

FOOTBALL SPAIN

Tebas: beIN and telco rivals drive historic deals which prove LaLiga sceptics wrong

By Richard Welbirg

LaLiga president Javier Tebas this week described the Spanish league's new domestic media rights deals as "historic" in terms of income and the completion of the move to collective selling.

LaLiga will earn at least €983m (\$1.066bn) per season over three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, in deals with pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports and telcos Telefónica, Vodafone and Orange. The league still has to sell free-to-air and selected non-exclusive rights.

In an exclusive interview with *TV Sports Markets*, Tebas said: "It was a very difficult target to achieve and there was also a lot of scepticism, taking into account that four months ago we had sold the rights for €600m."

Equivalent pay-television rights for the 2015-16 season were sold to Telefónica for €600m. The league later agreed a €25m deal with TVE for free-to-air rights (*TV Sports Markets* 19:14; 19:15). The league will earn at least 57 per cent more per season from its 2016-17 to 2018-19 deals.

Tebas said the increase was largely due to the "eruption of telecom operators in the pay-TV landscape" with the consequent roll-out of multi-play offers in Spain. He said telcos had to have premium football as part of their wider audiovisual content offer.

Tebas said that in addition to the strong competition between Telefónica and beIN, telcos such as Vodafone and Orange

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PREMIER LEAGUE

European sales continue to deliver growth

By Robin Jellis

England's Premier League has earned just under €295m (\$320m) per season in its new cycle from 11 media-rights deals across Europe agreed in recent weeks.

All new deals cover the 2016-17 to 2018-19 cycle, and represent an increase of about 95 per cent on the value of deals covering the same territories in the current cycle, from 2013-14 to 2015-16 (see table, page 5).

The most valuable deal was agreed in France, where telco Altice agreed to pay €120m per season – almost double the existing rights fee.

In many of its other deals the league also secured massive percentage increases due to strong competition for its rights. These included increases of:


- 367 per cent in Spain
- 335 per cent in Portugal
- at least 175 per cent in Germany
- 115 per cent in Belgium
- 80 per cent for 27 markets in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- 60 per cent in the Netherlands.

The agreements follow lucrative deals which were signed in October: the league

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Pitch renews Football League international rights

England's Football League has opted to renew its international rights deal with the Pitch International agency, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

Pitch will pay a minimum guarantee of between \$35m (€32.3m) and \$40m per season. The deal will run for three seasons, from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

This is close to double the value of Pitch's existing five-season deal with the Football League, from 2012-13 to 2016-17, in which the agency pays a minimum guarantee of between \$19m and \$20m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:21).

An unsolicited renewal offer from Pitch, worth an average of £22.5m (€31.3m/\$33.9m) per season, prompted the league to initiate a process where it invited proposals for an international sales adviser.

It shortlisted three potential advisers: Pitch; the Future Media Services agency, working with consultant Marc Watson; and Oliver & Ohlbaum, working with consultant Phil Lines.

The three are said to have proposed different models. Pitch's offer was for the same model as in its existing deal, Oliver & Ohlbaum sought to advise the league on a sales strategy, while Future Media Services planned to devise a strategy and sell rights with the league.

Pitch is expected to agree a deal covering multiple territories with beIN Media Group, as in the current cycle.

The league's rights cover the three divisions below the Premier League – the Championship, League One and League Two – plus the League Cup and Football League Trophy knockout competitions.

The majority of the value lies with the League Cup, due to the participation of Premier League sides.

When contacted by *TV Sports Markets* this week, the league confirmed it had identified a "preferred partner" but that the deal is yet to be finalised. ■

Sky snatches ATP tennis rights

German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland is close to dislodging Sport1 as the holder of ATP World Tour tennis media rights in the country, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

Sky is close to signing off on a three-year deal, from 2017 to 2019, worth about €1.5m (\$1.6m) per year – a trebling of the existing fee.

Sports broadcaster Sport1 pays just over €500,000 per year in its existing three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:20).

The fee has increased dramatically due to the heightened competition for sports rights in Germany, a market which has long been dominated by Sky.

The deal was agreed with ATP Media, the commercial arm of the tour, which was advised by the IMG agency.

The ATP also received bids from the Perform Group and sports broadcaster Eurosport. Perform is aggressively acquiring content ahead of the launch of its OTT service in summer 2016, while Eurosport is seeking more locally-relevant content across Europe. Sport1 was also bidding to renew its deal. There were two rounds of bidding.

The acquisition comes shortly after Sky's loss of English Premier League rights in the country – it was ousted by Perform as the league's rights-holder earlier this month (see separate story, page 1). The loss is said to have prompted Sky to be more aggressive in bidding for the ATP rights.

Sky's only other top tennis property is the Wimbledon grand slam, which it holds from 2014 to 2018 in a deal worth €2m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:8). Eurosport holds rights to the three other grand slams: the Australian, French and US Open tournaments.

The ATP agreement covers all World Tour Masters 1000 and World Tour 500 events, as well as the World Tour Finals, in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

From 2014 to 2016, the ATP has free-to-air deals in Austria and Switzerland, with public-service

broadcasters ORF and SRG respectively. They show ATP events hosted in their countries, as well as semi-finals and finals from other events involving native players.

Sky is thought to be pushing for total exclusivity in its deal, which is yet to be finalised – it is expected to be signed off just before Christmas. ■

Sky busy with football and rugby

Sky Italia has closed three deals in the last month: in addition to winning the rights to England's Premier League (see separate story, page 1), Sky renewed its deal for European club rugby and picked up Russian Premier League rights after a four-year hiatus.

The deals for European club rugby and football's Russian Premier League were both agreed with the IMG agency.

Pay-television operator Sky signed a one-season renewal, covering 2015-16, for the Rugby Champions Cup and Challenge Cup shortly before the season started last month. Sky will show up to four matches per match-day.

Sky is thought to be paying about €500,000 (\$542,000), the same annual fee as in its previous deal, from 2011-12 to 2014-15 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:7).

Club rugby is not a subscription driver for Sky, but it wants to see if the tournament's new format has a positive effect on ratings before deciding whether to commit for a longer period.

Sky faced no real competition for the rights. Neither Mediaset Premium nor Discovery Communications are thought to have bid.

The Russian Premier League deal is also for one season, 2015-16. Sky is said to have paid a nominal fee.

Sky previously held the rights from 2008-09 to 2010-11 but did not renew when the league changed its calendar. The season originally ran from March to November, but from 2012-13 it moved to an autumn-spring season. A lot of the value for pay-television broadcasters was in being able to offer football when other leagues shut down. ■

FOOTBALL SPAIN

LaLiga reaps reward from competitive domestic market

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had an important role in the market.

Story so far

A tender of 10 packages (see table) covering rights to the top-tier Primera Liga, second-tier Segunda Liga, and the Copa del Rey cup competition closed on December 2, after one round of bidding.

It is the first time Spanish domestic football rights have been sold on the open market, and firmly entrenches the success of LaLiga's switch to collective selling.

Collective selling of domestic football rights from the 2016-17 season was enabled by Royal Decree in May, and brought forward in June to include the current 2015-16 season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:9; 19:12).

The league wanted to tender the rights for a three-season cycle starting from 2015-16, but agreed a one-season deal with Telefónica after Spain's competition regulator – the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia – expressed concerns that Telefónica's club deals for 2015-16 would complicate the process.

Pay-television battle

Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports's acquisition of package six – covering eight Primera Liga matches per week – will have a huge impact on the market.

The broadcaster is majority-owned by beIN Media Group, with the Mediapro agency holding the remaining stake. The rights were bought by Mediapro to comply with Spanish law, but the €1.9bn fee across the three-season cycle, or €633m per season, is backed by beIN.

It gives the broadcaster a very strong portfolio, adding premium weekend football to its existing Uefa Champions and Europa League rights (*TV Sports Markets* 18:18; 19:5).

