

FOOTBALL SPAIN

Barça extols collective selling benefits and switches rights to Telefónica

By Richard Welbirg

Spanish club Barcelona said this week that the planned return to collective selling would help La Liga to eventually match or exceed the media-rights income of Italy's Serie A, but that it would require the country's pay-television industry to be much stronger.

La Liga currently lags almost €400m (\$456m) per season behind the Italian league. Its clubs are expected to earn about €760m in the 2015-16 season, the last under individual selling. This compares with over €1.15bn that Serie A will earn in the same season.

Closing the gap will not be easy but collective selling could be a vital first step. Barcelona vice-president Manel Arroyo told *TV Sports Markets* this week that the

€1bn target set by league president Javier Tebas for the first year of collective selling was "absolutely realistic."

The Liga de Fútbol Profesional, the association which administers the Primera and Segunda divisions, plans to introduce the collective selling of rights from the 2016-17 season.

Fierce competition for the rights is expected from telco Telefónica on one side and an alliance of beIN Media Group and the Mediapro agency on the other. The Vodafone-owned cable group Ono and Discovery Communications are also potential bidders (*TV Sports Markets* 19:1).

Arroyo said that currently La Liga was "penalised" by the relatively low

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FIGHT SPORTS

Court ruling opens Germany to UFC

By Richard Welbirg

A broadcast deal in Germany – which is close to being agreed – is an important staging post for mixed martial arts promoter Ultimate Fighting Championship in its assault on Europe.

UFC is probably the fastest-growing sports promoter in the world and in the last two to three years has been looking to expand beyond its core North American market.

One major obstacle to expansion in Europe was the 2010 ruling by the


Bavarian State Media Authority (BLM) that its fights contained "unacceptable" levels of violence. The ban was ruled illegitimate by the Administrative Court in Munich last month.

In a wide-ranging and exclusive interview with *TV Sports Markets*, David Allen, senior vice president and general manager of Europe, Middle East and Africa, and James Elliott, senior content director for Europe, Middle East and Africa, talked about the significance of

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US funding plus local knowledge helps EI

The financial might of major US network Turner Broadcasting System, allied to strong local market knowledge, will enable Brazilian sports broadcaster Esporte Interativo to be both competitive in the rights market and distinctive from rivals in its programming, the broadcaster believes.

Esporte Interativo president Edgar Diniz told *TV Sports Markets* this week: “We definitely have the financial muscle to make the investments that we think make economic sense.”

Turner acquired a 20-per-cent stake in the broadcaster from Diniz’s marketing agency TopSports in 2013 and the remaining 80 per cent of the broadcaster last month.

“We really think that we will continue to use our local expertise to differentiate ourselves from Fox and ESPN,” Diniz added. “We can combine the scale of Turner with Esporte Interativo’s expertise.”

Late last year, Turner provided the financial backing which enabled Esporte Interativo’s surprise acquisition of pay-television rights to the Uefa Champions League (*TV Sports Markets* 18:21).

The broadcaster will use the Champions League as the keystone content in the launch of a new nationwide pay-television channel in July. Negotiations are currently underway with Brazil’s major carriers, DirecTV-owned satellite platform Sky and cable platform Net, owned by telco Embratel.

Esporte Interativo will now be in direct competition with pay-television networks ESPN, from which it prised Champions League rights, and Fox Sports, which launched in 2012.

The identity of the new pay-television channel is yet to be defined but it will be Esporte Interativo rather than Turner-branded.

The broadcaster believes it has an

edge in domestic football through regional cup tournaments Copa do Nordeste and Copa Verde. It holds long-term media rights deals for the competitions and is heavily involved in their organisation and promotion.

It also holds the rights to the state championships of Cearense, Alagoano, Maranhense, Paraibano, Rio Grande do Sul, Piauiense and Sergipano. These competitions, currently exploited on regional pay-television network Esporte Interativo Nordeste, will give the national pay-television channel more than 500 football matches per year. ■

Pro D2 on course for big increase

Canal Plus and Eurosport are battling it out over the pay-television rights to French rugby union’s Pro D2, with the existing rights fee set to treble.

Currently, from 2011-12 to 2014-15, Pro D2 coverage is split between pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus, basic-tier broadcaster Eurosport, and public-service broadcaster France Télévisions, in deals worth a combined €1.1m (\$1.3m) per season. A new deal will cover the five seasons from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

The rights are being sold by the Ligue Nationale de Rugby, which operates the top two leagues of French rugby union – the Top 14 and the Pro D2.

The league is hoping for about €5m per season in a new deal for pay-television rights. It is expecting an uplift because a pay-television broadcaster would have more exclusivity – there will only be one from 2015-16 onward.

Canal Plus and Eurosport, however, are thought to be unwilling to pay more than €3m per season. Basic-tier broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport also bid. A pay-television broadcaster would have rights to all matches. The league is expected to announce a deal on March 2 after a second round of bids.

Canal Plus will be keen to beat Eurosport to the rights after it was

usurped by the Discovery-owned broadcaster in a deal late last year for MotoGP rights.

Canal Plus is understood to have been preparing a bid for MotoGP rights, which were held by Eurosport in a three-year deal, from 2012 to 2014, worth about €1.5m per year. However, Eurosport agreed a three-year renewal, from 2015 to 2017, worth about €3m per year in a direct deal with commercial rights-holder Dorna Sports.

Canal Plus acquired exclusive Top 14 rights last month in a four-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2018-19. The deal is worth €74m per season and was agreed with the LNR (*TV Sports Markets* 19:2).

The LNR will also sell some Pro D2 rights to a free-to-air broadcaster, expected to be incumbent rights-holder France Télévisions. Digital-terrestrial broadcaster L’Équipe 21 also bid for free-to-air rights. ■

ESPN surprises NBC

US pay-television network ESPN beat commercial networks NBC and Fox to win rights to the revived World Cup of Hockey in 2016.

ESPN is thought to have paid \$12m (€10.6m) in a deal with the National Hockey League and the NHL Players’ Association, the tournament organisers. The World Cup of Hockey was last played in 2004.

ESPN’s win is a surprise as NBC is the NHL’s US broadcast partner. It holds rights to the league in a 10-year, \$2bn deal which runs until the 2020-21 season.

When the Canadian rights were sold earlier this month, pay-television broadcaster Rogers Sportsnet’s existing deal with the NHL is thought to have tipped the bidding in its favour (*TV Sports Markets* 19:3).

Rogers holds Canadian NHL rights in a 12-season deal from 2014-15 to 2025-26, worth C\$436m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:22). ■

FOOTBALL SPAIN

Barça: Switch to Telefónica was not about sponsorship

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penetration of pay-television in Spain compared to Italy and other countries. It would need to grow from its current base of about 3m homes if La Liga was to close the economic gap. Italy has about 8m pay-television homes. As a football media product, he said, the Spanish league could not be considered to have less value than the Italian league.

“If the pay-television industry grows as it should, clearly we can attain that money. What we need to understand is that the pay-TV market in Spain is underdeveloped. That is key,” Arroyo said.

Collectivisation

Barcelona’s commitment to central selling has been something of a surprise. The Catalan club and its rival Real Madrid have been the beneficiaries of individual selling. The two clubs have the highest media rights income in Europe, far outstripping the rest of La Liga.

