tournament (*TV Sports Markets* 17:21).

Sales strategy

RWCL's strategy was focused upon extracting the greatest possible revenue from the top 10 rugby union markets, which would then allow it to strike "strategic" deals in other markets, one source close to the process said.

The top rugby union markets are: France, Ireland, Italy, and the UK in the northern hemisphere; Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa in the southern hemisphere. There is also some value in the emerging rugby markets of Latin America, Japan and the US (see table).

Outside these markets, RWCL aimed to secure the widest possible reach – it is keen to develop interest in rugby union and the World Cup is the sport's showcase event. But even in territories where there is little interest in rugby union, a rights fee was sought.

As one rugby expert said: "You want broadcasters who are invested in the rights, and you do this by making them pay something for it. If you give it away for free they won't be engaged."

The strategy of RWCL over the last decade has been to sell the rights to two tournaments – one in each hemisphere – in a single package to prevent broadcasters from cherry-picking the

Broadcast deals for the 2015 Rugby World Cup in selected territories		
Territory	Rights-buyer	Total fee
UK	ITV	£47.5m
France	TF1	£42m
Australia	Fox Sports	£14.5m
Sub-Saharan Africa	SuperSport	£11.5m
New Zealand	Sky	£5.25m
Ireland	TV3	£3m
Latin America	ESPN	£2m
Italy	Sky Italia	£1.25m
Japan	Dentsu	£1.25m
US	NBCUniversal	£800,000
In-ship rights	Various	£600,000
Middle East and North Africa	OSN	£400,000
UK (Welsh-language)	S4C	£300,000
Fiji and the Pacific Islands	Fiji TV	£250,000
Asia (excluding China and Japan)	Fox International Channels	£250,000
Germany	Eurosport	£150,000
Canada	TSN/RDS	£125,000
Indian subcontinent	Sony Six	£125,000

Source: *TV Sports Markets Rights Tracker*

events played in their own hemisphere. RWCL doesn't always sell two tournaments in one package: in France, TF1 bid for both 2015 and 2019, but its bid for the latter was rejected as too low.

Enhanced coverage

Although the number of territories in which the 2015 Rugby World Cup was broadcast is similar to 2011, more deals were agreed with local free-to-air broadcasters this time.

Examples include agreements with free-to-air broadcasters in the Asian markets of Cambodia (MTV), Indonesia (BeritaSatu), Laos (Lao TV), Macau (TDM), Mongolia (C1 Television), Pakistan (PTV) and Sri Lanka (Rupavahini). These were in addition to a pan-Asian deal, excluding China and Japan, with Fox International Channels worth \$400,000.

There were notable free-to-air deals in: the Netherlands, with commercial broadcaster RTL; Cuba, with Tele Rebelde; and a first free-to-air deal in Germany with sports broadcaster Eurosport.

In Central Asia, RWCL secured further free-to-air coverage following a deal with the Saran Media agency. Deals were struck with: Tan TV in Kazakhstan; KTRK in Kyrgyzstan; TBMC in Turkmenistan; and NTRC in Uzbekistan.

In Latin America, where the rights were acquired by pay-television broadcasters ESPN Brasil and ESPN Latin America, the World Cup secured additional coverage via sublicensing deals with both Canal 7 and Teledoce in Argentina, and Canal 13 in Chile.

The World Cup also agreed deals with nine different cruise ship companies worth a total of about \$950,000. This is said to have been a fourfold increase on the value of similar deals for 2011.

One of the tournament's talking points was Japan's unlikely 34-32 victory against two-time winners South Africa. As a result, Japan's following match against Samoa became the most-watched match in a single territory in Rugby World Cup history, with an audience in Japan of 25m.

Rights in Japan were split between pay-television broadcaster J Sports, commercial broadcaster Nippon TV and public-service broadcaster NHK.

Growing interest in Japan will be a key priority for World Rugby ahead of its hosting of the 2019 tournament.

Bullish 2019 target

World Rugby is said to be bullish in its rights fee projections for the 2019 tournament; it is understood to be aiming to maintain its 2015 revenue, the most earned for any Rugby World Cup.

The body is expected to see a significant

increase in the value of the rights in Japan due to the hosting of the tournament. Advertising agency Dentsu paid \$2m for rights to the 2015 competition.

Maintaining the target will be tough. The value in the top two markets for 2015, the UK and France, is likely to fall due to the time difference in 2019.

Rights fees for the World Cup have not increased as dramatically in Japan as hoped: there is a culture of co-operation

between broadcasters in the territory which often limits rights values.

The first deals for 2019 will be agreed in Japan and the UK. World Rugby is already speaking to broadcasters in the UK, and plans to launch a tender in January. It is planning to tender media rights in Japan at the same time.

In the UK, World Rugby is hoping to take advantage of the strong competition between pay-television broadcasters BT

and Sky for most sports rights, while ITV will be keen to renew.

ITV's ratings were much better than feared following the early exit of the England national team, which failed to qualify from the group stage.

As one source put it, the Rugby World Cup is currently "front and centre of people's thinking". A UK deal will also set a benchmark for other broadcasters in Europe. ■

TV CHINA

IQiyi makes sport play with prestige tennis and golf

By Richard Welbirg

Chinese video streaming platform iQiyi made an aggressive move into sport this month, acquiring digital rights in major deals with the PGA Tour and the Women's Tennis Association.

iQiyi is 80-per-cent owned by Baidu, China's largest search engine, and is the country's second-largest video-streaming platform behind Youku Tudou.

iQiyi has decided to make a serious move into sport, and is believed to have specifically targeted golf and tennis rights because of the sports' integration with the entertainment and fashion sectors.

WTA president Micky Lawler told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "They saw sports as a new form of entertainment... the merging of sports and entertainment.

"And tennis for example, if you take [Ana] Ivanović or [Jelena] Janković, it's your dream reality show, with very positive life lessons."

It will not be the first time iQiyi has carried tennis content. It has previously agreed individual deals with Chinese tournaments on the WTA Tour and shared broadcast rights to the 2015 US Open with state broadcaster CCTV. But this month's deals are on a different scale.

WTA Media, which sells the rights, felt the breadth of the firm's offer – in terms of marketing, promotion and the creation of original content around the rights – was sufficient to overcome any concerns

about its experience. WTA Media is a joint venture between the WTA and the Perform Group which handles broadcast production and media distribution.

Both the WTA and the PGA Tour are understood to have valued iQiyi's plans for developing original ancillary content around the live rights. The WTA's Lawler said: "They are really good on how sports will be consumed. They get that there's got to be much more than live rights."

Tennis

iQiyi will pay between \$160m (€149m) and \$170m for WTA rights over 10 years, from 2017 to 2026, or between \$16m and \$17m per year.

The deal was made possible by the WTA's 10-year, \$525m deal with Perform (*TV Sports Markets* 18:23). Under that agreement, Perform will produce over 2,000 WTA matches each year, up from about 750 matches per year in its existing deal, from 2013 to 2016.

Only about 200 matches per year are currently shown in China. WTA rights in the current cycle are sold internationally by the Lagardère Sports agency on behalf of Perform.

In China, Lagardère sold the rights on to the China Sports Media agency. One source told *TV Sports Markets* the deal was worth just over \$500,000 per year. CSM sells on rights to provincial channels and new media platforms. The WTA currently has no coverage on CCTV.

From 2017, iQiyi will carry coverage of every match. The rights were tendered in September. iQiyi is thought to have fought off three rival new media firms over two rounds of bidding. Le Sports and PPTV are known to have bid. Bidders were able to make offers for both

short- and long-term deals. Details of the final agreement with iQiyi, including the duration, were agreed in negotiations following the tender.