Mediapro is responsible for distributing the beIN Sports channels. It has thus far been unable to agree a carriage deal for

LaLiga tender package details			
Package	Content	Winner	Per-season fee
1	Second-pick live Primera Liga match. Cannot include Real Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Atlético Madrid or teams in European competition. Free to air.	None	N/A
2	Second-pick live Copa del Rey match. Both semi-final matches. Free to air.	None	N/A
3	Free-to-air highlights to all LaLiga content. Up to 12 minutes per match.	None	N/A
4	Six live Segunda Liga matches. Free to air.	None	N/A
5	First-pick live Primera and Segunda match. Live Segunda play-offs.	Telefónica	€250m
6	Eight live Primera matches. All Copa del Rey matches not included in Package 2.	beIN Sports	€633m
7	Ten live Segunda matches.	None	N/A
8	All Primera, Segunda and Copa del Rey live matches, for exploitation in public establishments.	Vodafone/Orange	€100m-€110m
9	Delayed coverage of full matches in all competitions. Online only.	None	N/A
10	Ninety-second clips. Online only.	None	N/A

Source: LaLiga
N/A: no rights fee as the package is unsold

the channels with Telefónica, which accounts for about 70 per cent of Spain's pay-television subscribers.

Mediapro is understood to be offering Telefónica the same per-subscriber terms under which it agreed carriage deals with telcos Orange, Telecable and Vodafone.

The outcome of the tender gives beIN the upper hand in negotiations.

Telefónica won package five with a bid worth €250m per season. It will have significantly less content in the new cycle.

Package five includes the first-pick match from each round of the Primera Liga: 38 matches each season. There are limits to its picks: it may not select both home and away fixtures between any two teams. In the current cycle, Telefónica has rights to all but one match from each Primera Liga and Copa del Rey round, and all Segunda Liga matches.

Experts agreed the outcome of the tender was a poor one for Telefónica, although were divided on the impact it would have on the company. One said the telco would struggle with so little domestic football, but could survive if it maintained its control over non-football properties. Another suggested Telefónica would now be forced to agree a carriage deal for the beIN Sports channels.

Vodafone and Orange made a joint bid for packages five and six. Telco Opencable also bid for both. Commercial broadcaster

Atresmedia bid for package five only.

Live in public

Package eight – the rights to all matches in public places such as bars, clubs and bookmakers – was won by a joint bid from Vodafone and Orange. The telcos will pay €100m per season, plus up to €30m across the three-season cycle based on subscriber numbers.

The fee did not meet the league's reserve price but was judged to be close enough, and far enough above rival bids from Telefónica and Opencable to award the rights.

Vodafone and Orange both carry beIN Sports's channels on their pay-television platforms. They also offer subscribers LaLiga content in the 2015-16 season through the Abono Fútbol channels.

These are custom channels created by Telefónica for sublicensing to other pay-television operators, which it was required to offer by the CNMC as a condition of its acquisition of the Canal Plus pay-television platform this April.

Telefónica is said to earn about €180m from sublicensing the channels, which carry all its 2015-16 coverage of the Primera, Segunda and Copa del Rey.

In August, Vodafone launched a €230-per-month triple-play package aimed at hotels and bars. Orange followed suit in November, with packages priced at

€171 or €181 per month. They are the only two operators who can offer hospitality packages which include Champions League coverage in 2015-16.

One expert said their fee for LaLiga rights was ambitious, but not impossible to recoup.

Free to air

The league was less successful in the sale of its free-to-air rights. No bidders met the reserve price, either in response to the tender or in a second round of bidding which closed on December 15.

There were four free-to-air bidders: Atresmedia; rival commercial broadcaster Mediaset; TVE; and Forta, the union of regional public-service broadcasters. Not all broadcasters bid for every package.

Free-to-air rights in the current season were awarded to TVE following a tender earlier this year. TVE paid €12m for a package of highlights and €13m for the second-pick match from each round of the Primera Liga and the Copa del Rey.

LaLiga's reserve price for package three was thought to have been €13.3m per season. All bids are thought to have been less than TVE's current fee.

Packages two and three are the most important to the commercial broadcasters. Package one consists of one weekly Primera match, but the severe

restrictions on team selection – no team involved in European competition; and no matches of Atlético Madrid, Barcelona, Real Madrid or Valencia – reduces its appeal.

TVE is widely regarded as having overpaid for its rights this season. The commercial broadcasters can survive with reduced highlights and no live matches, and are not willing to pay a premium.

LaLiga has announced a third round of bidding for packages one to four, to close on December 22.

Last rights

Bids for packages seven and 10 also failed to meet the league's reserve price.

Only Opencable bid for package seven: it made two offers, dependent on whether package four was sold or not.

Atresmedia, Forta, Mediaset and marketing agency Hello Media Group bid unsuccessfully for package 10.

These packages will not be re-tendered: they will be sold directly by the league on a non-exclusive basis. Interested parties will have to pay a fixed fee, plus a percentage of their revenue from subscribers who watch LaLiga content. The league will open the packages to bids in late January or February.

There were no bids for package nine, which covers delayed video-on-demand

rights. The league is considering commercialising these rights itself.

Production and channel

Mediapro, which also acts as the league's international sales agent, has a production deal with the league running for four seasons, from 2015-16 to 2018-19. Costs per match are about €20,000.

The tender allowed bidders for packages six, seven and eight to elect to receive the rights in the form of a LaLiga channel, rather than a match feed.

The league had hoped to offer complete channel packages only, but was blocked from doing so by the CNMC. The regulator judged that to do so would discriminate against Telefónica, which is blocked from exclusive channel acquisitions under the conditions of the Canal Plus takeover.

Tebas said: "Our target... will be that each league [the Primera and Segunda] has its own channel in order to distribute it both domestically and internationally.

"We handle the production centrally since, as owners of the product, we want it to have a similar quality. We believe that it is us who must decide the quality for our national and international viewers rather than TV operators." ■

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

PREMIER LEAGUE

Latest European deals almost double current rights values

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earned a 144-per-cent increase in Norway and a 130-per-cent increase in Sweden (*TV Sports Markets* 19:18). The league's rights have now been sold in all but six European markets (see panel, page 5).

Belgium

In Belgium, pay-television broadcaster Telenet renewed its deal for just over €20m per season.

In the current cycle, Telenet pays €9.3m per season. The fee more than doubled

due to strong bidding from pay-television broadcaster Eleven Sports Network.

Belgacom, the other main pay-television broadcaster in the country, is not thought to have bid.

Another factor driving the fee is that the league has dramatically increased in popularity due to the high number of Belgians playing in the league.

Telenet, which operates in Flanders, is likely to sublicense coverage in Wallonia to pay-television broadcaster BeTV, as it does in the current cycle.

Telenet this month agreed a carriage deal with Eleven which also allows Telenet to show some of Eleven's content on a non-exclusive basis on its own channels, including Spain's LaLiga and NBA basketball.

The agreement will last for three years, until the end of the 2017-18 season, when

Eleven's contracts expire. Telenet is paying a fixed rather than a per-subscriber fee.

Italy

Rupert Murdoch's Sky Italia pay-television platform was awarded rights in Italy in a deal worth about €18m per season.

This is an increase of about 38 per cent on the current deal with the Pitch International agency, which is worth €13m per season. Pitch sold on the rights to Murdoch's Fox Sports pay-television channels for about €15m per season.

Sky's main pay-television rival Mediaset Premium bid, but not strongly. It is thought that Fox did not bid this time.

Theoretically, Fox and Sky are rivals with distinct acquisitions strategies – both bid, for example, for the same packages of Serie A rights – but the view held by most in the industry is that a common

intelligence is at work due to Murdoch's 21st Century Fox owning both.

In any case, Fox has reduced content capacity having closed its Fox Sports 2 channel at the end of July.