Each will earn €140m in 2014-15, the final year of four-season deals with Mediapro. The next highest-earning clubs are Atlético Madrid and Valencia, which will each earn €44m.

Arroyo said the club’s board had been in favour of collective selling since the election of Sandro Rosell as club president in summer 2010. Rosell was elected with a mandate until the end of the 2015-16 season, but was forced to resign following allegations about the misappropriation of funds over the signing of Brazilian forward Neymar in 2013.

Josep Maria Bartomeu was elected from the board to complete Rosell’s term, but has faced instability within the club and in January this year called snap elections in the summer to “relieve tension.”

Telefónica deal

Arroyo was talking in the wake of Barcelona’s surprise decision to sell its media rights for the 2015-16 season to

Telefónica rather than long-term partner Mediapro. It had been thought Mediapro’s close relationship with Barcelona would sway the club.

Both agency and telco are understood to have offered the club about €140m. The decision hinged on the ancillary benefits in each case. Arroyo admitted that the club had been close to a deal with Mediapro last summer but said that the “possibility of Telefónica was always around.”

He denied claims from some Spanish sources that Bartomeu saw a deal with Telefónica as a bigger boost for his re-election campaign.

Arroyo said the club foresaw potential partnerships with Telefónica in a number of areas and was impressed by the strength of its brand in Latin America, where several of Barcelona’s star players originate. As part of the deal the telco will assume management of the club’s in-house television channel, Barça TV, and equip the Nou Camp stadium with wireless internet capability.

Telefónica will also become Barcelona’s regional partner in Latin America in a three-year deal, starting this month, worth €39m, or €13m per season. The club has an option to extend the deal by two years. Arroyo said, however, that the sponsorship agreement with Telefónica was negotiated separately and not the reason for the switch of its media rights.

He added that the club was aware that the deal would strengthen Telefónica’s negotiating power ahead of the return to collective selling in the 2016-17 season.

Barcelona is the third club from which the telco has acquired rights for 2015-16, following deals with Celta Vigo and Real Sociedad last month. Telefónica is thought likely to agree a deal with Espanyol, the sole Liga club yet to sell its 2015-16 rights. Mediapro is not prepared to meet the club’s asking price.

It is to the league’s advantage to ensure Telefónica has a competitive presence in the market ahead of the return to collective selling. If the LFP hopes to meet its €1bn target in 2016-17, it will require strong competition in the market.

The exact role Mediapro will play in that is the subject of considerable speculation in Spain. Some media sources claim that the agency will step back from its role as a buyer

to become the league’s production and distribution partner for domestic and international rights in some kind of joint venture. Some believe that this has already been agreed in principle between the league and the agency. Arroyo said, however, that any such plan would have to be agreed by the assembly of the clubs, and that no such proposal had been floated so far.

Wealth gap

The 20 Primera clubs combined will earn about €722m from the sale of their audiovisual rights in the 2014-15 season. All clubs are in the final year of three- or four-year deals with either pay-television platform Canal Plus or the Mediapro agency. Canal Plus has since been acquired by telco Telefónica, subject to regulatory approval.

It is estimated that top division clubs will earn about €760m in 2015-16, the last season before collective selling is introduced (*TV Sports Markets* 18:14). This covers media rights to domestic competitions and international rights.

Serie A has yet to complete its sales cycle for the three seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18. With the domestic cup rights and some minor packages of rights still to be sold, it has so far brought in €1.148bn per season from its domestic live and highlights rights and international rights.

The Sport Law

The Royal Decree that will institute the legal framework for collective selling has been described as ‘imminent’ since late 2014. The text of the ‘professional sport law’ has been agreed by the clubs and Spain’s competition regulator, the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia.

It awaits only the signature of Spain’s prime minister, Mariano Rajoy, and there is considerable confusion in the country as to why it has not yet been signed off.

At an extraordinary assembly earlier this month, 40 out of 41 Primera and Segunda clubs in attendance voted to urge the government to implement the legislation as soon as possible. Some Spanish media sources have claimed the clubs could strike in an attempt to force the government into action. ■

FIGHT SPORTS

German ruling opens up key market in European expansion

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that ruling for UFC's European strategy and the reasons behind its recent growth.

German breakthrough

UFC is reported to be in advanced negotiations with commercial broadcasters RTL and ProSiebenSat.1. It has also held talks with pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland and sports broadcaster Sport1.

A deal is expected in the coming weeks. Local experts expect any rights fee to be minimal but say free-to-air coverage on a major network would have huge value in developing the audience in Germany.

The German deal will follow last month's deal with Russian state broadcaster VGTRK for 2015 events. UFC has had smaller agreements in Russia in the past, but the new deal signals the first time it has had exposure across free-to-air, pay-television and digital platforms.

The two deals are a big step forward for UFC's distribution in Europe. The promoter is thought to currently earn in excess of €20m (\$22.8m) for its media rights in the region.

Distribution strategy

UFC has grown quickly in Europe, adding broadcast deals in 53 territories covering 115m households in 2014. Allen and Elliott identified two main reasons for the UFC's increasing reach.

First, it has more than doubled the number of staff in its EMEA office, based in London. A dedicated rights distribution team was created in December 2014.

Second, it has increased the number of European events. In 2013 there were three European dates. In 2014, there were four: London, Berlin, Dublin and Stockholm.

UFC returned to Stockholm in January this year, and has three further scheduled events in 2015: Krakow, Glasgow and Berlin. Allen said it plans to eventually host between six and eight events this year.

US-based events air in the early hours of

the morning in Europe. But events hosted in Europe are broadcast in primetime, which boosts viewer numbers and is more appealing to free-to-air broadcasters, as it is easier to sell advertising.

"European events just gave us that pull down into a different market, pulling in different viewers. And it made broadcasters, sponsors and commercial partners look at us differently, and it put us in the forefront of people's minds," said Allen.

There is no single European media strategy. The promoter agrees deals with each broadcaster on an individual basis as it is not tied down to a set rights cycle, such as the English Premier League. When agreeing deals it faces markets with varying degrees of openness to MMA.

"We're at different stages of the sport's evolution," explained Elliott. "Remember the sport's only 20 years old. We're a young sport; we're an even younger business in terms of the UFC in its current guise."

"There are some places where we just need to get on air. In some markets we need to consolidate and we need to help our broadcast partners figure out the sport. And there are some markets where we're already up and running and the sport is accepted, the sport is becoming mainstream."

UFC has to adapt to the conditions in individual markets. One of the key requirements in markets where the sport is less developed is to educate both potential viewers and broadcasters about the product.

Growth

Despite the impressive growth UFC has achieved in Europe already, the promoter believes it still has a long way to go. Elliott suggested that none of its markets in Europe were yet close to maturity.

The sport has five key markets in Europe. Scandinavia and the UK & Ireland are by some way the most valuable markets in terms of rights fees.

Pay-television operator BT Sport holds the UK rights in a three-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, worth £4m (€5.4m/\$6.2m) per season. This represented an increase of 263 per cent on the £1.1m per season paid by ESPN from 2009-10 to 2012-13.

The other three priority markets for UFC in Europe are France, Germany and Russia.

All are large media markets where UFC is yet to extract what it feels is an appropriate value for its rights.