Golf

For the PGA Tour, iQiyi agreed a deal worth between \$9m and \$10m per year, from 2016 to 2020. The deal was struck in direct negotiations. Rights are exclusive in the digital sector.

TV Sports Markets understands the PGA Tour was in advanced negotiations with Le Sports, and at least one other new media firm, before switching to iQiyi.

The PGA Tour is focused on growing the popularity of the sport in China, and has a number of deals across multiple platforms in order to maximise coverage.

Its primary deal is with Guangdong Radio and Television's premium GDTV Golf channel, which carries coverage of all PGA Tour events. A package of non-exclusive rights to 12 events can be sold to other buyers by the PGA Tour.

For these 12 events, it has deals with state broadcaster CCTV, the national satellite Travel Channel and various provincial broadcasters. All its deals terminate at the end of 2015, but will be renewed: the majority in three-year deals.

In the new media sector, Sina manages the PGA Tour's local website and streams all 12 events in a three-year deal from 2013 to 2015. Le Sports agreed a deal covering five events in 2015.

The two deals are thought to have earned the PGA Tour between \$2m and \$3m in 2015. The rise to almost \$10m per year from 2016 is very large given that most events air after midnight in China. ■

EUROLEAGUE

IMG confident new format will yield greater revenues

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expertise on production, event management and hospitality. In particular, IMG will work with host broadcasters to ensure uniform production standards.

Its investment is almost double the €35m the league will earn in the 2015-16 season. It is also 26 per cent higher than the €50m per season which the International Basketball Federation (Fiba), the sport's international governing body, had projected in its plan to wrest control of the competition (see box).

Sources close to the Euroleague say the joint venture has projected profits of €242m over the 10 years. Kelly declined to comment, but said IMG was confident the joint venture made business sense. "It won't be immediate, but we're going to see returns throughout that period. We laid out a detailed business plan to the Euroleague – it's aggressive, but realistic."

He said there is "huge potential" in the Euroleague as a property. "They've built such a strong foundation and yet have a long way to go. What we need to do is really secure the long-term future of the sport in Europe, and if we're going to do that we need to build the property long term, with the best competition format and a clear message of permanence."

Format is key

IMG believes the Euroleague's new format (see panel, page 5) will be the key factor in increasing revenues.

Kelly said the new format would provide broadcasters with a more appealing product, as the best clubs are guaranteed to play each other twice a season. Broadcasters will also be protected against the early exit of local clubs.

The joint venture will also increase broadcaster confidence in the property as it now has a stable long-term future. The Euroleague's existence has come under threat from Fiba's ambition to create its own tournament.

IMG deal ends Fiba's Champions League ambitions

This month's 10-season joint venture deal between the IMG Events & Media agency and basketball's Euroleague puts an end to attempts by the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) to create its own top-tier European club competition.

Fiba is said to be keen to work with the joint venture and is expected to meet IMG and the Euroleague soon. Informed sources say Fiba is pleased with the level of investment offered by IMG and happy that income for Euroleague clubs will increase substantially.

All parties are keen to continue talks that could see the league become sanctioned by Fiba for the first time. The league broke away from the governing body in 2000.

Earlier this month Fiba invited 11 Euroleague clubs to join its own competition, the Basketball Champions League. It had guaranteed €30m (\$32.4m) per season to the clubs, projecting overall income of €50m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:19).

Its proposal was rejected by the Euroleague's A-licence holders, which preferred to continue as majority

owners of the competition. Euroleague clubs own 75 per cent of the competition's holding company, Euroleague Commercial Assets.

The new Euroleague format is similar to the format Fiba had proposed to clubs on November 3. The governing body also sought a 16-club round robin competition, but proposed retaining just eight A-licence holding clubs instead of 11. Fiba wanted a more meritocratic tournament, with greater opportunity for clubs to qualify from domestic leagues.

Fiba has criticised the scheduling of Euroleague matches in the past, saying it hindered the development and popularity of domestic leagues in Europe. Euroleague games are currently played on Thursday and Friday nights, while most domestic league matches take place at weekends.

The Euroleague and IMG have been in discussions about a joint venture for the past year. A number of other agencies were interested in partnering with the Euroleague, but IMG presented the most comprehensive offer. IMG said it had been "a very smooth process". ■

IMG-Euroleague joint venture terms

The IMG Events & Media agency has guaranteed a total of €363m (\$391m) to Euroleague clubs over the first 10 seasons, from 2016-17 to 2025-26. Collectively, the clubs will earn about €30m in 2016-17, with the figure rising each season.

The remaining €267m of the €630m total will be invested in the Euroleague, with a focus on improving production and marketing. Any profit made on the total investment will be split equally

between IMG and the Euroleague.

The joint venture is currently unnamed. It will be 55-per-cent owned by the Euroleague, with the remaining 45 per cent owned by IMG.

Ioris Francini, the agency's president, and Enric Rojas, its head of media affairs in Spain and Portugal, will be heavily involved with the project along with Adam Kelly, senior vice president, head of sales EMEA and global business development worldwide.

Challenges

IMG's huge investment will be difficult to recoup, despite changes to the format of the competition. The Euroleague has a number of long-term broadcast deals

already in place, and difficult conditions in certain core markets are likely to hinder the agency's ability to significantly increase the competition's media rights revenue.

New format for the new Euroleague

The new format of the Euroleague, which will be instated from the 2016-17 season, was key to the IMG Events & Media agency's decision to invest in the property.

The number of participating clubs in the Euroleague will decrease from 24 to 16, but the number of games played will remain about the same – the previous format yielded a maximum of 256 games, while the new format will yield a maximum of 264.

In the current Euroleague format, clubs exiting at the group stage would play just 10 matches each season against a selection of five clubs in their respective groups.

In the new format, the 16 participating clubs will play each other in a round robin format; each club will play a total of 30 matches. The top eight clubs will then play in a best-of-five play-off round, followed by the season-ending Final Four – a one-game semi-final followed by a final and a third-place play-off.

Eleven clubs will retain A-licences which guarantee participation in the Euroleague. These are: Anadolu Efes Istanbul, Barcelona, CSKA Moscow, Fenerbahçe, Maccabi Tel Aviv, Milan, Olympiacos, Panathinaikos, Real Madrid, Saski Baskonia and Žalgiris.

The five remaining places will be earned on merit. One place will be reserved for the winner of the Eurocup, the Euroleague's second-tier competition. Another will be reserved for the winner of a wildcard tournament contested by eight clubs.

The remaining three places will be earned by champions of three domestic leagues in Europe. The Euroleague has yet to confirm which domestic leagues will have qualification rights.

The format of the Eurocup will also change, as the competition will be reduced from 32 to 24 clubs. Of the 24 places, 21 will be earned through qualification from domestic leagues, with the remaining three reserved for wildcard invitations.

Deals in the core markets of Greece and Turkey, home to three of the 11 Euroleague A-licence clubs, expire in 2017-18 and 2018-19 respectively. Market conditions in Greece are not conducive to a large increase, despite the popularity of basketball in the country.

A newly-signed five-season deal in the Nordics and Baltics with commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group expires in 2019-20, three years into IMG's period of investment (*TV Sports Markets* 19:19).

The Euroleague also has a five-season title sponsorship deal with Turkish Airlines, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, worth €6.7m per season.

The decreasing number of participating clubs could have a negative impact on sales in France and Germany. Both territories are home to participating clubs in the current format – Bayern Munich and Brose Baskets from Germany, Limoges and Strasbourg from France – but none of these clubs are A-licence

holders that qualify automatically.

As a result of the new 16-team format, their chances of qualifying for the competition will be greatly reduced, in turn reducing the value of the property to local broadcasters.

The Euroleague must also compete with the increasing popularity of the National Basketball Association. From this season the NBA has been broadcasting at least one game per weekend in European prime-time.