Sky also acquired clips rights for the first time, paying an additional three per cent on top of its rights fee. The clips will cost about €540,000 per season. They will be shown on Sky-branded services and will not be sold to any third parties.

Netherlands

Pay-television broadcaster Ziggo acquired Premier League rights in a deal worth about €16m per season in the new cycle.

This is up from the €10m per season the league currently earns from a deal with Pitch. Pitch sold the rights on to pay-television broadcaster Fox for about €18m per season – Fox paid a very high fee as it sought to establish itself in the Dutch market.

Ziggo faced competition from sports broadcaster Eurosport. In June, Eurosport made a move into top European football in the country, acquiring rights to Italy's Serie A and France's Ligue 1 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:11).

The loss of the Premier League will see Fox give more airtime to Germany's Bundesliga – its only international football league. Fox's most important property is the domestic football league, the Eredivisie.

Ziggo has 4.2m cable subscribers who can watch its Ziggo Sport channel for free. Its other sports channels command an additional fee. Ziggo has about 250,000 subscribers for its pay-television channels.

The last time the rights were sold directly to a broadcaster, in the 2010-11 to 2012-13 cycle, Ziggo – then known as Sport1 – paid €3.3m per season.

Poland

In Poland, pay-television broadcaster NC Plus renewed its rights, agreeing to pay an increase of about 28 per cent.

The new deal will be worth about €15m per season, up from €11.7m per season in the current deal.

It is thought NC Plus increased its fee due to the fear it would face an aggressive bid from Andrea Radrizzani's Eleven – although none materialised.

Latest Premier League deals in Europe, 2016-17 to 2018-19

Territory	Buyer	Annual rights fee	Percentage increase from current cycle
France	Altice	€120m	99
27 territories in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia	IMG	\$60m	80
Belgium	Telenet	€20m	115
Italy	Sky Italia	€18m	38
Netherlands	Ziggo	€16m	60
Poland	NC Plus	€15m	28
Spain	Telefónica	€14m	367
Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein	Perform Group	€11m	at least 175
Greece	OTE	€10m	18
Portugal	Sport TV	€10m	335
Iceland	365 Media	€4m	8

Source: *TV Sports Markets Rights Tracker*

Sales process for European markets

For the 2016-17 to 2018-19 cycle, the Premier League issued two tenders for its rights across Europe: one covering 10 markets with bids due by November 24, and another covering 27 territories with bids due by November 27.

Agencies were not allowed to bid in the first, but were in the second.

In its first tender, the league awarded the rights in only one territory – France – after one round of bidding. In the remaining nine markets the league awarded rights after two rounds. In the

league's second tender, it awarded the rights to IMG after the first round.

The latest round of deals mean the league has only six European territories left in which to sell its rights: Albania, Cyprus, Israel, Malta, Russia and Turkey.

The league has since issued a third tender covering Israel, Russia and Turkey: a second round of bids closed on December 16. The Saran Media agency has renewed in Turkey, while pay-television broadcaster Charlton is thought to have renewed in Israel.

The fee fell the last time the rights were sold, in February 2013. The rights in the previous cycle, from 2010-11 to 2012-13, were bought by NC Plus for about €13.7m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:4).

Spain

In Spain, competition between telco Telefónica and beIN Media Group drove the league's value up by 366 per cent. Telefónica acquired the rights in a deal worth about €14m per season. Its offer was marginally higher than beIN's, which offered just over €13m per season.

The sale of Premier League rights coincided with the bidding deadline for the domestic football league, LaLiga, and is also a factor in ongoing carriage

discussions between beIN and Telefónica (see separate story, page 1).

In the current cycle, the Premier League initially sold its rights to Ylan Singer's Multimedia Sport agency. The deal was worth €4.5m per season, a drop from €5.3m per season in the 2010-11 to 2012-13 cycle. However, the agency was unable to agree a deal with broadcasters and had to hand rights back to the league (*TV Sports Markets* 17:5).

The league then agreed a deal with IMG worth about €3m per season. IMG sold on rights to Gol T and Canal Plus for a total of €3.4m per season. The fee was split 60:40 between the two, with Canal Plus paying the greater share (*TV Sports Markets* 17:15).

IMG makes strategic move in Central/Eastern Europe

The IMG agency has made a strategic investment in England's Premier League through its acquisition of the rights in 27 territories across Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The agency won the rights with an aggressive first-round offer, worth about \$60m (€55.4m) per season, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. This is about 80 per cent more than the current value of the rights. The IMG deal replaces seven separate deals covering the 27 corresponding territories. These are worth about \$33.3m per season in the current cycle, from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

IMG is thought to have bid between 30 and 40 per cent more than the next-highest bidder, believed to be the Advisers Media International agency.

IMG is yet to devise a sales strategy. Sources close to the agency say it will not bundle the Premier League with other content, such as ATP World Tour Masters 1000 and World Tour 500 tennis events, or National Hockey League rights, in order to leverage the strength of the league across other properties. According to other agency executives, not bundling such a premium property would be a surprise. Most agencies operate that way and, historically, IMG has done so too.

Some football rights experts believe that, whatever the bundling strategy, the agency will struggle to refinance its investment. One pointed to the struggle being faced by the Saran Media agency in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Saran acquired Spanish LaLiga rights in the two territories for about €3.5m per season, but is yet to agree a deal with a broadcaster due to its high asking price (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

Germany

The Perform Group acquired Premier League rights in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, dislodging pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland.

The new deal will be worth about €11m per season, an increase of at least 175 per cent on Sky's existing deal. That deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, is worth between €3.5m and €4m per season.

Romania is expected to be a lucrative market for IMG. In the current cycle, rights were awarded to Multimedia Sport in a deal worth about €6m per season. But the agency had to hand the rights back to the league after failing to agree a broadcast deal.

The rights were bought in December 2013 – four months into the 2013-14 season – by sports broadcaster Eurosport. The deal is worth about €3m per season. For the new cycle, IMG is likely to have three bidders: Eurosport, telco Telekom Romania and pay-television broadcaster RCS-RDS.

IMG could agree lucrative deals in Bulgaria, Hungary and the Balkan territories. On the other hand, the agency recognises that Ukraine will be a challenging market due to ongoing political turmoil in the country.

The IMG deal covers: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

IMG and AMI are thought to have been the only two companies bidding for rights in all 27 territories. Many individual broadcasters bid for rights in their respective territory only.

Offers for all 27 territories had to include an indication of the market-by-market value of the rights, although the overall number was higher than this; IMG paid a premium to secure rights in all territories. ■

[www.](#) For more information on the league's current deals, visit our website.

Perform is aggressively acquiring content ahead of the launch of its OTT service next summer. It has acquired rights to Spain's LaLiga, Italy's Serie A, France's Ligue 1, the NBA and NFL (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15; 19:17; 19:21).

The loss is a blow for Sky. The league is a premium property and has increased in popularity following the appointment of Jürgen Klopp as Liverpool manager.

Greece

In Greece, pay-television broadcaster OTE extended its deal, agreeing to pay an 18-per-cent increase for the rights despite limited competition.

OTE's new deal will be worth close to €10m per season, up from about €8.5m per season in the current cycle. Pay-television rival Nova made a much lower offer. Nova's parent company, telco Forthnet, has debts of about €324m, restricting its ability to bid aggressively.

The extension solidifies OTE's position as the leading pay-television broadcaster in the market. Nova's only top property is the domestic football league, the Superleague, which it holds in an initial four-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2016-17. It has since been extended until 2018-19 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:8).

Portugal

Pay-television broadcaster Sport TV reclaimed Premier League rights in Portugal in a deal worth just under €10m per season.

The league's existing deal with pay-television broadcaster BTV – owned by Portuguese Primeira Liga club Benfica – is worth €2.3m per season.

BTV was bidding to renew its rights, while Altice was also bidding: Altice owns Portuguese telco Portugal Telecom and smaller telcos Cabovisão and Oni.