Europe remains a small market by comparison to UFC rights in the US, which are worth \$90m per year in a seven-year deal with the Fox network. ■

[www.](#) For the full interview with David Allen and James Elliott visit our website.

PAY-TV JAPAN

'Recalibrated' Fox sees more profit in selling Bundesliga

By Richard Welbirg

Fox International Channels' decision to sublicense German Bundesliga rights in Japan to the MP & Silva agency surprised industry observers this week. Something seemed to be the wrong way round – agencies buy to sell to broadcasters, not vice versa.

FIC needs premium content for its Fox Sports channel, which launched in Japan in 2013, and the Bundesliga is an attractive product in Japan. However, FIC felt it would make a better return on its investment by sublicensing the rights than by exploiting all or most matches on Fox Sports.

There is no question that it has made a good profit, but the deal raises questions about the viability of the channel.

FIC acquired Bundesliga rights from the 2015-16 season in an 80-territory deal worth €80m (\$91m) per season, agreed in October 2013 with DFL Sports Enterprises, the Bundesliga's commercial arm. The league is understood to have valued the rights in Japan at between €6m and €7m per season.

FIC is thought to have secured between \$13m and \$15m per season from MP & Silva for the rights for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

This is an increase of about 280 per cent on the €3m per season MP & Silva pays DFL Sports Enterprises in the current 2012-13 to 2014-15 cycle as part of a wider package including rights in France, Vietnam and Belgium.

The agency was prepared to pay the increased fee as it believes the Bundesliga

is on a par with Europe's big three leagues in Japan and growing.

There are currently 13 Japanese players in the league, most of whom are full internationals. These include: Shinji Kagawa, who plays for Borussia Dortmund; Shinji Okazaki, the third-highest goal scorer of all time for Japan, who plays for Mainz; and Japan captain Makoto Hasebe, who plays for Eintracht Frankfurt.

Having players spread across several teams ensures broad viewer interest compared to La Liga, for example, where fan interest is focused on two teams: Barcelona and Real Madrid.

Fox 'recalibration'

FIC's decision to sell the rights reflects what local industry sources see as a scaling back of Fox's ambitions in Japan. The view is that Fox Sports is struggling to make a profit on the significant rights and production investment in the channel and that it needs to cut costs.

Fox said that the deal merely reflected a broadening of FIC's business model in recent years. It has moved beyond just being an operator of linear channels. The business now also incorporates content syndication and the development of OTT opportunities.

Fox Sports launched in 2013 as a joint

venture with Japanese digital content distributor TV Bank, owned by telco SoftBank. FIC has agreed to terminate the joint venture, but it intends to continue operating a Fox Sports channel.

FIC holds the Bundesliga rights for five seasons between 2015-16 and 2019-20, but has only sublicensed to MP & Silva for three seasons. It will review the success of syndicating the Bundesliga content in a few years' time.

In the loop

DFL Sports Enterprises was kept closely informed of the negotiation process by FIC. The broadcaster gave the commercial body notice about a year ago that it was considering sublicensing the rights.

It is thought that the deal with MP & Silva was agreed in principle about six months ago. Two weeks ago FIC returned to DFL Sports Enterprises and received its approval for the deal. MP & Silva is the league's existing partner in Japan and it has been pleased with the agency's record there.

Some rights experts say that if FIC sells on the rights in multiple territories, however, the DFL would probably be concerned. One of the reasons for agreeing the 80-territory deal was that the league would be associated with a strong

sports channel brand with high production values.

At the time of the deal, DFL Sports Enterprises chief executive Jörg Daubitzer told *TV Sports Markets* that money was not the driving factor in the FIC deal. He said that a global relationship with a broadcaster like Fox provided solid financial guarantees, but also the broadcasting know-how to elevate the league as a television product (*TV Sports Markets* 17:19).

FIC is also thought to have been looking for a buyer for Bundesliga rights in India and Vietnam but MP & Silva was not interested.

MP & Silva distribution

MP & Silva holds Bundesliga rights from 2012-13 to 2014-15 in Japan, Vietnam, France and Belgium in a single deal worth just over €6m per season. The allocation for Japan is understood to be between €2.7m and €3m per season.

Over the cycle, the agency has agreed five broadcast deals, as well as agreements for news clips and new media rights, worth about €6.5m per season.

MP & Silva has previously used complex bundling to extract value from a famously uncompetitive market (*TV Sports Markets* 14:16). The agency's Japanese revenue is thought to be about \$100m per year. [www](#)

PAY-TV ITALY

Rugby World Cup gives Sky fillip for tough campaign

By Frank Dunne

Sky Italia's acquisition last week of the rights to this year's Rugby World Cup will give the broadcaster a second high-profile, low-cost sports event around which it can build a marketing campaign in late summer.

Sky is thought to be paying somewhere between €1.5m (\$1.7m) and €2m for the rights to the tournament, down from a fee of between €2m and €2.5m it paid for the 2011 event in New Zealand. The broadcaster will show all 48 matches live.

It follows Sky's deal in December for the rights to basketball's European

championship, EuroBasket, for which the broadcaster paid between €600,000 and €700,000 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:23). Both events begin in September.

Neither event will be a big driver of subscriptions, but the broadcaster needs something to counter what will be a major marketing offensive by its main rival, Mediaset Premium, this summer.

From next season, 2016-17, Mediaset will have exclusive rights to the Uefa Champions League for three seasons and will use that to build subscriber numbers. The broadcaster is hopeful that it could lead to hundreds of thousands of Sky subscribers switching to Mediaset.

In February 2014, Mediaset agreed to pay just over €230m per season for the rights. Initially, it had been expected to offset some of the cost through a sublicensing deal with Sky. But Mediaset has emphatically ruled that out.

For the first two years of the current

three-year cycle, 2012-13 to 2014-15, the two broadcasters shared the pay-television rights to the Champions League and Europa League. This season, the senior competition has been exclusively on Sky, apart from one Wednesday match on Mediaset's free-to-air channels, and the junior competition exclusively on Mediaset.

Sky will inevitably lose customers to Mediaset. The challenge will be to limit the damage over the next three years. The view within Sky plc, the parent company of Rupert Murdoch's pay-television operations in Italy, Germany, and the UK, is that Sky Italia's overall sports proposition is robust enough to meet the challenge. Not having won the Champions League rights will also save the company over €200m per year.

Among other content, the broadcaster will have live rights to all 20 Serie A football teams, including 130 matches per

season on an exclusive basis, exclusive coverage of the Europa League, all Formula One and MotoGP events, plus most top tennis and golf competitions.

Additionally, the Sky platform carries Fox Sports, the premium channel also owned by Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox. Fox has the rights to Europe's top football leagues including England's Premier League, Spain's La Liga, France's Ligue 1 and the German Bundesliga.

Fox Sports is also currently carried on Mediaset Premium, in the second year of a two-year carriage deal. But there is no chance of this deal being renewed following Mediaset's hard-line position on the Champions League rights.

Sky Italia had 4.734m subscribers at the end of 2014. The broadcaster enjoyed a net increase of 30,000 in the final quarter – its highest net increase since the first quarter of 2012 – but still ended with 26,000 subscribers fewer than in 2013. Mediaset has 4m customers, of whom about half take an annual subscription.