However, IMG will soon have the opportunity to negotiate a new deal in Spain, a core market for the sport.

The Euroleague has an agreement with pay-television operator Canal Plus and a number of regional broadcasters. Canal Plus pays €1.5m per season from 2013-14 to 2015-16, and strong competition in the sector could produce a large increase. Including regional deals, the total value of the rights in Spain is €3m per season. ■

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

FOOTBALL

Football League seeks advice for international rights

By Robin Jellis

England's Football League is in the process of selecting a consultant to advise on the sale of its international media rights, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

The league has shortlisted three companies as possible consultants: Future Media Services, working with consultant Marc Watson; Oliver & Ohlbaum, which is working with consultant Phil Lines; and the Pitch International agency. A decision is expected by the end of November.

The league was previously advised on its deals by David Kogan, formerly of the Wasserman Media Group agency.

The league wanted to carry out an independent review of its media rights in order to maximise their value.

Football League international rights are currently distributed by Pitch in a five-season deal, from 2012-13 to 2016-17. Pitch pays a minimum guarantee of between \$19m (€17.7m) and \$20m per season. The league is not thought to earn any revenue above the guarantee (*TV Sports Markets* 19:4).

A large chunk of the revenue Pitch earns from selling the rights is said to come from beIN Media Group. BeIN holds the rights in: the Middle East and North Africa; Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia and the Philippines in Asia; France; Australia; the US and Canada.

The process of selecting a consultant is believed to have been triggered by an aggressive offer from Pitch, worth an average of £22.5m (€31.6m/\$34m) per season, to extend its existing deal.

It is understood the league believes it can earn more than this in a new deal. The league is seeking a three-season deal in the next cycle, from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

The rights cover the three leagues below the Premier League – the Championship, League One and League Two – as well as the League Cup and Football League Trophy knockout competitions. ■

OLYMPIC GAMES

PSBs can buy volume and choice, but only one feed available

By Frank Dunne

Many of Europe's public-service broadcasters are likely to provide a similar amount of linear coverage of the Olympic Games from 2018 compared to previous editions, despite having lost out on the rights to Discovery Communications.

However, the broadcasters will not be able to provide their viewers with any multi-screen or interactive offerings.

TV Sports Markets understands that in initial talks about sublicensing rights from media group Discovery, broadcasters have been told they will not be limited to the minimum number of hours of free-to-air coverage laid down by the International Olympic Committee. These are 200 hours for the summer Games and 100 hours for the winter Games.

One head of sport at a European public-service broadcaster said the indications were that his broadcaster would be able to dedicate a channel entirely to the Games,

with all-day coverage and editorial freedom to switch coverage between events. He said this was broadly in line with what the broadcaster had provided when it held the rights exclusively through its membership of the European Broadcasting Union.

Another EBU member said: "Being able to switch live between events is the only way to cover the Olympics, it's the only way to tell the story."

However, free-to-air broadcasters that acquire rights from Discovery will only be able to offer a single feed. This would enable them to switch between events, as usual, but not to show two events simultaneously, either through multi-channel devices or via streaming.

All multi-channel propositions will be reserved for Eurosport, the international sports broadcaster operated by Discovery.

Some experts say such a strategy would be a shrewd one. It would enable Discovery to secure substantial sublicensing fees in many markets to help refinance its investment, and would avoid problems relating to listed-events legislation.

Discovery paid €1.3bn (\$1.44bn) for the exclusive European rights to the Games of 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024. The deal excludes the 2018 and 2020 rights in

the UK and France, where they had already been sold. The deal also excludes Russia (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13).

Prior to entering into substantive negotiations with free-to-air broadcasters, which are likely to begin next year, Discovery will assess whether it makes sense to retain free-to-rights for its own channels in some markets. These include basic-tier and free-to-air channels owned by SBS Discovery Media in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; youth-oriented Dmax in Spain; Dmax and DeeJay in Italy; and lifestyle channel Quest in the UK.

Few experts believe Discovery would ever put Olympic coverage on channels like DeeJay and Quest, and there are question marks as to whether this would be possible due to local listed-events legislation regarding penetration rates.

The IOC would clearly prefer to have free-to-air channels with a larger market share and higher profile. However, having a free-to-air option at least gives Discovery a slightly stronger bargaining position.

Some insiders believe Discovery will adopt a different strategy in the UK and France, possibly involving a sharing deal which could enable Eurosport to provide coverage of the 2018 and 2020 Games. ■

RUGBY UNION

Strong bidding helps Six Nations double fee in Irish market

By Robin Jellis

Aggressive bidding from free-to-air broadcasters in Ireland helped the Six Nations Committee double its media rights fee in the territory last week.

Commercial broadcaster TV3 agreed a four-year deal, from 2018 to 2021, worth about €5m (\$5.4m) per year. This is a 100-per-cent increase on the current fee in Ireland: public-service broadcaster RTÉ holds the rights from 2014 to 2017 in a deal worth about €2.5m per year.

There was a third bidder: Irish-language free-to-air broadcaster TG4, which tabled a low offer. There were no bids from

pay-television broadcasters BT Sport, Setanta or Sky. Contrary to media reports, there was no TG4/Sky joint bid.

The increase was driven by RTÉ's desire to retain the rights, and the determination of TV3 to wrest them from RTÉ.

TV3 was acquired by media group Liberty Global this July, and its backing is said to have played a significant role in the acquisition. Liberty is the largest cable company in the world: it has 27m customers across 14 territories.

One local source said: "Since TV3 came on air in the late 1990s they would not have bid for something as big as the Six Nations; they would not have had the money. But RTÉ can only spend so much, and TV3 have deeper pockets now."

The Six Nations Committee, and agency adviser Bridge Television, held talks with broadcasters before inviting bids.

One of the reasons the committee is said to be happy to switch coverage to

TV3 is the low bidding of RTÉ the last time the rights were sold. Then, at a time of little competition, RTÉ forced the price down from the €3m per year it paid between 2010 and 2013.

Rugby union is very popular in Ireland. The national team has won the last two Six Nations tournaments, and in the last two years matches have attracted average audiences of 400,000 to RTÉ. There are about 1.4m television homes in Ireland.

TV3's broadcast of the 2015 Rugby World Cup played an important part in it acquiring Six Nations rights.

First, it proved that rugby can provide TV3 with big audiences: it twice broke its record audience during the tournament. The Ireland-Italy match had a reach of 1.375m viewers (a share of about 64 per cent), before the Ireland-France match reached 1.634m viewers (a share of almost 73 per cent). The Ireland-Argentina match reached 1.584m (a share

of just under 74 per cent).

Second, it showed the Six Nations that TV3 could successfully broadcast a top-class rugby competition. TV3 paid about £3m for its World Cup rights (*TV Sports Markets* 19:14).

In a statement, RTÉ's group head of sport Ryle Nugent said: "Every possible effort was made by RTÉ to retain these rights." He added that RTÉ put forward "the best possible bid within our means".

The Six Nations will cover production costs – it has chosen to centrally produce all matches to ensure consistent production standards across all venues.

All Six Nations teams play five home matches across two tournaments. One source estimated production costs to be about €100,000 per match for Ireland home matches, and higher for England, France and Wales home matches.

Impact

Most top sport in Ireland has traditionally been shown by RTÉ. The public-service broadcaster has deals in place for next year's Olympic Games, the Euro 2016 tournament and for some coverage of the Uefa Champions League.

It also has rights to the European Qualifier matches of the Irish national football team from 2014-15 to 2017-18, and the 2018 and 2022 Fifa World Cups, both as part of consortium bids with the European Broadcasting Union.

The Six Nations will become TV3's most important property. It has rights to some Champions League matches, the FA Cup final and delayed rights to the Ultimate Fighting Championship. But Liberty's aggression is expected to see TV3's sports portfolio expand.