The deal cements Sport TV's position as the leading broadcaster of football in Portugal: it holds rights to the majority of Primeira Liga matches, the Uefa Champions League and Europa League, Uefa European Qualifiers, Germany's Bundesliga and now the Premier League.

Sport TV's last deal for Premier League rights was from 2010-11 to 2012-13, when it paid €930,000 per season.

Iceland

In Iceland, 365 Media renewed its deal, agreeing to pay about €4m per season.

This is a small increase on the value of its current deal, and the deal before that. The current deal is thought to be worth about €3.7m per season. The previous deal, from 2010-11 to 2012-13, was worth €10m, or just over €3.3m per season.

Telco Síminn, also known as Iceland Telecom, is thought to have bid. ■

FOOTBALL ISRAEL

Five bidders poised as league sets new tender deadline

By Robin Jellis

Israel's Premier League is targeting an increase of at least 29 per cent in the value of its domestic media rights, with three packages of rights on the market.

The top-tier domestic league currently earns ILS42.5m (€10.1m/\$11m) per season for all media rights from four four-season deals, which run from 2012-13 to 2015-16. Based on the minimum price it is seeking for its three available packages, the league hopes to earn ILS55m per season in a new four-season cycle, from 2016-17 to 2019-20.

Five companies paid the ILS15,000 fee required to participate in the auction. They are: pay-television broadcaster Charlton; pay-television broadcaster the Sports Channel; public-service broadcaster the Israeli Broadcasting Authority; local telco Orange; and an unnamed international media company.

Orange is not linked to the French telco of the same name. Local telco Partner Communications has a deal to use the brand name until June 2017.

Basic-tier sports broadcaster One, which currently holds rights to one of the league's four packages, chose not to pay the required sum to participate in the tender.

Exclusivity premium

If a bidder acquires all three packages by meeting the cumulative minimum price of ILS55m per season, it will have to pay an additional ILS2m per season as a premium payment for acquiring all rights. A winner of all three packages would also be awarded non-exclusive online highlights rights.

One holds exclusive online highlights rights in the current cycle, but from 2016-17 onward the league will retain these rights for its clubs to use, at least on a non-exclusive basis.

Broadcasters will have to cover production costs on top of rights fees. A top-tier match costs between \$7,000 and

\$15,000 to produce. A top second-tier match costs between \$8,000 and \$8,500 to produce, while a smaller second-tier match costs about \$3,000.

In a change from previous deals, live rights will be platform-neutral.

Another change is that the league has introduced a minimum broadcast obligation. In the current cycle, Charlton has the right to show six live top-tier matches per week, but chooses to show only three or four. The winner of the equivalent package in the new cycle will have to show all six matches live.

Fox not bidding

The league is thought to have also held talks with global channel syndicator Fox International Channels to explore the possibility of setting up a league channel, as FIC has done in the Netherlands with the top-tier league, the Eredivisie.

Local media reports suggested FIC was a bidder. But FIC this week strenuously denied it was participating in the tender.

Frank Rutten, FIC's executive vice president of sports in Europe and Africa, told *TV Sports Markets*: "The league has mentioned we were interested in the rights. Fox is not participating in the tender. We looked at it, but not seriously. They should not be using us as leverage."

'Telcos needed'

One expert said the league would require aggressive bids from telcos in order to reach its target. Dirk Schluenz, who used to sell the league's rights when he was managing director of the Sportfive Israel agency, said: "The league can achieve its minimum price but it would be driven by the entering of a new player."

Schluenz, now managing director and owner of the Davnis Sports agency, added: "If it materialises that telcos in Israel are finally entering the bidding that would constitute a new client group for the media rights. They could then achieve this sum, and maybe do even better."

It is understood the league believes there are three main reasons why it could increase its media rights revenue, even without a strong telco bid.

First, the increasing competition in the Israeli market. Recent aggression shown by One has breathed fresh life into what

was a moribund sports rights market. This summer, One acquired rights to Spain's LaLiga in a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, worth €3m per season. This was a 150-per-cent increase on the value of the Sports Channel's previous deal, worth €1.2m per season.

For years, there has been limited competition between Charlton and the Sports Channel, with the two rarely bidding aggressively against one another.

Second, due to the interest the league has received in its rights from international media companies.

Third, the fact the league has seriously studied the possibility of launching its own channel, meaning broadcasters are more likely to offer market value.

One source close to the league said: "Having a new player enter the market is just one of many factors that make the league confident it will increase its fee."

Bidding delay

Bids were due on December 8, but the sales process has been delayed because Orange sought an injunction, contesting demands placed on it by the league.

Orange considered bidding for the bulk of live rights, which it would have exploited on an OTT basis, and asked the league for further clarification about the rights. The league said Orange would have to pay an additional 20 per cent on top of its rights fee to compensate for lost sponsorship revenue, as the telco has no existing OTT subscriber base. The league also requested that coverage be made available via set-top boxes.

Orange contested this in court on December 17, but the court ruled in favour of the league and applied the 20-per-cent premium to all bidders. A new tender deadline has been set for December 20, at 17.00 local time.

The league earns about ILS55m per season from a title sponsorship deal with Toto, the Israeli sports betting board.

Historically, the league's rights were sold by the national football federation, the Israeli Football Association. In summer 2014, the Israeli Professional Football League was established to market the league's commercial rights. ■

[www. For more information on the league's packages, visit our website.](#)

FOOTBALL

IMG-SUM sees opportunities in cleaned-up Copa

By Richard Welbirg

Distributing the commercial rights to next summer's Copa América Centenario is a "great opportunity" for the IMG agency despite the controversy that has dogged the tournament's operators and previous rights distributors this year.

IMG president Ioris Francini told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "This is a great opportunity for us. We knew that there were circumstances there, as there are elsewhere in the world in football. That shouldn't stop anyone from bidding, or trying to elevate the game, the commercial profile, and trying to do the best for the game of football."

IMG and Soccer United Marketing, the commercial arm of Major League Soccer, were awarded the rights on December 2 by Conmebol and Concacaf, respectively the governing bodies of South American and North and Central American football.

The joint venture has guaranteed about \$20m (€18.5m) plus a share of revenue above this level. The deal covers global

broadcast rights – although rights have already been sold in many territories – sponsorship rights and limited digital rights. IMG declined to comment on the value of the deal.

Most of the value will lie in sponsorship rights. SUM will focus primarily on sponsorship sales and IMG on media rights, although there will be considerable overlap and deals will be signed off jointly.

Francini said: "Because of the relationships that are ongoing between these parties, who are familiar with one another and operate very well together, it was a fairly easy conversation to have, in terms of tailor-making it and designing it."

Datisa, the three-way joint venture company created by the Full Play, Torneos and Traffic agencies to handle the global commercial rights and production to the competition, had conducted extensive negotiations with potential sponsors and was close to a deal with one telco. IMG-SUM will have access to information on these negotiations.

IMG-SUM have appointed ESP Properties, a division of the WPP advertising agency, and SJX Partners, a division of the CSM Sports and Entertainment agency, to assist with sponsorship sales. Francini said the two agencies would "further bolster the effectiveness of the sales process".

Much of the tournament's media value has already been accounted for, as Datisa had agreed deals covering 104 territories.

Nonetheless, one expert said IMG-SUM could probably cover its minimum guarantee through media-rights sales alone. The Middle East and North Africa is the most valuable market where a deal is yet to be agreed.

In the US, IMG-SUM will sign off a deal for English-language rights with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports worth \$15m. The deal had been almost completed by Datisa. Spanish-language rights in the country were sold by Datisa to Spanish-language broadcaster Univision in May 2014, for about \$70m.

New broom

Officials at Conmebol and Concacaf were indicted earlier this year for receiving bribes relating to the tournament's commercial rights. Datisa representatives were also indicted.