Change of heart

Despite the drop in rights fee, the World Cup deal is not a bad one for the tournament organiser, Rugby World Cup Limited. The 2011 deal was agreed at a time when Sky was in intense competition with Mediaset and was paying high fees across the board. Few in the market expected the fee level to be repeated.

Rugby remains a niche sport in Italy and the national team is not expected to get beyond the group stage.

Sky's deal was something of a surprise, as the broadcaster looked set to pull out of the sport following its surprise loss of the rights to the Six Nations to Discovery's free-to-air channel DMAX.

DMAX is paying about €2.5m per year for the Six Nations over four years, from 2014 to 2017. The company also bid for the 2015 Rugby World Cup rights when Italian negotiations were opened last summer, but its offer is thought to have been well below Sky's and negotiations with RWCL were fairly brief.

Discovery would have shared coverage between DMAX, which would have had the Italy matches and other key matches, and pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport, which would have shown the

rest. Eurosport does not yet operate a local Italian feed, but there is no technical obstacle to it doing so.

Pay/free combination

Discovery is also understood to be preparing a similar bid for two other important properties: the Coppa Italia, Italy's domestic football cup competition, and European rugby's new premier club competition, the European Rugby Champions Cup.

Lega Serie A put the domestic rights to the Coppa Italia and Supercoppa out to tender last week for the three seasons from 2016-17. It set a base price of €28m per season, up from the €20.5m it currently earns. The mobile and internet rights carry a base price of €520,000 per season and radio rights a further €300,000 per season.

Sky pays €500,000 per season in an agreement for European club rugby which expires this year. Discovery is thought to be proposing to split coverage, with Italian clubs on DMAX and everything else on Eurosport.

The pay/free combination offered by DMAX and Eurosport is likely to be attractive to rights-holders, provided Discovery is prepared to meet their rights-fee expectations. ■

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Setanta gets a fee cut but Uefa remains ahead overall

By Frank Dunne

Irish pay-television broadcaster Setanta is thought to be paying less in its deal, agreed last week, for the Uefa Champions League than it does in the current cycle. Overall, however, Uefa has finished with an increase on the current cycle in Ireland thanks to increases in the value of the free-to-air rights.

European football's governing body is thought to be earning between €5.5m (\$6.3m) and €6m per season for all rights across the three-year cycle, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Currently, it earns between €4.5m and €5m per season.

In each cycle, the bulk of the value comes from the free-to-air rights. Uefa has deals with state broadcaster RTÉ and commercial broadcaster TV3. Each last year renewed for the same rights package – RTÉ for the top match on Wednesday night, and TV3 for Tuesday night.

It is understood that in the current cycle, each pays a similar amount. In the new cycle, RTÉ will be paying more than TV3.

It is unusual in Uefa's European rights deals for the free-to-air rights to be more valuable than the pay-television rights. This happens in Ireland because non-exclusive pay-television rights for the territory have been included in UK rights deals. As a consequence, the non-exclusive Irish pay-television rights are only worth about 10 to 15 per cent of the overall total.

Currently, BSKyB has the non-exclusive pay-television rights for the Champions League. Its Sky Sports channels are available in about 685,000 Irish homes. The Europa League is not shown in Ireland in this way in the current cycle.

From next season, BT will show both the Champions League and Europa League in Ireland.

Setanta's hand

Setanta was able to secure a discount for two reasons. First, it faced no competition. Second, its need for the rights was less than it was for the current cycle, which strengthened its bargaining position.

In 2013, Setanta agreed a deal with BT to carry the BT Sport 1 and BT Sport 2 channels in the Setanta Sports Pack. This meant its subscribers would already receive Champions League coverage from next season, something it is understood to have used as a negotiating tool.

Having the rights on its own channels as well does have some value, however. Setanta will sometimes show matches which are not on BT. It will also be able to present them with local presenters and with an Irish slant, making the coverage more interesting to local audiences.

Europa League

Setanta also renewed and extended its deal for Europa League rights. It will be the only Irish broadcaster showing matches in the next cycle. In the current

cycle it shares coverage with TV3. It is thought that Setanta's rights fee is about €500,000 per season, broadly the amount Uefa brings in for the current cycle.

Unlike the Champions League, no UK broadcaster currently has Europa League rights in Ireland. This is because BT inherited the rights when it took over ESPN, when the Disney-owned company closed its UK operations in 2013. Because ESPN had no distribution in Ireland when acquiring the rights, it acquired them for the UK only. BT has to black out the signal on its channels in Ireland when matches are played.

All deals for both competitions were agreed by Team Marketing, Uefa's sales agent for club competitions. ■

CYCLING

Vuelta earns 40% fee increase from EBU/Eurosport deal

By Robin Jellis

The Vuelta a España cycle race earned a strong increase in media-rights fee from the European Broadcasting Union in a five-year deal finalised late last month.

The deal runs from 2016 to 2020 and is worth just under €5m (\$5.7m) per year. This is up by more than 40 per cent on the fee of about €3.5m per year the EBU pays in its four-year deal from 2012 to 2015. Both deals cover Europe excluding Spain.

The structure of the new deal is different. When the existing deal was signed, Eurosport was still part of the EBU, the consortium of public-service broadcasters, through its French parent company TF1. Since its takeover by US media company Discovery Communications it has to negotiate separately to be a part of EBU deals. Eurosport lost its automatic access to EBU content late last year.

It is thought that Eurosport agreed a pre-deal with the EBU for pay-television rights, which enabled the EBU to agree a deal for all rights directly with Amaury Sport Organisation. ASO owns the Unipublic agency, the Vuelta's commercial rights-holder.

The fee increase is thought to be largely

due to Eurosport making a much bigger contribution than it did in the present deal. Insiders believe it is guaranteeing about 40 to 50 per cent of the total EBU fee. Eurosport's deal covers 54 territories and its rights are exclusive in France, Germany, Italy, Poland and the UK.

Cycling is one of the bedrocks of Eurosport's programming output and the broadcaster was determined to hold on to the Vuelta. It lost Union Cycliste Internationale cycling rights when the sport's global governing body switched its rights from the EBU to the Infront Sports & Media agency in a four-year deal, from 2013 to 2016, worth about €2.8m per year.

The MP & Silva agency is thought to have expressed an interest in acquiring the rights before the EBU deal was agreed. But ASO was keen to retain the wide free-to-air exposure offered by the EBU, and was also convinced by the increased rights fee.

It was happy to agree a long-term deal to provide financial security well into the future. It has a similar philosophy when agreeing deals for the Tour de France, for which it is the commercial rights-holder.

The EBU members providing the bulk of the remaining rights fee are thought to be: Belgian public-service broadcasters VRT and RTBF; Italian state broadcaster Rai; Dutch public-service broadcaster NOS; commercial broadcaster TV2 in Denmark; and commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 in Norway.

One source said the long-term deal may suggest that ASO is concerned about more rights-fee decreases in the Spanish market. Public-service broadcaster TVE holds rights from 2014 to 2016 in a deal worth between €2.5m and €3m per year. This is down from the €3.5m per year TVE paid from 2011 to 2013, and the €4m per year it paid for 2009 and 2010.