One criticism of TV3 has been its use of advertisements around its coverage of sport. TV3 is allowed to show 12 minutes of advertisements per hour, while RTÉ is allowed to show six minutes per hour.

Although RTÉ will lose Six Nations rights it is expected to see out the last two years of its deal, as the tournament provides it with big audiences. If it should choose to sublicense rights it must seek approval from the committee.

Exclusive home matches

The agreement in Ireland comes after the

deal in the UK with public-service broadcaster the BBC and commercial broadcaster ITV. That deal is worth £50m per year from 2016 to 2021, up from £41m per year – a 22-per-cent increase.

In that agreement, ITV will show home matches of the English, Irish and Italian national teams; the BBC will show home matches of the French, Scottish and Welsh national teams. ITV is blocked in Ireland, but the BBC is still available. This means that, despite overspill, TV3's coverage of Ireland home matches will be exclusive.

The Six Nations will next look to sell its rights in France and Italy, before selling rest of the world rights. These are held by France Télévisions, Discovery and Pitch International respectively. ■

BASKETBALL

NBA secures increases in latest international deals

By Callum McCarthy

The National Basketball Association has finalised a string of deals outside its domestic US market in recent weeks, securing large increases in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and India, and a modest uplift in Poland.

The basketball league also sold in-flight and in-ship rights to the IMG Events & Media agency's Sport 24 channel.

The vast majority of the NBA's media rights revenue comes from its domestic market, where media companies Disney and Turner Broadcasting pay \$930m per season (€864m) between 2008-09 and 2015-16 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:19).

Outside the US, the league operates a market-by-market strategy. Its international rights are worth about \$250m per season, and are increasing in value by about 20 per cent per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:10).

Germany, Austria and Switzerland

In Germany, Austria and Switzerland, the league has more than doubled its income in a deal with the Perform Group.

Perform will pay an average of just over \$3m per season for rights to eight

regular-season NBA games per week. It has agreed to sublicense five of these games per week to other broadcasters in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons.

Perform will show the NBA on its OTT service, which will launch at the beginning of the 2016-17 season, as well as continuing to operate the NBA's German-language website.

The deal is for a minimum of five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, with an extension dependent on the success of the OTT service. The NBA will monitor its ratings and the service's subscription numbers before taking any decision to extend the deal.

As the OTT service will not launch until 2016-17, Perform will pay about \$2.2m in 2015-16, with the fee rising substantially in the following seasons.

The average per-season fee in the new deal represents an increase of about 131 per cent on the NBA's previous deals covering the three territories. In the 2013-14 and 2014-15 seasons, the league earned \$1.3m per season in deals with Perform and sports broadcaster Sport1.

In the previous cycle, Perform paid \$800,000 per season for one live game and rights to the NBA's German domain name. Sport1 paid \$500,000 per season for the right to show between two and four live games per week.

It is unclear how many games Perform will sublicense from 2017-18 onward, but it is thought to have an obligation to ensure the NBA has a presence on linear broadcast channels throughout its deal.

Sport1 has acquired three live regular-season games per week from Perform in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons. It will also show selected games from the playoffs and every game from the finals.

Telco Deutsche Telekom will show two live regular-season games per week, including exclusive rights to the NBA's European prime-time game each Sunday. The other three games will be streamed for free on Perform's spox.com website.

The large increase was due to strong competition for the rights. Perform needed premium content for its OTT service, while Sport1 needed the NBA for its American sports pay-television channel, Sport1 US. Sport1 is thought to have shown strong interest in the rights

before they were awarded to Perform.

Deutsche Telekom shows both the Basketball Bundesliga, Germany's top-tier domestic basketball league, and the Euroleague, European basketball's premier competition.

Germany currently has two high-profile players in the NBA – Dirk Nowitzki of the Dallas Mavericks and Dennis Schröder of the Atlanta Hawks.

The league responded to the heightened broadcaster interest by doubling the number of live games available – from four to eight per week. The increased content was also a factor behind the fee increase.

Additionally, the NBA will continue to run its League Pass OTT subscription service in tandem with Perform's OTT offering with no blackouts – all games will be available live and on-demand.

Poland

In Poland, the league renewed its deal with pay-television platform NC Plus. Uplift on the previous deal is about 11 per cent; basketball experts believe the increase is not larger as the price was already considered a high one.

NC Plus will pay about \$3.1m per season for exclusive rights in a two-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2016-17. In its previous four-season deal, from 2011-12 to 2014-15, it paid \$2.8m per season.

NC Plus will broadcast the same number of games per week as it did in the previous cycle. It will show between three and four live regular-season games per weekend on its nSport Plus channel, including games on Saturdays and Sundays at more favourable times for European viewers. It will also show the playoffs and finals.

There was no formal bidding process; the NBA negotiated privately with interested broadcasters. The league spoke to pay-television broadcaster Eleven Sports Network, sports broadcaster Eurosport, and commercial and pay-television broadcaster Polsat. Eleven did not bid as aggressively as expected.

Local experts believe Eleven is keeping its powder dry. A tender for rights in Europe to English football's Premier League was issued on November 2, and it is thought this will be the main battleground for the two broadcasters.

The deadline for bids across the region is November 24.

India

In India, the league renewed its deal with pay-television broadcaster Sony for five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, securing an increase of about 38 per cent. The deal is designed to create a long-term home for the NBA in India.

Sony will pay about \$1.8m per season for exclusive rights. In its previous three-season deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, it paid \$1.3m per season. Interest from rival pay-television broadcaster Star is thought to have been limited.

The fee takes the longer, five-season term into account, as well as the NBA's growing popularity in India. Ratings for NBA programming have risen by about 15 per cent year-on-year since 2012.

Sony will show two live regular-season games per weekend, selected play-off games and the NBA Finals on pay-television sports channel Sony Six. It will also broadcast highlights of NBA games.

Sony will also provide more bespoke coverage of the league. It will produce a weekly highlights show, daily recaps and an in-studio broadcast to link its two live games, which are broadcast consecutively on Sunday mornings.

Sport 24

The deal with IMG's in-flight and in-ship sports channel is for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and is worth between \$300,000 and \$400,000 per season.

The rights cover all territories outside the US. The NBA's current patchwork of domestic deals means it would be difficult for the league to carve out a package of in-flight and in-ship rights in the US.

The league previously agreed one-off deals to show the playoffs and finals on cruise ships and airlines. These deals are thought to have earned the league between \$100,000 and \$200,000 per deal.

The NBA's experience of selling these rights enabled them to establish a benchmark for what an international, season-long package would be worth.

Sport 24 will broadcast just over 100 matches from the NBA regular season, playoffs and finals. ■

FOOTBALL

Le Sports beats rivals to carry AFC flame in China

By Richard Welbirg

The Asian Football Confederation will enjoy an almost eightfold increase in the value of its rights in China in its new deal with Le Sports.

The new media company will pay \$110m (€102m) across four years, from 2017 to 2020, or \$27.5m per year. This is a 686-per-cent increase on the \$14m, or \$3.5m per year, paid by Great Sports Media between 2013 and 2016. Great Sports Media is a subsidiary of Shanghai Media Group.

The deal was agreed with the Lagardère Sports agency – the AFC's global media rights and marketing partner.

There are two main reasons for the huge increase in value. First, the explosive growth of China's digital rights market. Second, the competition between new media companies seeking to carve out a position in that market.

Andrew Georgiou, Lagardère Sports & Entertainment's chief operating officer, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "I think it's developed in two main ways: some very positive sentiment from the Chinese government about the development of football, and some positive commitment to the development of the digital space.

"Various organisations are fighting for market share in that digital space, all on different platform models. And obviously football is at the forefront of that."