Datisa had paid \$112.5m for the Copa América Centenario rights: \$77.5m was paid to Conmebol and \$35m to Concacaf.

Conmebol and Concacaf bought unsold Centenario rights from Datisa and opened them to the market with a bid deadline of November 6 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:20). ■

[www.](#) For the full interview with Ioris Francini and Michael Mellor, visit our website.

FOOTBALL NORWAY

Discovery's big ambitions help league defy gravity

By Frank Dunne

Discovery Communications' ambition to strengthen its market position in the Nordics helped Norway's football league defy all expectations in the sale of its media rights last week.

US media group Discovery will pay NOK400m (€42.6m/\$46m) per season for the rights to the top two divisions, the Tippeligaen and the 1. Divisjon, for six seasons, from 2017 to 2022.

This represents only a three-per-cent increase on the NOK387.5m per season the league currently earns from four-

season deals, from 2013 to 2016, with media groups TV2 and C More.

However, the increase must be judged against the widespread assumption that the league was facing a massive cut in the value of its rights. This was because C More was losing about NOK150m per season on its NOK255m-per-season deal for the right to six live matches per week.

One local broadcast executive said that the league's total value had been expected to drop to about NOK200m per season. C More's Norwegian pay-television operation was bought by TV2 in February (*TV Sports Markets* 19:6).

The league will also reduce its production costs. At present, it pays about NOK30m to NOK35m per season to produce four Tippeligaen matches and seven 1. Divisjon matches per week. Other matches are produced by either TV2 or C More. Under the new deal,

Discovery will pay production costs for all 480 matches per season, on top of its rights fee: a total of between NOK80m and NOK100m per season.

Fotball Media, the joint venture between the Norsk Toppfotball, the body representing the first and second divisions, and the Norges Fotballforbund, Norway's football federation, said it was "very pleased with the outcome".

Chief executive Knut Kristvang told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "There have been voices saying we should expect a decrease in value but we have always believed in the value of our property in Norway. It's a small increase in rights fee but we are also saving on production costs. A six-year deal gives Norwegian clubs greater security to plan for the future. It was a good and fair process."

The value went up because of three-way competition between Discovery – via its

Discovery Networks Norway subsidiary – TV2, and commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group.

Industry experts question whether Discovery can make money on the deal over the lifetime of the contract or whether the investment is a strategic loss-leader. Having the rights for six seasons – something Discovery pushed hard for – makes that task easier. The company is understood to have paid a healthy premium for the longer term.

Live coverage will be split between basic-tier sports broadcaster Eurosport Norway, basic-tier channel Max, and free-to-air channel TV Norge.

Having Tippeligaen rights should allow Eurosport to secure wider distribution and improved carriage fees. Repositioning Eurosport as a premium channel is also reported to be under consideration.

The deal covers the two men's divisions only. The rights to the domestic cup and the women's league – which last time were part of the package TV2 acquired – will be sold separately. TV2 sublicensed

the rights to state broadcaster NRK in the current cycle for between NOK3m and NOK4m per season. Fotball Media is thought likely to renew with NRK early next year without going to market.

TV2 blow

In the current cycle, TV2 pays about NOK125m per season for two Tippeligaen matches per week and highlights, plus rights to the cup, the second division and the women's league.

The broadcaster had been determined to hold on to the Tippeligaen rights but its bid was thought to be well below that of Discovery. This was for two reasons.

First, it did not believe it could refinance a deal at the level Discovery was offering. Second, in October it spent €65m per season – a 144-per-cent increase – to hold on to its rights to England's Premier League (*TV Sports Markets* 19:18).

Six-season deal

Six seasons is a long duration for an exclusive football property in Europe. The

European Commission laid down three seasons as a maximum in its investigations into the Uefa Champions League, England's Premier League and Germany's Bundesliga over a decade ago. The duration has since been enshrined in law in Italy and Spain.

However, the deal in Norway follows a six-season deal in June 2014 for rights in Denmark to the top domestic football league, the Superliga (*TV Sports Markets* 18:13). That deal was cleared by the Danish competition authority, and there is no sign that the Norwegian authority plans to investigate the Discovery deal.

Kristvang said the league had been talking to the competition authorities during the process and did not anticipate an investigation into the deal.

The deal means the three top football properties – the Premier League, the Tippeligaen and the Uefa Champions League – are now spread across three different groups, creating a healthy balance in the market where no one player dominates. ■

KICKBOXING

Glory switches up strategy with move to ESPN in the US

By Callum McCarthy

Kickboxing promotion Glory will cement its place on US sports broadcaster ESPN for all of 2016 after turning down an offer from incumbent rights-holder Spike, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

The new deal follows on from two single-event deals with ESPN at the end of 2015, and ensures 10 main card Glory events will be broadcast live on online streaming platform ESPN3.

The events will also be shown delayed on pay-television channel ESPN2 and ESPN Deportes, the broadcaster's Spanish-language channel. ESPN will have first option to renew the contract for 2017.

Glory will not receive a rights fee from ESPN, but the promotion will earn income from an advertising revenue share. The split is still under negotiation.

The promotion's projected income from

Spike loses out on Glory in US, gains in the Netherlands

Kickboxing promotion Glory has secured a lucrative deal with commercial broadcaster Spike in the Netherlands, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

Spike will pay about \$500,000 (€460,000) for all Glory programming in 2016, and will also contribute toward production costs for events in the Netherlands. Glory is expected to host at least one event in Amsterdam in 2016.

The deal follows on from a two-event deal struck with Spike in October, which covered events in November and December: held in Milan, Italy, and Amsterdam, the Netherlands, respectively. Spike was host broadcaster for Glory's Amsterdam event.

the deal – which also accounts for an expected rise in US sponsorship revenue – is about the same as it earned in its previous deal with commercial broadcaster Spike.

That deal, which ran from October 2014 to October 2015, was worth about \$150,000 (€138,000) per event: \$1.5m in

Spike's fee is an increase of about 25 per cent on Glory's previous deal with commercial broadcaster RTL, from October 2014 to October 2015, worth about \$400,000. The increase was driven by competitive bidding between RTL and Spike, while pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports is also thought to have been interested.

In June, a ban on holding kickboxing events in Amsterdam was lifted. The prospect of more events in the country generated greater interest in the rights.

In addition, the promotion will hold five of its 10 main card events in Europe during 2016, guaranteeing favourable timeslots for European broadcasters. ■

total. Industry experts are sceptical as to whether Glory can earn close to this figure purely from a revenue share agreement.

This is because of the relatively poor reach of ESPN3, and delayed broadcasts on ESPN2 clashing with college and NFL American football programming on Saturday and Sunday nights respectively.

While ESPN's live and delayed rights are exclusive, Glory can still sell rights to its other events and programming to national and regional broadcasters in the US.

Glory has retained the right to show marquee events – such as eight- and 16-man tournaments – on pay-per-view; sell its undercard Superfight Series to other US broadcasters; and secure deals for ancillary programming with other regional and national broadcasters.

The promotion wanted to preserve its ability to secure coverage across multiple broadcasters to grow awareness of its product. Kickboxing is a minority sport in the US.

All Glory media rights deals are brokered by the TSA agency. Marcus Luer, chief executive of TSA, is a co-founder and managing director of Glory Sports International, Glory's parent company.

Spike split

Glory had been in talks over a new deal with US broadcasters since early 2015, and initiated a split with Spike at the end of its deal in October.

Spike is thought to have been unhappy with Glory's ratings in the latter half of its most recent deal, while the promotion was disappointed with Spike's handling of the property. Glory was keen to move to a specialist sports broadcaster for two main reasons.

First, Spike was seeking greater editorial control over the promotion. It wanted Glory to focus more on US fighters and promote more events in the country, despite the majority of its top fighters coming from Europe.

In its new deal with ESPN, Glory will face no such pressure. ESPN is happy for the promotion to focus more on its core European markets.