The insider described ASO as a "low risk" organisation, whose strategy is dictated by the Amaury Group, which owns ASO. Amaury Group also owns French newspapers *Le Parisien* and *L'Équipe*, among others. It is thought that ASO subsidises other parts of the business.

In 2008, ASO bought a 49-per-cent stake in Unipublic from Spanish media group Atresmedia. It is understood to have acquired the remaining 51 per cent in late 2013, and now wholly owns the agency. ■

FOOTBALL

League gains from Sky but Europe puzzle remains

By Robin Jellis

The English Football League last week earned an increase of about 11 per cent in the value of its media rights from incumbent rights-holder Sky in a one-year extension.

UK pay-television broadcaster Sky will pay about £100m (€135m/\$154m) for the league's rights in the 2018-19 season. The deal contains an option to extend the contract for the 2019-20 season.

This is an increase in value on the existing deal, covering the three seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18, worth about £90m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:14).

The new deal was agreed directly between the Football League and Sky. The rights were not tendered. Sky's main pay-television rival in the UK market, BT Sport, did not bid.

Sky is understood to have been keen to renew the rights to keep them out of BT's reach. The deal also provides many hours of live football coverage. The extension is similar to the one Sky agreed for England and Wales Cricket Board rights late last year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:1).

The Football League has a long-standing relationship with Sky, which has showed live coverage in the UK since the collapse of pay-television broadcaster ITV Digital in 2002. In 2000, ITV Digital agreed to pay £105m per season for the rights before being forced to close.

Sky's rights cover the three leagues below the top-tier Premier League – the Championship, League One and League Two – as well as the League Cup and Football League Trophy knockout competitions. Sky will continue to show 148 live matches per season.

Premier complications

Earlier this month, Sky picked up five of seven Premier League rights packages in a deal worth £1.392bn per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:3).

From 2016-17, Sky will have Saturday lunchtime Premier League matches, which would clash with the Saturday lunchtime Football League matches it currently shows. Sky is expected to shift the Football League slot to the evening, when BT will be showing Premier League matches.

The new Premier League deal has further complicated matters as it made Friday night matches available for the first time – which were acquired by Sky. Sky currently shows some Football League matches on Friday evenings, and in the 2013-14 season showed between 15 and 17 matches in this slot.

International puzzle

It is not clear how the rights from 2015-16 onward will be sold in Europe, as they are currently included in two separate contracts. They are part of the five-season deal with the Pitch International agency for global rights outside the UK, from 2012-13 to 2016-17. The deal is worth about \$20m per season.

In Sky's current deal, and its one-year extension, it has rights in the European Economic Area. It is expected that Pitch and Sky will hold talks about how the rights will be distributed. Sky could show the rights through its Sky Deutschland and Sky Italia operations in Germany and Italy respectively. Sky also holds some Scottish Professional Football League rights in the European Economic Area as part of its UK deal (*TV Sports Markets* 17:12). ■ [www.:](#)

BASKETBALL

Germany hosting role adds value to 2015 EuroBasket rights

By Robin Jellis

ARD and ZDF will pay a rights fee of at least €500,000 (\$570,000), plus broadcast sponsorship, for EuroBasket 2015 rights in Germany.

The deal was agreed between SportA, the agency which buys rights for public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF, and Fiba, basketball's global governing body.

The rights fee is understood to be a decent increase on the fee paid by ARD for EuroBasket 2013. The main reason for

the increase is the fact that part of the competition will be played in Germany. It is also being hosted in Croatia, France and Latvia, and takes place between September 5 and 20.

The deal covers Germany's group stage games against Iceland, Serbia, Turkey, Italy and Spain. The rights fee of €500,000 covers just these games.

ARD/ZDF will also show matches of the German team if they progress from the group stage, subject to scheduling. If the German team reaches the final, the broadcasters will pay up to about €1m.

Fiba spoke with other broadcasters in Germany, but was keen to secure wide coverage in a deal with the public-service broadcasters. The governing body is understood to have worked on the deal with the Deutscher Basketball Bund, the German basketball federation. Talks lasted about 18 months.

On top of the fee, EuroBasket 2015 presenting sponsor Beko will receive some broadcast sponsorship on ARD/ZDF.

Fiba has an additional package of rights to sell, covering all games other than those of the German team. The value of these rights will be considerably less than the ARD/ZDF package.

The body is expecting bids from sports broadcaster Sport1, pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport and telco Deutsche Telekom. It is under no time pressure to sell the rights.

Basketball Bundesliga

Deutsche Telekom holds rights to the top German basketball league, the Basketball Bundesliga, in a four-season deal from 2014-15 to 2017-18 worth €1m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:12). It also covers production costs of more than €4m per season.

Sport1 sublicensed rights from Deutsche Telekom in a two-season deal, from 2014-15 to 2015-16, worth about €250,000 per season. Sport1 shows 48 games per season, non-exclusively, on its free-to-air channel. Deutsche Telekom shows all 306 games on its Entertain IPTV platform.

ARD/ZDF sublicensed highlights and news access rights from Deutsche Telekom, also for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 seasons, in a deal worth about €150,000 per season. ■

CRICKET

IPL digital deal ticks three strategic boxes for Star India

By Richard Welbirg

Star India's new deal for Indian Premier League internet and mobile rights helps the broadcaster in three ways: it gives it vital digital content, helps undermine the exclusivity of rival Sony, and ensures Star has a role in IPL coverage ahead of the sale of the main television rights in India.

Star-owned Novi Digital Entertainment paid the Board of Control for Cricket in India Rs3.022bn (€42.8m/\$48.6m) for the rights to three IPL seasons from 2015 to 2017, or just over Rs1.007bn per year. As well as exclusive internet and mobile rights on the Indian subcontinent, the deal includes platform-neutral rights in the rest of the world excluding Africa, Europe, the US and the Middle East.

Star fought off competition from Times Internet, part of the Times of India group, and Multi Screen Media, owner of Sony Entertainment Television, which reportedly bid Rs2.850bn and Rs1.918bn respectively.

The fee is a 54-per-cent increase on the Rs654m per year paid by a consortium led by Times Internet and including the Nimbus Communications agency over four years from 2011 to 2014.

One local expert said: "Star is trying to build its digital play. They create wrap-around shows around the IPL on their digital outlets just like television." Star sees the rights as a key driver to its streaming and on-demand portals, starsports.com and hotstar.com, launched last month.

The expert added: "It is also a step in the direction of getting more involved with the IPL expecting the TV rights renewal next year. They are also trying to compete with Sony at every level and devalue the exclusivity Sony had with their property."