At least six firms responded to Lagardère's tender, issued in September, including Great Sports Media, state broadcaster CCTV, and the China Sports Media agency, as well as Le Sports. It was the first time Lagardère had tendered the rights in China; previous deals were agreed in direct negotiations.

A third reason is the increasing competitiveness of Chinese clubs in the AFC Champions League. Guangzhou Evergrande won the competition in 2013 and will face the UAE's Al-Ahli in this year's final on November 21.

The deal covers 12 AFC properties, including women's and age-group international football. The three key properties are the Champions League, the 2019 Asian Cup national team tournament, and the third round of Asian qualifying for the 2018 Fifa World Cup.

This represents a slight gamble for Le Sports as the Chinese national team is third in its second-round group with two matches to play, needing to finish at least second to have a chance of reaching the third round. If it reaches the third round, the property would become very lucrative.

Gatekeeper

In the current deal, Great Sports Media broadcasts AFC content on its Great Sports channel and sells rights on to two agencies: CSM, which handles deals with television and video streaming portals, and Ocean Sports & Entertainment Marketing, which handles other new media buyers.

These distribute live rights in deals with CCTV, about five provincial channels, and four new media platforms: Le Sports, Sina, Sohu and PPTV.

Le Sports's proposal to the AFC included plans to ensure coverage of AFC properties is as wide as possible. Specific sublicensing proposals are some way off, but it expects to have between 15 and 17 provincial broadcast partners and three to four new media partners, as well as CCTV.

There is an obligation to show Chinese national team matches in the various competitions on terrestrial television. Matches of Chinese clubs in AFC tournaments must be shown on clubs' local terrestrial sports channels.

Stake

In late October, Le Sports bought a 20-per-cent stake in Lagardère Sports's Asia-focused division for \$75m.

The division was known as World Sport Group until Lagardère unified its agencies under the Lagardère Sports brand in September.

Georgiou said the deal means Lagardère has "the ability to leverage a significant position in China which previously we didn't have. It's always been a difficult market. We thought the time was right to find a strategic partner". ■

FOOTBALL

MP & Silva takes the ball back in second round of APAC deals

By Richard Welbirg

MP & Silva's clean sweep of markets in the Premier League's second group of Asia-Pacific rights sales has reasserted the agency's position in the region.

It agreed a deal last week worth about \$43.3m (€40.2m) per season for the league's rights for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, covering five territories: Chinese Taipei, Mongolia, the Pacific Islands, South Korea and Vietnam.

It concluded the Premier League's second group of tenders in the region; agencies could not bid in the first tender (*TV Sports Markets* 19:20).

Agencies and broadcasters could make individual bids in the seven territories comprising the second tender group: the five listed above, as well as Japan and the Philippines. Those who bid in all seven territories were permitted to bid for them as a package: MP & Silva and the IMG Events & Media agency did so.

After the first round of bidding, which closed on November 3, the league awarded rights in Japan and the Philippines on the basis of MP & Silva's individual bids. MP & Silva's fee in Japan will be \$87m over the three seasons from 2016-17 to 2018-19, or \$29m per season, rather than the \$80m total reported in the last edition of *TV Sports Markets*.

In the second round, which closed on November 9, the rules were the same: those who bid individually in each of the five remaining territories could also make a single bid for a package of all five. MP & Silva's combined bid is thought to have been more than \$20m ahead of IMG's over the course of the contract, or about \$6.7m per season.

The combined bid is thought to be slightly higher than the total of MP & Silva's individual territory bids. The Premier League would require a premium to award the complete package to one bidder if it was behind in one or more of the individual territories.

Winning Premier League rights across the region strengthens MP & Silva's portfolio at a time when the agency is looking to sell equity. After a year of discussions with potential investors, the agency launched a formal sales procedure in September, which remains underway.

Co-founder Andrea Radrizzani sold the majority of his holding to Riccardo Silva, the agency's other co-founder, in August. Until then, Radrizzani and Silva had owned a combined 89 per cent of the firm.

Radrizzani retains a small shareholding but is no longer involved in operations having founded pay-television broadcaster Eleven Sports Network in May.

Radrizzani had historically led the agency's Asian operations, and there were suggestions the loss of his relationships and knowledge could weaken the firm in the region. This deal suggests otherwise, though the agency will have to sell on rights in a number of difficult markets.

South Korea

South Korea was the lynchpin market in MP & Silva's deal. The value was expected to fall significantly, as media group SBS is believed to have lost money on its \$15m per season deal in the current 2013-14 to 2015-16 cycle.

MP & Silva's offer of \$14m per season saves the league from a large decline in value, but creates some difficulties for the agency. One local expert told *TV Sports Markets* a broadcaster would struggle to break even if it paid any more than \$10m per season for the rights.

Almost all South Korean homes have a pay-television subscription, but the average revenue per user is very low. The largest buyers of sport are the basic-tier cable sports channels operated by SBS, commercial channel MBC and national broadcaster KBS. The majority of their income comes from advertising.

MP & Silva has two possible buyers for the rights: SBS and Eclat, which owns IPTV broadcaster SpoTV. Both are thought to have bid between \$9m and \$10m per season in the first round of the Premier League tender.

Neither KBS nor MBC would be prepared to bid for the rights at these prices. KBS's N Sports channel broadcasts Spain's LaLiga at similar times, while

MBC's budget is largely taken up by its deal for Major League Baseball.

Only SBS might be prepared to lose a small amount of money on a deal, as the Premier League is its flagship property and carries a degree of prestige.

Vietnam

The most significant growth for the league across the region was in Vietnam, where MP & Silva bid \$26m per season for the rights from 2016-17 to 2018-19.

This is more than double the \$12m per season IMG pays in the current cycle. Vietnam's pay-television market has grown considerably, from 3.7m subscribers in 2011 to 9.9m at the end of June 2015, according to the country's Ministry of Information and Communication.

In the current cycle the majority of rights are sublicensed to K Plus of VSTV, a joint venture between national broadcaster VTV and French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus.

MP & Silva may find it difficult to recoup its investment through a traditional sublicensing agreement. The MIC has repeatedly encouraged Vietnamese broadcasters not to bid for Premier League rights, or to form a negotiating group, in order to keep fees down.

One rights expert told *TV Sports Markets* the only way to make money in the market at current prices would be to create a channel with a local partner and agree carriage deals with local operators.

Mongolia

In Mongolia, the agency is thought to have offered \$1m per season. IMG pays \$500,000 per season in the current cycle.

After National Basketball Association rights, the Premier League is the key sport property in the country. IMG sublicenses rights in the current cycle to pay-television broadcaster SPS HD.

It is thought to be a profitable deal for the agency, but Mongolia's economy is weaker than in 2012, when the rights were last sold, and the Mongolian tugrik has depreciated severely against the dollar. SPS also has to contend with overspill from broadcasters in China and Russia.

A source close to the broadcaster said it would be unwilling to pay any more than \$1m per season.

Singtel renews deal in Singapore at slight decline

Pay-television broadcaster Singtel retained Premier League rights in Singapore for the 2016-17 to 2018-19 cycle. It will pay about \$78.3m (€72.7m) per season, down about two per cent from \$80m per season in the current 2013-14 to 2015-16 cycle.

The league invited both three- and six-season bids, as it sought the potential of a premium from a long-term deal in a market that has been flat for three cycles. Bidders were required to submit offers over both durations.

Singtel paid \$80m per season for the rights in the 2010-11 to 2012-13 cycle. The market has become difficult for rights-holders because of cross-carriage legislation introduced in March 2010 (*TV Sports Markets* 16:17).

The legislation requires a buyer of exclusive rights to make the content available on competitors' platforms.

Thus, rival StarHub's customers can buy

the package of Singtel's eight mio Stadium channels and one subscription on-demand channel. Singtel retains all revenues associated with the sale of the package, but must pay StarHub a carriage fee for each channel.