Second, Viacom-owned Spike had begun to prioritise other combat sports on its channel. Bellator MMA, also owned by Viacom, and Premier Boxing Champions, a promotion which buys airtime on Spike, would often take precedence over a Glory event should a schedule clash occur.

On ESPN, Glory has no such competition. The broadcaster recently axed its long-running Friday Night Fights boxing series and wanted combat sports content to replace it. ■

FOOTBALL PORTUGAL

New Benfica deal sparks feeding frenzy for club rights

By Callum McCarthy

Benfica's deal with telco Nos has triggered a wave of negotiations between Portuguese clubs and telcos, with Porto and Sporting Lisbon particularly keen to take advantage of competition in the marketplace.

The deal includes exclusive live rights to Benfica's home Primeira Liga matches and distribution rights to Benfica-owned pay-television channel BTV. It will run for a maximum of 10 seasons, from 2016-17 to 2025-26, and is worth up to €400m (\$434m), an average of €40m per season.

Telco Altice and channel syndicator Fox International Channels bid against Nos for Benfica rights. Fox wanted to create a Primeira Liga channel, while Altice wanted to introduce its basic-tier Ma Chaîne Sport channel to Portugal.

Benfica home matches have been shown exclusively on BTV for the last three seasons, from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

Most other top-tier Portuguese clubs currently have deals with Joaquim Oliveira's PPTV agency until the end of the 2017-18 season, and are now seeking significant improvements. Porto and Sporting, Benfica's main rivals, want large increases on their current media-rights income when their rights are next sold.

Porto's current deal with PPTV, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, is worth €20.7m per season. The club is seeking between €34m and €36m per season in a new deal.

Sporting earns about €16m per season for its home matches, from 2013-14 to 2017-18, and wants to double its income.

The remaining 15 Primeira Liga clubs each earn between €2m and €5m per season, with Braga thought to earn the most. These clubs are seeking new deals worth €5m to €10m per season.

Competition for each club's rights will come from two contenders: Nos and Altice – which owns Portugal Telecom and its pay-television operator Meo.

Nos is considered the favourite to land

Porto and Sporting rights. Companies owned or controlled by Oliveira have small stakes in both Nos and Porto, while Oliveira has long-standing relationships with directors at Sporting.

Oliveira's Global Media Group and Nos each own 50 per cent of pay-television broadcaster Sport TV. The broadcaster currently shows all Primeira League matches, with the exception of Benfica home matches, through the rights held by PPTV. Nos is all but certain to show Benfica matches on Sport TV.

Sport TV v BTV

Following the deal with Nos, BTV will go back to its beginnings as a basic-tier club channel, rather than a premium sports channel. This will end its battle with Sport TV for sports rights in Portugal.

BTV was beaten out of the market by Sport TV – its loss of English Premier League rights this month was the final nail in the coffin (see separate story, page 1).

International properties acquired by BTV – Italy's Serie A, France's Ligue 1 and the Ultimate Fighting Championship – will be transferred to Sport TV as part of Nos's deal with Benfica. Each contract will be honoured in full.

The exit of BTV from the Portuguese sports-rights market will concern rights-holders, while the prospect of a Sport TV monopoly is already a concern for potential new entrants. Altice and telco Vodafone have asked the Autoridade da Concorrência, Portugal's competition authority, to monitor Nos's activity.

Centralisation deferred

Benfica's deal appears to have ended any hope the Primeira Liga executive had of adopting a centralised sales model in the foreseeable future, though Altice is hopeful of agreeing individual deals with each of the league's remaining clubs.

Altice will bid aggressively for rights to Porto and Sporting home matches. It is also interested in acquiring a critical mass of smaller clubs' rights to create a power base within Portuguese football. The telco is currently in talks with several clubs, including Belenenses, Boavista and Vitória Guimarães. ■

[www. For more information on Nos's deal with Benfica, visit our website.](#)

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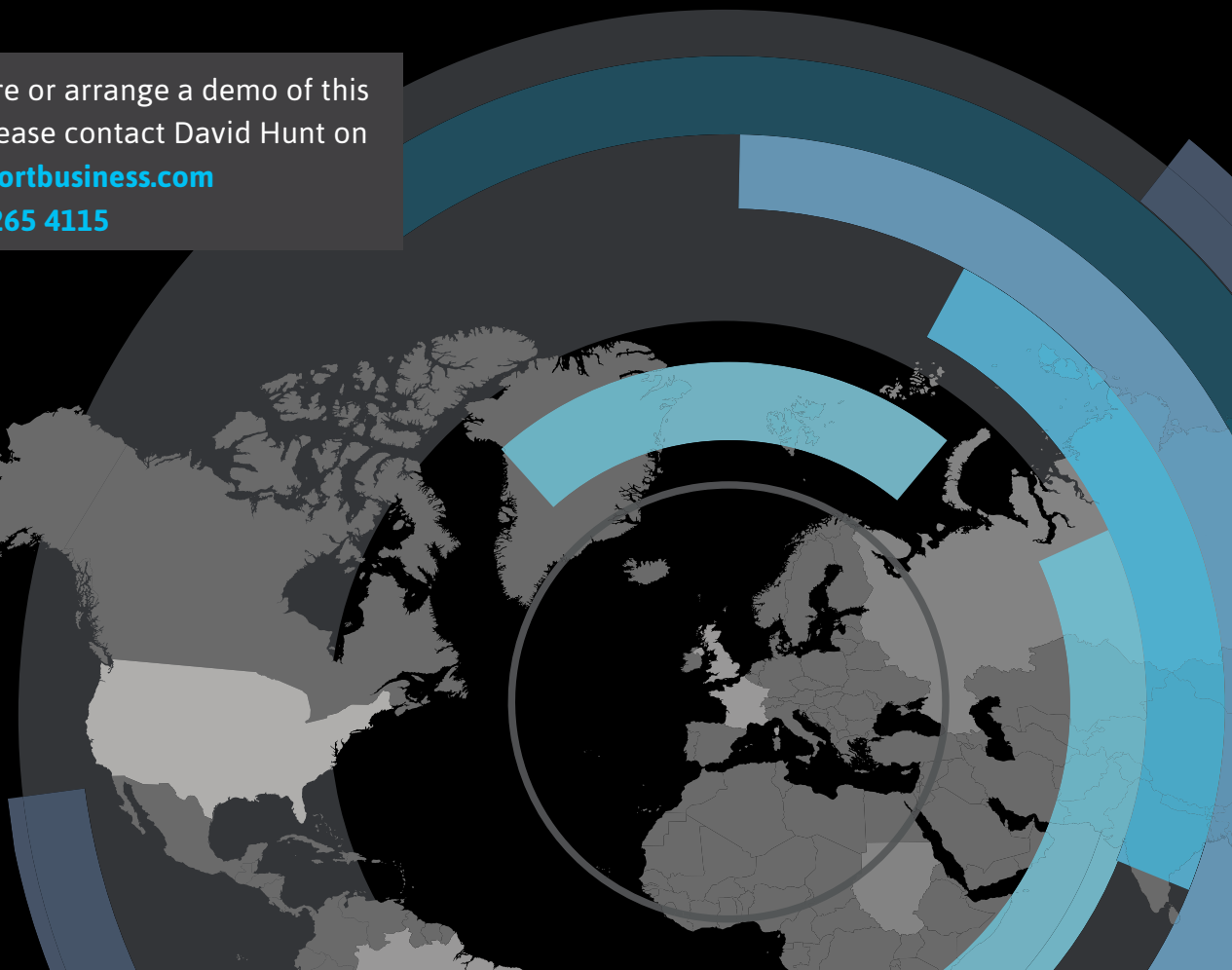
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 3 to December 16**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: LaLiga, Premier League, Primeira Liga, Tippeligaen and more**