The BCCI sold this package of rights in 2011 after terminating its 10-year deal with the World Sport Group agency. The broadcast rights deal with Sony covering the same period, from 2008 to 2017, remains in place. It is worth about \$775m (*TV Sports Markets* 12:2). ■

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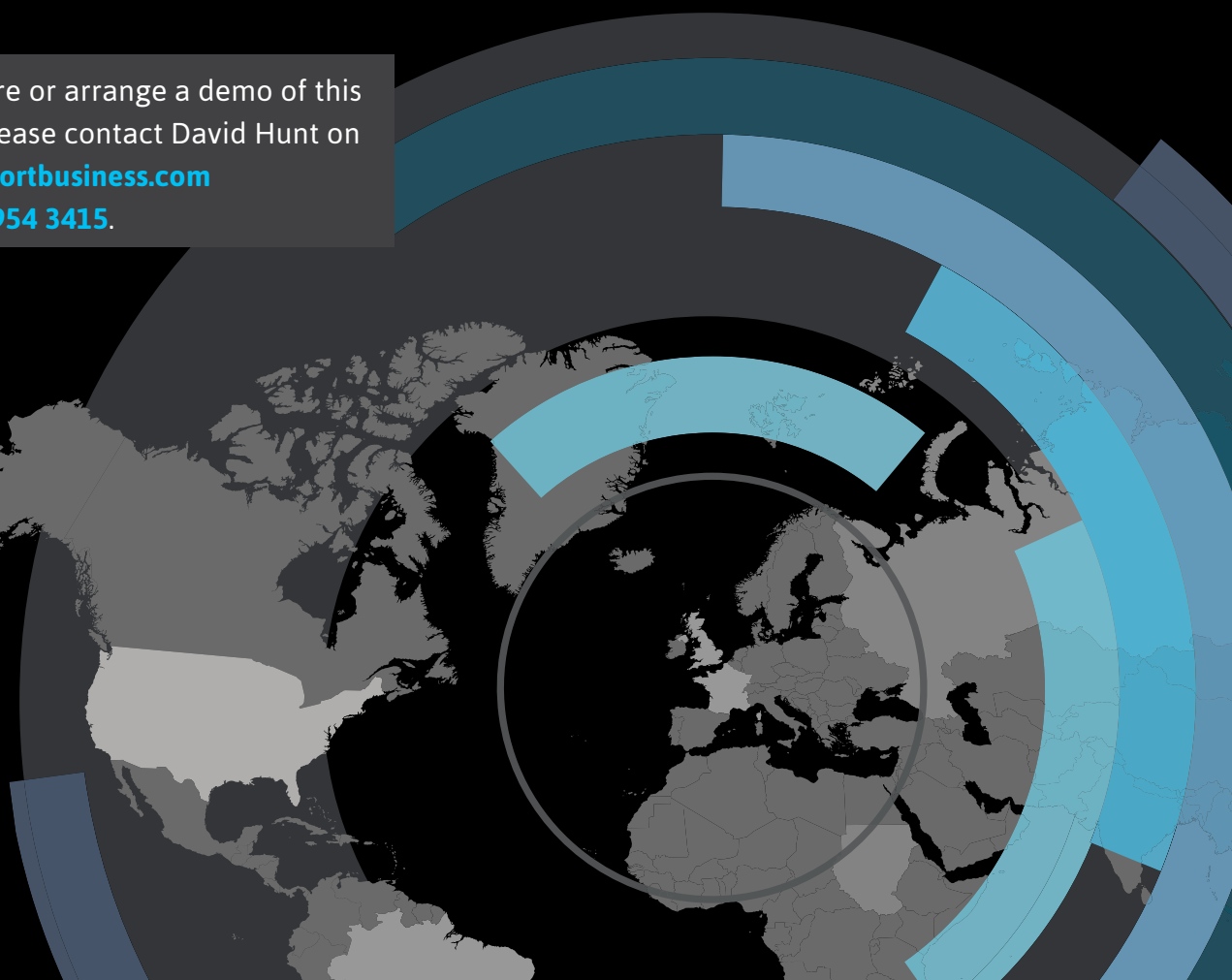
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from February 12 to February 25**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: World Cup, Europa League, FA Cup, Bundesliga, Serie A and more**

- **Football:** Fifa, football's global governing body, renewed a rights deal with the Fox network and pay-television broadcaster Telemundo in the US. The deal covers four years, from 2023 to 2026, and includes: the 2026 World Cup; 2023 Women's World Cup; 2023 and 2025 U-20 World Cup, U-17 World Cup and Beach Soccer World Cup; 2024 and 2026 U-20 Women's World Cup and U-17 Women's World Cup; and the 2025 Confederations Cup. Fox acquired English-language rights, while NBCUniversal-owned Telemundo bought Spanish-language rights. US broadcasters ESPN and Univision criticised Fifa for awarding the rights without holding an open bidding process.
- **Football:** Canadian telco Bell Media extended rights for tournaments operated by Fifa, including the 2026 World Cup. The four-year deal, from 2023 to 2026, also includes all other Fifa events. Bell Media will exploit the rights via pay-television channels CTV and TSN plus French-language channel RDS.
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky agreed a one-year rights extension with the English Football League. Sky will continue to show live coverage of 148 matches per season plus highlights and clips from the tournaments the league operates. The deal covers television, broadband internet, on demand and mobile rights (page 7).
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports confirmed a three-year extension, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, to its deal in the Netherlands for the Uefa Europa League club tournament. The Team Marketing agency brokered the agreement on behalf of Uefa, the sport's European governing body.
- **Football:** Telco Telefónica dislodged the Mediapro agency as Spanish Liga club Barcelona's official rights-holder in a deal for the 2015-16 season. Telefónica will also assume distribution rights for Barça TV, the club's in-house channel (page 1).
- **Football:** Pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired exclusive broadcast and digital rights in Germany for the English FA Cup knockout club tournament. The deal is for three-and-a-half seasons, starting immediately and running until the end of 2017-18. The deal includes live, delayed, highlights and news rights, plus sublicensing rights.
- **Football:** North American Major League Soccer franchise the Seattle Sounders extended rights deals with two regional broadcasters ahead of the 2015 season. The Q13 Fox regional Fox network affiliate and JoeTV, the Seattle-based affiliate of the MyNetworkTV broadcast syndication service, will continue to show Sounders games in the Seattle region.
- **Football:** State-owned television channel Dubai Sports acquired rights in the UAE for the Omantel Professional League, the sport's top division in Oman, in a deal with the Oman Football Association. The length of the deal, which started immediately, was not disclosed, but it will run until at least the end of 2014-15.
- **Football:** The MP & Silva agency agreed a deal to continue distributing rights to the Bundesliga, the top division of German football, to broadcasters in Japan. The new deal covers three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. MP & Silva sublicensed the rights from Fox International Channels, after it was approved by DFL Sports Enterprises, the commercial arm of the German Football League (page 4).
- **Football:** The Sportsman Media Group agency retained live rights to Germany's Bundesliga and 2. Bundesliga for exploitation to betting service providers. It acquired the rights for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons on a global basis, with the exception of Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, San Marino and the Vatican City. Matches can be broadcast live in betting shops and via online platforms for registered active users. The deal is reported to be worth €15m (\$17m) per season, a five-fold increase on the existing deal.
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport agreed a three-year extension to its deal for Serie A, the top division of Italian football. The deal, brokered by MP & Silva, covers 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky secured exclusive live rights for Major League Soccer. The four-year deal begins in March for the 2015 MLS season and runs until the end of the 2018 campaign.