StarHub bid for the rights, but there is no incentive for it to increase the fee given the current legislation.

BeIN Media Group also bid. It is yet to launch channels in the country, but acquired LaLiga rights there in August (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

There was no bid from sports broadcaster Eurosport, which had previously indicated an interest in the property (*TV Sports Markets* 19:8).

Its need for premium content eased after Discovery Communications, Eurosport's owner, agreed a carriage deal with Singtel in August. A carriage deal with StarHub had been in place since 2008. ■

It is the only plausible buyer: it faces no pay-television competition, while commercial channels have cut sports-rights spending.

SPS was invited to bid in the Premier League tender, but chose not to. SPS had a provisional deal in place with IMG had the agency won the rights.

Chinese Taipei & the Philippines

MP & Silva is the incumbent in Chinese Taipei, having acquired the rights in a deal for the 2013-14 to 2015-16 cycle that included the Philippines.

The rights had initially been bought by the KJ Sports n Media agency, but it handed them back to the league as it was unable to agree deals with broadcasters.

MP & Silva will pay \$500,000 per season in the Philippines from 2016-17 to 2018-19, and is thought to have bid the same amount in Chinese Taipei.

In the current cycle, the rights are thought to be worth about \$330,000 per season in Chinese Taipei and about \$400,000 per season in the Philippines.

The Premier League is not a top property in either market. Chinese Taipei is primarily a baseball market, while basketball and boxing are the most

popular sports in the Philippines.

In the current cycle, rights in the Philippines were exploited by the agency's joint-venture channels with beIN Media Group. MP & Silva's stake in the channels across Asia was bought out by beIN this September (*TV Sports Markets* 19:12).

In Chinese Taipei, the agency was unable to acquire a licence for the beIN-branded channel.

Pacific Islands

MP & Silva pays \$1.6m per season in the current cycle for exclusive rights in New Zealand and 15 Pacific Islands. The Pacific Islands account for about \$500,000 per season (*TV Sports Markets* 16:22).

It is thought to have offered about \$660,000 per season for the rights in the 2016-17 to 2018-19 cycle.

Remaining markets

The Premier League is yet to tender its rights in Indonesia. Rights in the Indian subcontinent were tendered on November 10 with bids due on December 9.

The league remains in direct talks with broadcasters in Malaysia and Myanmar, where there was no winner from tenders which closed on November 2. ■

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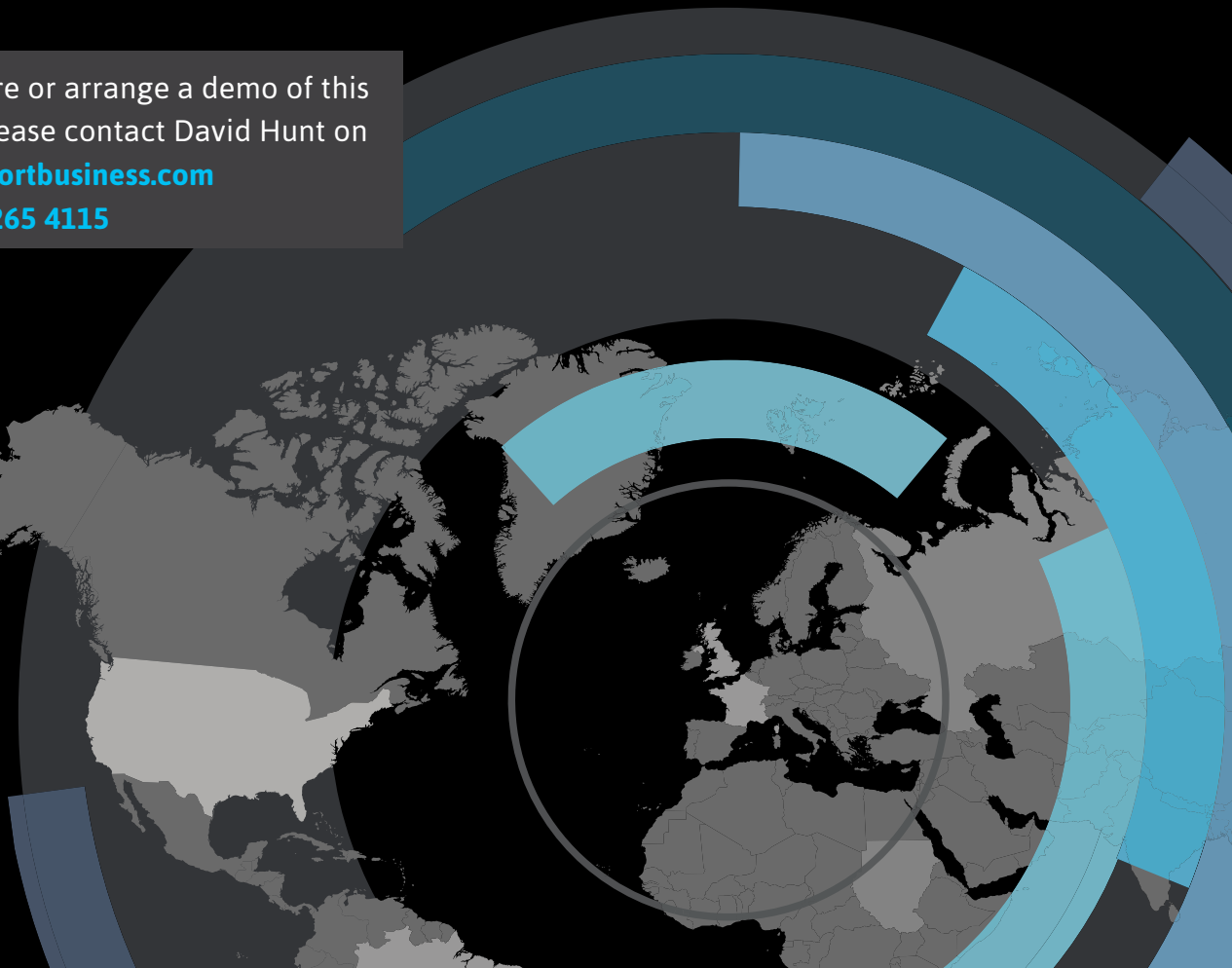
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from November 5 to 18**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: Premier League, Euro 2016, Russian Premier League and more**