- **Football:** Spain's LaLiga sold domestic rights to pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports, telco Telefónica, and telcos Orange and Vodafone (page 1).
- **Football:** The French football league – the Ligue de Football Professionnel – agreed four-season deals, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, with pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus and public-service broadcaster France Télévisions for rights to the Coupe de la Ligue knockout competition.
- **Football:** D8, the digital-terrestrial channel operated by Canal Plus, acquired rights in France for the Uefa Champions League final in 2016, 2017 and 2018. It sublicensed the rights from pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports in a deal reported to be worth €3m (\$3.3m) per year by *L'Équipe*. French law obliged beIN to make the final available on free-to-air television.
- **Football:** The IMG agency acquired rights for the English Premier League across 27 markets in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (page 1).
- **Football:** The Perform Group acquired exclusive English Premier League rights in Germany, Austria and Liechtenstein, non-exclusive rights in Switzerland and Luxembourg and clips rights across all five countries. The deal runs for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 1).
- **Football:** Telco Telefónica acquired exclusive rights in Spain for the English Premier League over three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 1).
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia acquired exclusive rights in Italy for the English Premier League over three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 1).
- **Football:** Polish pay-television operator NC Plus acquired rights for the English Premier League for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 1).
- **Football:** Dutch pay-television operator Ziggo acquired English Premier League rights for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 1).
- **Football:** Belgian pay-television broadcaster Telenet extended its English Premier League deal for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 1).
- **Football:** Telco OTE renewed a deal in Greece for the English Premier League for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 1).
- **Football:** Portuguese pay-television broadcaster Sport TV was awarded English Premier League rights covering three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 1).
- **Football:** The Scottish Professional Football League agreed a deal with UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport for rights to the League Cup knockout competition. The deal will run for four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20. Each season, BT Sport will show six games from the tournament's new group stage and a further seven games from the knockout rounds. According to the BBC, the deal is worth about £8m (€11.4m/\$12.1m) over four seasons, or £2m per season.
- **Football:** Portuguese telco Nos acquired rights for matches featuring the country's Primeira Liga club Benfica for an initial three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 10).
- **Football:** The Discovery Networks Norway division of international media company Discovery Communications acquired domestic rights for Norway's top-tier Tippeligaen. The deal covers six seasons, from 2017 to 2022 (page 8).
- **Football:** Russian free-to-air broadcasters Channel One and Russia-1 will share rights to the Uefa Euro 2016 tournament with new sports platform Match TV following deals with CAA Eleven, the sales agency of the sport's European governing body, Uefa. The collective value of the deals is about €30m (\$32.5m). Channel One and Russia-1 will broadcast the pick of the games, including those featuring the Russian national team. Match TV will sublicense rights to the other matches from the two broadcasters.
- **Football:** Indian pay-television broadcaster Neo Sports acquired rights for the 2015 and 2016 editions of the Fifa Club World Cup in a deal with the Dentsu agency.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Irish telco Eir agreed a deal to acquire pay-television broadcaster Setanta Sports. The deal must be approved by the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, as well as Ireland's Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.
- Gazzetta TV, the Italian sports channel operated by the RCS MediaGroup, could close down after accumulating costs of €10m (\$10.8m) in its first year. RCS is considering suspending broadcasts or selling the channel, with a decision likely to be taken on December 21.
- Europeans will be able to access subscription media services based in their own country when they are "temporarily abroad",

according to proposals put forward as part of the European Commission's digital single-market strategy. The proposals, which would affect pay-television sports subscriptions, are expected to be implemented in 2017.

- Imagina, the operator of the Mediapro agency, appointed a new management team at its Media World Sports affiliate company after two of its executives were suspended on allegations of corruption surrounding football rights. Irantzu Diez Gamboa was appointed as general manager of Imagina US, having previously served as general manager of Grupo Globomedia in Spain. The appointment followed the suspension of Roger Huguet, the chief executive of Media World Sports, and Fabio Tordin, a Media World Sports executive. In November, the pair pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire and tax fraud and launder money in

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 3 to December 16

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

NFL, Premier Badminton League, MLB, Brazilian basketball, chess and more

- **American Football:** BeIN Media Group and digital-terrestrial television broadcaster W9 sealed three-year extensions, from 2016 to 2018, to their NFL deals in France. Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports will show three live games per week during the regular season, plus support programming. W9's deal includes coverage of the season-ending Super Bowl.
- **Badminton:** Asian pay-television broadcaster Star Sports acquired rights for India's 2016 Premier Badminton League team competition in a deal with the Badminton Association of India. Star Sports will broadcast live coverage of all 18 matches.
- **Baseball:** The Major League Baseball Advanced Media division of North America's Major League Baseball extended a distribution partnership with digital sports news agency SendtoNews for three years, from 2016 to 2018.
- **SendtoNews** will have exclusive distribution rights for the digital syndication of MLB video content to local news websites in the US and Canada.
- **Basketball:** The Brazilian Basketball League reached a two-season rights deal, from 2015-16 to 2016-17, with commercial broadcaster RedeTV, covering the top-tier Novo Basquete Brasil.
- **Chess:** Norwegian public-service broadcaster NRK agreed a deal with Agon, the commercial agency of Fide, the game's global governing body. NRK acquired exclusive rights for five years, from 2016 to 2020, including the 2016, 2018 and 2020 World Chess Championship, the candidate tournaments and the World Blitz and Rapid Championships.
- **Cricket:** The Pakistan Cricket Board awarded domestic rights for the Pakistan Super League to public-service broadcaster PTV and pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports, with UAE-based agency Tech Front acquiring global rights to the new Twenty20 franchise competition. The deals run for three years, from 2016 to 2018.
- **Cricket:** Sri Lankan state broadcaster Rupavahini acquired rights for the Sri Lanka v New Zealand national team series in a sublicensing deal with the Sporty Solutionz agency. The series includes two Tests, five one-day internationals and two Twenty20 matches between December 10 and January 10.
- **Equestrian:** Polish pay-television operator NC Plus acquired rights for the Tour Cavalada, an annual series held in the country. The agreement covers television and online rights for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

connection with the investigation of football's global governing body Fifa by the US Department of Justice.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- The MP & Silva agency agreed a three-year content distribution deal, from 2015 to 2017, for multi-platform digital media company Deluxe Entertainment Services. DES will deliver live coverage of the NFL American football league across Europe, including up to seven regular-season games per week as well as all playoff matches and the season-ending Super Bowl.
- The International Cricket Council appointed UK sports production and media company Sunset+Vine as its live production partner under a four-year deal, from 2016 to 2019.
- Sunset+Vine agreed a deal with UK public-service broadcaster the BBC to produce live coverage and highlights of the World Indoor Professional Bowls Championship for three years, from 2016 to 2018.
- Pay-television motorsports channel Motors TV secured a carriage deal with Dish Network's OTT service Sling International in the US. Sling will include the channel in its World Sports package, which costs \$10 (€9.93) per month.
- Pay-television boxing channel BoxNation secured a carriage deal with UK digital-television service Freeview. The channel is available via Freeview for £12 (€16.70/\$18.10) per month.
- International pay-television broadcaster Eleven Sports Network secured a multi-year carriage deal with Belgian cable operator Telenet for its Eleven and Eleven Sports channels.
- Specialist equestrian sports and lifestyle television channel Horse & Country acquired the OTT subscription business of Swedish channel Horse1. Horse1's subscriber base transferred to Horse & Country's H&C Play online service.
- Spanish telco Telefónica will launch services including video-on-demand and linear television channels in Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Uruguay throughout 2016.
- Pan-Nordic pay-television broadcaster C More will launch a new golf channel in Sweden on January 1. The channel will be available to all C More sports package subscribers.
- Telco Cable & Wireless Communications sealed a multi-year regional partnership with Manchester United, under which its pay-television platform Flow will become the exclusive distributor of the English Premier League football club's in-house television channel MUTV in the Caribbean, starting with the 2016-17 season.
- The WWE wrestling organisation will launch its WWE Network pay-television service in Japan on January 5. Fans will receive WWE Network free for the first month before a monthly subscription fee of \$9.99 (€9.22) is applicable.
- The Lagardère Sports agency was appointed as host broadcaster of the Dubai Marathon under a three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 3 to December 16**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****US Masters, horse racing, Canadian Hockey League, MotoGP and more**