SINCE LAST TIME

- India's Enforcement Directorate, the country's financial watchdog, issued a show cause notice ordering several individuals to explain the processes behind the award of rights in the early years of the Indian Premier League. Notices were served to N Srinivasan, currently sidelined as BCCI president; former league chairman Lalit Modi; the league's chief operating officer Sundar Raman; Manjit Singh, chief executive of Sony-owned Indian broadcaster Multi Screen Media; Paul Manning, legal counsel for the IMG agency; and some directors at the World Sport Group agency and MSM.
- Sky corporate affairs director Graham McWilliam defended the UK pay-television broadcaster's decision to pay an increase in its rights fee for live domestic coverage of the English Premier League. Sky will pay an increase of more than 80 per cent in its rights fee over the next three-season cycle, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, committing a total of £4.176bn (€5.6bn/\$6.4bn) over the cycle for 126 matches per season. Pay-television broadcaster BT Sport will pay an average of £320m per year for 42 games. McWilliam said only one company had "achieved all its objectives in the auction" and added that price comparisons ignore a "huge value gap."
- Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox denied reports it has held talks over a takeover of global media and entertainment company Discovery Communications. *The Australian Financial Review* said senior executives from 21st Century Fox met with counterparts at Discovery to discuss a potential takeover.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from February 12 to February 25**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****NBA, Mayweather v Pacquiao, cycling World Championships and more**

- **Baseball:** Pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport secured exclusive rights across Europe for the inaugural Global Baseball Match-Up between Japan and Europe on March 10-11. Eurosport will show live coverage of the two-match series on its Eurosport 2 channel.
- **Baseball:** Major League Baseball's Arizona Diamondbacks confirmed an extension to its local rights deal with regional sports network Fox Sports Arizona. Diamondbacks president and chief executive Derrick Hall did not comment on the terms of the new long-term agreement with the Fox Sports affiliate, but the MLB.com website said the deal runs for more than 15 years and is worth over \$1.5bn (€1.3bn).
- **Basketball:** Brazilian pay-television broadcaster Globosat agreed a multi-year deal with the NBA. Globosat will show three games per week from the regular season, play-offs and conference finals. Rights will be exploited via the SporTV pay-television channels.
- **Basketball:** Italian digital-terrestrial sports broadcaster Sportitalia acquired rights for the 2015 Copa del Rey de Baloncesto, the Spanish knockout club tournament. Sportitalia will show two quarter-finals, the semi-finals and final live.
- **Boxing:** US network CBS acquired rights for the new Premier Boxing Champions series operated by promoter Al Haymon. Under the multi-year deal, the series will be shown on CBS as well as the network's pay-television channel, Showtime. CBS will show up to eight events this year, starting in April. Other cards may be added to pay-television channel CBS Sports Network.
- **Boxing:** US cable television broadcasters HBO and Showtime agreed a joint pay-per-view rights deal for the bout between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao. Showtime and HBO will jointly produce and distribute the bout.
- **Boxing:** Boxing promoters Matchroom and Sauerland agreed a deal to share broadcast rights to big fight nights for viewers in the UK and Germany. A total of 12 world title fights in Germany will be shown live by Sky. The fights, along with Sauerland's Nordic Fight Night series, will be shown on the Matchroom Fight Pass subscription streaming service. In Germany, Matchroom's 20 shows on Sky will be broadcast by the ProSiebenSat.1 media group on either its free-to-air Sat.1 channel or its online platforms.
- **Cycling:** Public-service broadcaster France Télévisions acquired rights for the 2015 Track Cycling World Championships in a sublicensing deal with beIN Media Group. The broadcaster showed coverage on its France Ô and France 3 channels.
- **Cycling:** Eurosport acquired rights to Dutch cyclist Thomas Dekker's attempt to break the International Cycling Union's Hour Record. Eurosport broadcast coverage on Eurosport 2 throughout 70 markets across the Europe and Asia-Pacific regions.

FOOTBALL

- The English Football League struck a deal with the Premier League to redistribute a portion of the top tier's media-rights revenues to Football League clubs from 2016-17. 'Parachute payments' for relegated Premier League clubs will be reduced from the current four seasons to three seasons, with second-tier Championship clubs not in receipt of parachute payments each to be awarded a solidarity payment equivalent to 30 per cent of a third-year parachute payment. League One and League Two clubs will receive 4.5 per cent and three per cent of a third-year payment, respectively.
- BT Sport will provide live coverage of the FA Cup quarter-final between Bradford City and Reading on March 7 on a free-to-air basis.
- German Bundesliga football club Bayern Munich entered into a content partnership with Chinese state-owned broadcaster CCTV. Bayern will make exclusive video interviews and content available to CCTV's Total Soccer weekly magazine programme.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- Rupert Murdoch's pay-television operator Sky is set to increase its shareholding in Sky Deutschland, which operates in Germany and Austria, to 100 per cent. Sky's wholly-owned subsidiary, Sky German Holdings, increased its stake in Sky Deutschland to 95.8 per cent in January.

- Pay-television broadcaster OSN struck a deal to distribute WWE Network, the pay-television channel operated by the WWE wrestling organisation, to subscribers in the Middle East and North Africa. The deal will run for five years, from 2015 until 2019.
- Norwegian commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 agreed a deal to take over pay-television broadcaster C More's sports operation in Norway. TV2 will assume all of C More's Norwegian sports rights.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- German sports broadcaster Sport1 will be challenged by pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland and commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1 for Professional Darts Corporation rights from 2017. Event promoter Matchroom Sport is the commercial rights-holder.
- UK pay-television broadcaster Sky will make a decision soon on whether to activate a two-year extension, from 2017-18 to 2018-19, to rights for the Scottish Professional Football League, which operates the top four divisions in Scotland. Sky's current deal is reported to include a "secret clause" for the extension.
- The Australian, New Zealand and South African rugby unions are close to sealing a five-year deal, from 2016 to 2020, in Australia. Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports is set to retain all live rights to Australia national team games and Super Rugby matches. Commercial broadcaster Ten will simulcast Australia's games and show delayed coverage of one Super Rugby game each weekend.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from February 12 to February 25