- **Football:** The MP & Silva agency confirmed deals to distribute English Premier League rights in multiple territories in Asia. The deal will run for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 9).
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky renewed a deal in the UK for near-live extended highlights of the English Premier League for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Sky will be able to show extended highlights of all 212 matches that are not broadcast live on television. For the first time, viewers will be able to watch the highlights on demand.
- **Football:** Sky acquired six packages of English Premier League rights in the Republic of Ireland. Sky will show up to 33 games at 3pm on Saturday afternoons as well as games on Friday evenings and Sundays in the new three-season cycle, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Sky will show exclusive live coverage of up to 159 games per season.
- **Football:** Singaporean telco Singtel extended a deal for the English Premier League for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 10).
- **Football:** The TV Media Sport agency acquired free-to-air rights to 12 games from the Uefa Euro 2016 national team tournament across 38 African territories: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The deals were brokered by the CAA Eleven agency on behalf of Uefa, the sport's European governing body.
- **Football:** The BBC Northern Ireland division of UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired live rights for the Northern Ireland national team's home friendly games ahead of Uefa Euro 2016, in a deal with the Irish Football Association.
- **Football:** Italian pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia acquired rights for the Russian Premier League. The duration of the deal was not disclosed.
- **Football:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus acquired rights for the 2015 Fifa Club World Cup. Canal Plus will broadcast eight matches from the tournament in Japan.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Euroleague Basketball signed a 10-season deal with the IMG Events & Media agency to establish a new joint-venture to operate relaunched European club competitions from the start of the 2016-17 season. The deal includes an option for an additional 10 seasons through to 2035-36 and features a remodelling of Europe's top basketball tournament structures. The Euroleague and IMG will manage the commercial operation and all global media and marketing rights. The top-tier Euroleague will have 16 teams, including 11 permanent franchises, and the second-tier Eurocup will have 24 teams (page 1).
- An arbitration decision stating that US regional cable-television broadcaster MASN owed Major League Baseball's Washington Nationals \$298m (€277m) for the US franchise's media rights was thrown out by a New York judge. MASN, which is controlled by MLB's Baltimore Orioles, filed a lawsuit against the arbitration process in the New York State Supreme Court last year. The action claimed the arbitration, over a dispute surrounding the value of the Nationals' rights from 2012 to 2016, was improper because the law company representing the Nationals, Proskauer Rose, had also worked for MLB and the teams of all three MLB franchise owners who sat in arbitration.
- Chinese e-commerce company Alibaba Group agreed to acquire online video platform Youku Tudou in a deal worth about \$3.7bn (€3.44bn). Youku Tudou chief executive Victor Koo, who owns about 18 per cent of Youku Tudou, will retain his position after the deal closes in the first quarter of 2016. In September, Alibaba, Chinese internet company Sina, and private equity company Yunfeng Capital established a joint venture to intended to transform the country's sports industry.
- Media company Liberty Global announced a £3.5bn (€4.9bn/\$5.3bn) deal to acquire Cable & Wireless Communications, the London Stock Exchange-listed telco. The takeover, which was recommended by the board of the telco, is expected to close in the second quarter of 2016.
- Five Spanish consumer organisations filed a complaint with the country's industry ministry relating to the performance of the Mediapro agency's TotalChannel OTT platform, which carries coverage of the Uefa Champions League club football competition. The Asociación de Internautas, Unión de Consumidores de Cataluña, Asociación pro Derechos Civiles, Económicos y Sociales, Unión de Consumidores de la Comunidad Valenciana and Unión de Consumidores de Andalucía called on the ministry to intervene, citing TotalChannel's interruptions, registration problems and general poor service. TotalChannel blamed the problems on internet infrastructure in Spain, rather than its own platform.
- Russian pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus acquired assets held by state-owned broadcaster VGTRK on behalf of free-to-air broadcaster Match TV, which launched on November 1. Both NTV Plus and Match TV are operated by Russian media group Gazprom Media Holding. The transaction included online sports platform sportbox.ru.
- International sports broadcaster Eurosport unveiled a new brand identity following its takeover by US media and entertainment

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from November 5 to 18

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

Biathlon, Bangladesh Premier League, e-sports, gymnastics and more

- **Biathlon:** French digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 acquired rights for events hosted by the International Biathlon Union. The deal covers nine stages of the IBU World Cup between November 2015 and March 2016, as well as the senior and junior world championships and the IBU Cup. The rights were acquired from the European Broadcasting Union, which brokered the deal on behalf of the IBU.
 - **Cricket:** UK pay-television broadcaster Premier Sports acquired rights for the Bangladesh Premier League Twenty20 tournament. The deal covers all 34 games of the 2015 edition.
 - **E-sports:** French digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 agreed a deal to show the final of the 2015 Electronic Sports World Cup.
 - **Golf:** NBC Universo, the Spanish-language cable channel of US media company NBCUniversal, acquired rights for the third and final rounds of the PGA Tour's OHL Classic at Mayakoba in Quintana Roo, Mexico.
 - **Gymnastics:** The European Broadcasting Union consortium of free-to-air broadcasters extended its rights and services partnership with the European Union of Gymnastics (UEG) for four years, from 2017 to 2020. The EBU will retain exclusive media rights to UEG properties. The agreement covers 10 events including all men's and women's European Artistic and Rhythmic Championships, and the UEG 2018 European Artistic Championships, which will be integrated into the European Sports Championships as part of the deal. Eurovision, the operational arm of the EBU, will serve as the UEG's global distribution service provider.
 - **Horse Racing:** Racecourse Media Group, the holding company responsible for a range of media and data rights involving 34 of the UK's premier racecourses, agreed a deal to distribute Dubai-based Meydan Group's international rights. The agreement, which covers up to 20 meetings per year, includes the annual showpiece Dubai World Cup as well as Dubai Racing Club events from Meydan Racecourse.
 - **Ice Hockey:** The US National Women's Hockey League struck a deal with New England Sports Network, a regional cable-television broadcaster in the country. NESN will broadcast eight Boston Pride games before the end of the 2015-16 season.
 - **Motorcycling:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport sealed a three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018, for exclusive rights in the UK and Ireland to the International Motorcycling Federation's Speedway World Championship. It will broadcast the Speedway Grand Prix and the Speedway World Cup. The deal was agreed with BSI Speedway, a division of the IMG Events & Media agency, which will produce the coverage.
 - **Motorsport:** Swedish public-service broadcaster SVT acquired World Rallycross Championship rights for three years, from 2016 to 2018. The deal was brokered by IMG on behalf of the FIA, motorsport's global governing body.
 - **Motorsport:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 extended a sublicensing deal with US sports broadcaster ESPN for the US IndyCar series. The deal will run for three years, from 2016 to 2018. Sport1 will provide live or delayed coverage of every race in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.
 - **Motorsport:** The Formula E electric car-racing series extended its deal with Portuguese pay-television broadcaster Sport TV for the 2015-16 season.
- company Discovery Communications. The new logo – featuring the Eurosport star – is accompanied by the strapline 'Fuel Your Passion'.
- Vivendi chairman Vincent Bolloré said it is "essential" the media company's French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus invests in sport in order to remain competitive. The broadcaster lost 88,000 subscribers in France in the 12 months through to the end of September, according to French newspaper *Le Figaro*.
 - World Rugby, the global governing body of rugby union, launched a tender process for the host broadcast contract at the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan. The tender will be independently managed and run on behalf of World Rugby by industry expert Tony Sinclair. A deadline for bids was not disclosed, but the contract will be awarded in March 2016.
 - LaLiga, which operates Spanish club football's league structure, teamed up with beIN Media Group and Chinese internet operator PPTV to host big-screen public viewings of the Real Madrid v Barcelona clash on November 21 in Shanghai, China; Miami, USA, and the Spanish military base in Lebanon.
 - UK public-service broadcaster the BBC will cut its sports-rights budget by £35m (€49m/\$53m) in 2016-17 as part of £150m in overall savings.
 - The WWE wrestling organisation will launch its WWE Network pay-television channel in Germany on January 5.
 - German public-service broadcaster ZDF was withdrawn from French satellite and digital-terrestrial television platform CanalSat.
 - Pay-television operator Setanta extended an exclusive deal to carry UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport's channels in the Republic of Ireland.
 - A new television channel dedicated to African sport will launch across the continent and in Europe in January. Stad'Afrik will be available as a free-to-view service via satellite-television service provider Eutelsat, as well as through the CanalSat Afrique service of French pay-television operator Canal Plus and on IPTV platforms in France. The new channel, which will be operated by France-based media company Baigom Compagny, will show African athletics, basketball, boxing, football, handball and tennis.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from November 5 to 18**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****Six Nations, swimming, IPTL, Pac-12, Pro Wrestling League and more**