- **Golf:** Canadian telco Bell's pay-television broadcasters CTV, TSN and RDS acquired exclusive rights in the country for the Masters. The deal was agreed with the Augusta National Golf Club, which organises the US event. The Yahoo Sports website reported the deal will run for at least five years, until 2020.
- **Horse Racing:** Satellite Information Services, a provider of services for the betting and broadcast industries, acquired exclusive streaming rights from Dubai's Meydan Racecourse for two seasons, from 2015-16 to 2016-17.
- **Horse Racing:** UK racecourse owner and operator Arena Racing Company struck a deal to distribute coverage of events staged by South African racecourse owner Phumelela Gaming and Leisure to betting shops in the UK and Ireland. The agreement will run for six-and-a-half years, from June 2016 until the end of 2022. The coverage will also be distributed to online betting operators via Sports Mediastream, a digital platform operated by pay-television channel At The Races.
- **Horse Racing:** The NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal extended a deal for the Breeders' Cup Challenge for three years, from 2016 to 2018.
- **Horse Racing:** US-based rights distributor Sky Racing World agreed a partnership with gaming group Codere to provide live video streams of Australian racing in Brazil. Sky Racing World will provide live video streams of races via Codere's Suaposta service. Sky Racing World plans to begin distributing coverage of races from New Zealand and South Africa across Brazil next year.
- **Ice Hockey:** The Canadian Hockey League agreed a deal with SendtoNews that will allow the digital sports news agency to distribute content featuring action from the Western Hockey League, Ontario Hockey League and Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. The agreement covers the remainder of the 2015-16 CHL season plus the 2016-17 and 2017-18 campaigns.
- **Motorcycling:** The IMG agency extended a rights distribution deal for the MotoGP world championship in an agreement with the Dorna Sports agency, in a multi-year deal through to the end of the 2020 campaign.
- **Motorsport:** French digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 extended a deal for the World Rallycross Championship for two seasons, 2016 and 2017. L'Équipe 21 will show live coverage in France, Andorra, Monaco and French overseas territories, as well as Comoros, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Haiti, Maritius, Seychelles, Tonga and

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The Australian Rugby Union has confirmed new five-year rights deals, from 2016 to 2020, with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports and commercial broadcaster Ten. The deals incorporate rights to the Super Rugby southern hemisphere club competition and Australia national team games. The total value of the deals is about A\$285m (€191m/\$207m).
- The Association of National Olympic Committees launched a request for proposal from agencies interested in acquiring rights for the 2017 and 2019 World Beach Games. The rights include broadcast, host broadcast production and commercial rights. No deadline was given for bids.
- The 2016 Australian Open tennis tournament will be broadcast exclusively live in the UK by sports broadcaster Eurosport after public-service broadcaster the BBC failed to agree a sublicensing deal.
- Racecourse Media Group, the holding company responsible for media rights involving 34 of the UK's horse racing courses, will delay the award of its next cycle of domestic rights until the new year, when rival commercial broadcasters ITV and Channel 4 will go head-to-head, according to the *Daily Mail* newspaper. The next cycle of rights will run for four years, from 2017 to 2020.
- The Gaelic Athletic Association's Kerry County Board will propose a motion at the 2016 GAA Annual Convention to return live coverage of championship matches to free-to-air television in

the Republic of Ireland. Pay-television broadcaster Sky is the current rights-holder, with its next deal beginning in 2017.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters adopted a declaration calling for "sporting events of major importance for society" to be available on a free-to-air basis. The EBU said the aim of the declaration was to "draw attention to the worrying trend whereby major sports events are increasingly accessible behind paywalls only, cutting off a major part of the potential audience".
- US media company Time Warner invested \$15.8m (€14.6m) in Uninterrupted, a multimedia network for sports lifestyle content established by basketball superstar LeBron James and business partner Maverick Carter. Time Warner made the investment through its Warner Bros. Entertainment and Turner Sports divisions. Uninterrupted also signed a multi-year deal with mobile service go90 to provide content, original series, and exclusive athlete point-of-view videos.
- Football's English Premier League should consider introducing a regional blackout system to allow it to show all 380 matches per season live on UK television, according to Tom Mockridge, chief executive of UK pay-television operator Virgin Media.
- The British Basketball League will introduce live global streaming of its games through an initiative launched in partnership with sports technology company Hawk-Eye Innovations, sports

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 3 to December 16**MEDIA RIGHTS 4****Olympic Games, Ski mountaineering, ITF Pro Circuit, ATP Tour and more**

Vanuatu.

- **Olympic Games:** Brazilian media company Globo was awarded rights by the International Olympic Committee through to 2032. The rights cover all platforms, although free-to-air television rights are non-exclusive. The agreement covers the 2018 winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, the 2020 summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan, and the 2022 winter Games in Beijing, China. Hosting rights are yet to be awarded for the summer Olympics in 2024, 2028 and 2032, and the winter Games in 2026 and 2030.

- **Ski Mountaineering:** Infront Sports &

Media struck a deal that could allow the agency to distribute rights for the International Ski Mountaineering Federation World Championship and Continental Championships for five seasons, from 2016-17 to 2020-21. The arrangement is an option to Infront's production contract for the federation's 2015-16 season, covering highlights of the Individual, Sprint and Vertical World Cup and the European Championship.

- **Tennis:** The International Tennis Federation extended a deal with sports and betting-related data company Sportradar for five years, from 2017 to 2021. Sportradar will remain the preferred streaming partner for the ITF's

various Pro Circuit single-player events. Sportradar will also work with the ITF to develop a new media platform.

- **Tennis:** Pay-television operator VSTV acquired rights in Vietnam for the men's ATP World Tour for three years, from 2016 to 2018.
- **Tennis:** Canadian pay-television sports broadcaster TSN acquired rights for the ATP World Tour in a multi-year deal, starting in 2016.
- **Volleyball:** The Saran Media agency acquired global rights for the Turkish men's and women's volleyball and beach volleyball domestic club leagues. The deal with the Turkish Volleyball

broadcaster WebcastSport and pay-television broadcaster Sky. Initially four BBL events will be streamed live in January via the skysports.com and webcastsport.com websites.

- The Football Association of Ireland will stream coverage of every game from the League of Ireland, the top division in the Republic of Ireland, on a global basis over four years, from 2016 to 2019.
- Italian Serie A club AS Roma linked up with digital consultancy Omnigon to launch asroma.com, which features Roma TV Plus, a new platform giving fans access to video content.
- The 2016 U19 Cricket World Cup in Bangladesh will receive unprecedented live broadcast coverage of 20 matches, according to the International Cricket Council.
- The ATP Media broadcast division of the ATP World Tour men's tennis series will increase live match production at Masters 1000 tournaments in 2016. More than 100 additional singles matches will be produced, and doubles coverage will also increase.

- The International Sailing Federation teamed up with production company Sunset+Vine to create a new global television series, World Sailing. The series of 26-minute programmes will begin in January 2016 and will be distributed by the Sunset+Vine International division of the production company, with at least 50 broadcasters expected to sign up by early 2016.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Fred Kogel will replace Bernhard Burgener as the chairman of the management board at media company Constantin Medien, which operates German sports broadcaster Sport1. Kogel, currently a board member with responsibility for the areas of production, process management and integration at Constantin, will replace Burgener on January 1. • Olaf Schröder, the chairman of Sport1 since October 2014, was appointed as a member of Constantin's management board with responsibility for sports, with effect from January 1.

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