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

British Darts Organisation, PGA Tour, MotoGP, Formula One and more

- **Darts:** The British Eurosport division of Eurosport acquired exclusive live rights for the British Darts Organisation's 2015 World Trophy in Manchester, the UK. Eurosport agreed the deal with BDO Events, the sales agent of the BDO.
- **Golf:** US satellite-television provider DirecTV extended a rights deal for four PGA Tour tournaments – the Northern Trust Open, the AT&T Byron Nelson Championship, the Memorial and the Barclays. The deals will run for five years, from 2015 to 2019.
- **Horse Racing:** US pay-television broadcaster TVG, a subsidiary of online betting company Betfair, acquired rights for events staged at racecourses operated by gambling and horse racing company the Stronach Group for seven years, from 2015 to 2021. The rights to races at the Santa Anita, Gulfstream Park, Pimlico, Golden Gate Fields and Laurel Park racecourses in the US were included in TVG's acquisition of rival pay-television broadcaster HRTV from the Stronach Group. The television operations of HRTV will be combined with TVG. The total value of the acquisition and rights will be \$47.8m (€42m) over seven years.
- **Horse Racing:** Australian pay-television broadcaster Sky Racing struck a temporary rights deal with the Racing Victoria state organisation in order to avert a blackout following the impending closure of pay-television broadcaster TVN, which will cease broadcasting on March 15.
- **Motorcycling:** Pay-television broadcaster Taj TV, which operates in the Indian subcontinent, acquired exclusive rights for the MotoGP series. The five-year deal with the Dorna Sports agency, the series' commercial rights-holder, will run from 2015 to 2019. Ten Sports will broadcast all MotoGP, Moto2 and Moto3 races and qualifying sessions live across its six channels.
- **Motorcycling:** The British Eurosport division of Eurosport acquired rights for the International Motorcycling Federation's World Endurance Championship until at least the end of 2015. British Eurosport will provide live coverage and highlights, with Eurosport Player streaming live coverage.
- **Motorsport:** Australian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights for the Formula One championship. Fox Sports will show live coverage of all 20 races per season for five years, from 2015 to 2019. As part of the agreement with Formula One Management, Fox Sports chief executive Patrick Delany said his company had struck an "extraordinary affiliate agreement" with Sky to show the same F1 coverage available via the UK pay-television broadcaster.
- **Motorsport:** Australian commercial broadcaster Ten struck a deal with Formula One Management to acquire Formula One rights for five years, from 2015 to 2019. Ten will broadcast live coverage of 10 grands prix per season and highlights of the other 10 races on its secondary channel, Eleven.
- **Motorsport:** UK pay-television broadcaster Premier Sports renewed a rights deal with the Nascar stock car racing series for the top-tier Sprint Cup competition. The deal will run for three years, from 2015 to 2017.
- **Motorsport:** Irish pay-television broadcaster Setanta Sports extended a rights agreement for Nascar's Sprint Cup for three years, from 2015 to 2017.
- Italy's Lega Serie A has issued a tender for the broadcast rights to the Coppa Italia and Supercoppa Italiana club football competitions for 2015-16 to 2017-18. The tender, drawn up together with Infront Sports & Media, has a base price for the television rights to the two competitions of €84m (\$95.5m) across the three seasons, and €1.56m for digital rights. The deadline for bids is March 6.
- Bulgarian football clubs CSKA Sofia and Levski Sofia have threatened to boycott the top domestic division unless a new model is drawn up for the distribution of television revenue. Both clubs claim they should enjoy a greater share of revenue from broadcast rights as they are the two most-watched teams. Broadcast revenues for the league are currently shared on an equal basis amongst its 12 teams.
- Doordarshan will continue to share broadcast signals of the 2015 Cricket World Cup with cable-television operators in India after the country's Supreme Court reserved a verdict on the matter after staying an order from the Delhi High Court which barred the public-service broadcaster from sharing the signals. Doordarshan's parent company, Prasar Bharati, ruled out the possibility of establishing separate channels for live coverage of the event. The tournament's global rights-holders, pay-television broadcasters ESPN and Star Sports, along with the BCCI, claimed cable-television operators were receiving live feeds through Doordarshan channels for free.
- Host Broadcast Services, a subsidiary of Infront Sports & Media, was selected by the International Cycling Union to serve as host broadcaster of the 2015 Track World Championships.
- The International Cycling Union and British Cycling agreed to delay the 2016 Track World Championships from February 24-28 to March 2-6 to avoid a clash with coverage of the Six Nations.
- The 2014 edition of the World Touring Car Championship attracted 16 per cent more television viewers than in 2013, while broadcast coverage of the series was up 42 per cent to 1,728 hours.
- The Women's Tennis Association reported a 22.5-per-cent increase in cumulative viewing figures for its 21 Premier top-tier tournaments and the season-ending WTA Finals event in 2014.
- Free-to-air and pay-television broadcaster Abu Dhabi Media launched a new sports channel dedicated to increasing the exposure for traditional Emirati sports in the Arab region. The new Yas channel will broadcast 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- Doordarshan will continue to share broadcast signals of the 2015 Cricket World Cup with cable-television operators in India after the country's Supreme Court reserved a verdict on the matter after staying an order from the Delhi High Court which barred the public-service broadcaster from sharing the signals. Doordarshan's parent company, Prasar Bharati, ruled out the possibility of establishing separate

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from February 12 to February 25**MEDIA RIGHTS 4****European Games, Netball Australia, Rugby World Cup and more**

- **Multi-sport:** Pay-television sports broadcaster Universal Sports Network acquired rights in the US and Canada for the 2015 European Games in Baku, Azerbaijan. The deal covers live daily broadcasts plus the opening and closing ceremonies on television and online.
- **Multi-sport:** Greek public-service broadcaster Nerit acquired rights for live coverage of the 2015 European Games. Nerit will show daily action plus the opening and closing ceremonies on its television and online platforms.
- **Multi-sport:** Finnish public service broadcaster YLE acquired multi-platform rights for the 2015 European Games. YLE will supplement daily live coverage and a highlights show with coverage of the opening and closing ceremonies.
- **Netball:** Netball Australia agreed a deal with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports and commercial broadcaster Ten. Fox Sports and Ten's free-to-air channel One will show Australia's international Tests and all games in the ANZ Championship club competition in 2015 and 2016.
- **Rugby Union:** Italian pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia agreed a deal for the 2015 Rugby World Cup. Sky, which struck the agreement with tournament organiser Rugby World Cup Limited, will show live coverage of all 48 matches on television, digital and mobile platforms (page 5).
- **Sailing:** The Extreme Sailing Series agreed a deal with BT Sport for the 2015 season.
- **Squash:** The Professional Squash Association awarded rights for its World Tour series in 2015 season to pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports in Australia.
- **Squash:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand acquired rights for the 2015 PSA World Tour series.
- **Squash:** The PSA finalised deals in New Zealand and Australia. The governing body of men's and women's squash signed an 18-month deal with Sky New Zealand. Live matches from the PSA World Tour will be shown in New Zealand for the first time.
- **Volleyball:** Polish pay-television operator Polsat acquired rights for several European Volleyball Confederation properties. The deal will run for four years, from 2015 to 2018, and includes the annual European Beach Volleyball Championships. Polsat will also serve as the host broadcaster of the 2017 men's European Championships in Poland. The deal was brokered by the Infront Sports & Media agency.
- **Volleyball:** The Saran Media agency acquired rights in Turkey for the 2015 men's and women's European Volleyball Championships and the European Beach Volleyball Championships in a deal with Infront Sports & Media.
- **Volleyball:** Italian state broadcaster Rai acquired rights to the 2015 men's and women's European Championships. Rai will show the Italian national team's matches and other key games live on its television, internet and mobile platforms. The deal was brokered by Infront Sports & Media.
- Discovery Communications is ready to invest in sports-rights for Eurosport, according to the global media and entertainment company's chief financial officer, Andy Warren. Discovery, which acquired Eurosport last year, said spending on sports-rights is likely to squeeze financial margins in 2015. Warren said Discovery would invest in rights "in the near term" to "fully maximise the growth potential of the asset in the medium and long term."
- Major League Baseball is considering spinning off part of MLB Advanced Media, its interactive media and internet company. MLBAM is in talks with 40 potential clients.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Cyril Linette, former director of sports at French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus, was appointed director general of daily French sports newspaper *L'Équipe*. Linette had been director of sports at Canal Plus since 2008. • Tony Crispino, former chief operating officer of the IMG agency's college division, was appointed as chief operating officer of Bruin Sports Capital, the new sports marketing company established by ex-IMG president George Pyne.

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St Mark's House, Shepherdess Walk, London, N1 7BQ
© TV Sports Markets Ltd 2015.
Printed by Rapidity, Citybridge House,
235-245 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7JD



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