- **Multi-sport:** Media company NBCUniversal acquired Universal Sports Network's rights after the US pay-television sports broadcaster closed down. The rights include agreements with international and national governing bodies for Olympic sports such as cycling, figure skating, gymnastics, skiing, swimming, track and field athletics, triathlon and volleyball. NBCU, which has an eight-per-cent stake in Universal Sports Network, opted to close the broadcaster ahead of supporting the launch of the International Olympic Committee's new channel next year.
- **Rugby Union:** Irish commercial broadcaster TV3 acquired rights for the Six Nations Championship for four years, from 2018 to 2021. TV3 outbid public-service broadcaster RTÉ, the incumbent Irish rights-holder (page 6).
- **Swimming:** The Ligue Européenne de Natation, the sport's European governing body, agreed a four-year extension, from 2017 to 2020, to its deal with the European Broadcasting Union consortium of free-to-air broadcasters, with the option to extend the deal by a further four years, from 2021 to 2024. The agreement includes the European Swimming Championships, European Short Course Championships and European Water Polo Championships.
- **Tennis:** Commercial broadcaster TV5 acquired rights in the Philippines for the 2015 International Premier Tennis League franchise-based tournament. Coverage of the league, which features current and former stars, will be shown live on TV5 and via the sports5.ph website. TV5 president and chief executive Emmanuel Lorenzana said the broadcaster would consider extending the deal as "we need more events like this to promote tennis here". The league will stage one of the tournament's four legs in Manila; the others are in India, Dubai and Singapore.
- **Tennis:** The Sina Sports division of Chinese internet operator Sina acquired exclusive rights in the country to the International Premier Tennis League for two years, 2015 and 2016.
- **US College Sports:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 extended a sublicensing deal with ESPN covering the US National Collegiate Athletic Association's American football and basketball games. Sport1 will show at least 130 basketball and 70 American football games live or delayed in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, including end-of-season matches.
- **US College Sports:** The Pac-12 conference expanded a rights partnership with Chinese internet company Le Sports to include more than 200 events over two seasons, from 2015-16 to 2016-17. Le Sports will show 100 men's basketball games and at least 24 American football, women's football and women's basketball games. The initial deal, agreed in February, included 27 basketball games during the 2015-16.
- **Wrestling:** Indian pay-television broadcaster Sony acquired rights for the country's Pro Wrestling League domestic team competition for five years, from 2015 to 2019. The deal includes rights in more than 60 countries. Sony agreed the deal with ProSportify, the organiser and promoter of the inaugural league in association with the Wrestling Federation of India national governing body.
- Sony-owned Indian broadcaster Multi Screen Media rebranded as Sony Pictures Networks.
- Azerbaijani broadband and mobile phone operator Bakcell agreed a long-term content partnership with Turkish pay-television operator Digiturk, which is owned by beIN Media Group. Bakcell mobile and broadband customers will gain access to Digiturk's channels, including the Lig TV sports channel, which broadcasts sports properties such as the Turkish football's top-tier Süper Lig and the Turkish Basketball League.
- Online sports broadcaster Laola1.tv, a subsidiary of the Sportsman Media Group agency, struck a carriage deal in Austria with Telekom Austria. Laola1.tv's sports content will be available as a channel through the telco's IPTV service A1 TV.
- Bidding closes on December 2. LaLiga will replace a 10pm Saturday game with a new Saturday 1pm kick off, with a new free-to-air game slot created for Fridays at 8.30pm.
- The CAA Eleven agency launched a sales process in the UK for rights to the European Qualifiers for football's Uefa Euro 2020 and 2022 Fifa World Cup national team tournaments, the 2018-19 and 2020-21 Nations League international friendly competitions and other international matches. Bids must be submitted by 1pm CET on December 8.
- The Ligue de Football Professionnel, the French football league, launched a sales process for rights to the Coupe de la Ligue knockout competition. The rights will run for four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20. Bids must be submitted by December 14.
- The Fotball Media agency, which distributes rights on behalf of the Norwegian Football Federation, launched a tender process for the rights to the domestic top-tier division Tippeligaen and second-tier 1. Divisjon. The rights will run from the 2017 season onward. Three of the nine packages available will include live coverage of the Tippeligaen. Bids must be submitted by late November, according to the Kampanje news website.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- LaLiga, which operates Spanish club football's league structure, launched a tender process for domestic rights covering three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. The tender includes 10 packages of rights across the top-tier Primera División, second-tier Segunda División and Copa del Rey knockout competition.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from November 5 to 18

- The Asian Cricket Council launched a sales process for certain media rights relating to its Asia Cup, Women's Asia Cup, U-19 Asia Cup and Emerging Asia Cup national team tournaments between 2016 and 2023. The rights cover all territories. Bids must be submitted by November 28.
- The Board of Control for Cricket in India will launch a new process for the next cycle of rights for Twenty20 competition the Indian Premier League in May 2016. The next rights cycle will begin in 2018.
- collaborate on the production and distribution of real-time video content, such as instant replays and behind-the-scenes footage on social media platforms.
- UK commercial broadcaster ITV cited increased advertising activity surrounding its coverage of the 2015 Rugby World Cup rugby union national team tournament as a key reason for the 13-per-cent growth in year-on-year revenue over the nine months to September 30. Total external revenue amounted to just over £2bn (€2.9bn/\$3.1bn) in the nine months, up from £1.8bn.
- Barbara Slater, director of sport for UK public-service broadcaster the BBC, rejected claims it undervalues highlights rights of the Scottish Professional Football League. The BBC pays £59.9m (€84.2m/\$90.6m) per season for highlights from the English Premier League, in comparison with a £1m-per-season deal with the SPFL. The BBC's contract with the SPFL is in its final year. SPFL chief executive Neil Doncaster said in October the consensus among its board was the corporation was underpaying.
- Australian pay-television operator Foxtel's recent loss of English Premier League rights was downplayed by its parent company News Corporation, whose chief executive Robert Thomson questioned the value of the top division of English club football. Thomson said the fact that "the 3pm kick-off in the UK is 2am in Australia" was one of the reasons why Foxtel was not prepared to pay "any price" for the rights.
- Corporate bookmakers and alcoholic drinks manufacturers will still be permitted to advertise during sports broadcasts in Australia, despite restrictions being placed on free-to-air broadcasters in the country under a new Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice. The code, submitted by Free TV – the industry group representing commercial free-to-air broadcasters – was approved by the Australian Communications and Media Authority and will be activated on December 1.
- The International Judo Federation reported increased global media coverage from its 2015 World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan. The event was watched by 193m viewers worldwide – a 72-per-cent increase on the previous edition in Chelyabinsk, Russia. More than 1,000 hours of television coverage was produced over the week-long event, up from 726. A total of 2.5m viewers watched on ippon.tv, the IJF's online channel.
- The Formula E electric car-racing championship launched a mobile application that will enable viewers to access live streams of races in selected markets and on-board camera angles. The app was built in partnership with sports media company Intellicore.
- Formula E renewed a partnership with technology developer 360 Racing, which will continue to provide on-board camera feeds until the end of the 2015-16 season.
- Live-action virtual reality broadcast technology company NextVR sealed a \$30.5m (€28.3m) first round of funding, with investors including Time Warner Investments – the strategic investment arm of US media group Time Warner – and Comcast Ventures, the venture capital affiliate of US media company Comcast.
- Walt Disney remains "bullish" over the performance of ESPN, according to the media company's chief executive, Bob Iger, despite an announcement in October that 300 jobs would be cut from the pay-television sports broadcaster. Walt Disney's Media Networks division, which includes ESPN, posted better-than-expected revenue of \$1.8bn (€1.7bn) for the three months to the end of September – a year-on-year rise of 27 per cent.
- The Canadian Football League will stream live coverage of its 2015 end-of-season playoffs and the Grey Cup final via video-sharing platform YouTube. The games will be available to view free-of-charge on YouTube in 150 countries around the world. China is excluded from the deal.
- LaLiga, which operates Spanish club football's league structure, struck a strategic partnership with social video production company Grabyo. LaLiga and a number of its top clubs will

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