

RUGBY UNION

BT Sport renews with Premiership Rugby in pre-emptive strike to keep out Sky

By Robin Jellis

UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport renewed its rights to English Premiership Rugby last week, increasing its rights fee by almost 60 per cent.

The new six-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2020-21, is understood to be worth an average of £35m (€49m/\$52m) per season. It is thought that the fee will rise to about £40m in the final season.

This is up from about £22m per season in BT's existing four-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2016-17.

The existing deal will be ended two seasons early to allow the new deal to begin from 2015-16.

The deal was agreed directly between BT and Premiership Rugby, the body which organises English club rugby

union's top-tier Premiership. The rights were not tendered.

The deal is seen as a pre-emptive strike from BT to prevent its main rival, Sky, from bidding. BT was prepared to pay a premium to take the rights off the market. The telco is understood to have initiated renewal talks with the league.

The Premiership is likely to be one of a small number of top properties in the UK which will be able to command rights-fee increases, with a depression in fees expected over the coming years as a consequence of the huge increases BT and Sky paid to renew their Premier League deals last month.

Premiership Rugby's commercial

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OLYMPIC GAMES

IOC upbeat despite gloomy European outlook

By Richard Welbirg

The International Olympic Committee expects to increase the value of its European media rights despite the gloomy economic outlook across much of the continent.

On May 11, the IOC will invite bids in Europe for the rights to the 2018 winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, and the 2020 summer Games in Tokyo, Japan. The deadline for bids is June 15.

In the current cycle, covering the 2014 Games in Sochi, Russia, and the 2016 Games to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the IOC earned €771.5m (\$816m) in Europe – a 15-per-cent increase on its

European income of €672m from media rights to the 2010 and 2012 Games.


The committee believes a further uplift is possible despite weak growth expectations in the region. The European Commission's February economic forecasts project growth in the European Union of 1.7 per cent in 2015 and 2.1 per cent in 2016. The projections are even lower for the Eurozone countries, at 1.3 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively.

Despite this, Timo Lumme, the IOC's managing director of television and

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FASTRACK 1

NEWS IN BRIEF

French Open secures big increase in Canada

Canadian pay-television sports broadcasters TSN and RDS trebled their rights fee and their guarantees for coverage of French Open tennis in last week's renewal.

The new TSN/RDS deal is for eight years, from 2017 to 2024, and follows the broadcasters' existing six-year deal, from 2011 to 2016, worth \$250,000 (€237,500) per year.

The deal was agreed directly between TSN/RDS and the French tennis federation, the Fédération Française de Tennis. The federation was advised on the sales process by the Lagardère Unlimited agency.

The federation spoke with other broadcasters in Canada, but there was no formal tender process.

TSN/RDS was seeking a long-term deal. The federation was happy to grant this, provided it received a strong increase in rights fee and exposure.

Under the new deal, TSN and RDS will show a combined 360 hours of coverage per edition, split equally between the two broadcasters. This is three times the 120 hours shown by the broadcasters in the current deal.

There are two main reasons why TSN/RDS was so keen on the rights, and was prepared to increase its fee.

First, the emergence of Canadians Milos Raonic and Eugenie Bouchard as top players has increased the relevance of the rights. Raonic is sixth in the men's world rankings, while Bouchard is seventh in the women's rankings.

Second, TSN/RDS were keen to hold on to one of their top properties and wanted to agree a long-term deal. This is a common trend in North American sports-rights deals.

The multi-court coverage offered by the federation is also thought to have been a factor in getting an increase from the broadcasters. As of this year the FFT will make action from all 16 courts available, which TSN/RDS wanted for

their digital platforms.

The two are long-term broadcasters of the French Open in Canada. TSN has shown the French Open since it launched in 1984. French-language network RDS launched in 1989. ■

England games on the market

UK pay-television broadcaster Sky this month tendered rights to England autumn internationals outside the UK, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

In October, Sky bought global rights to England national team autumn internationals in a deal with the Rugby Football Union, the sport's governing body in England.

The deal is for five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, and is worth just over £35m (€49m/\$52m) per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:20).

Sky previously only held domestic rights in a five-season deal, from 2010-11 to 2014-15, worth £17m per season. International rights were held by the Pitch International agency over the same five-season period for about \$10m, or \$2m per season.

Sky is now selling the rights globally, outside the UK. It has set a deadline of April 2 for offers. There is no reserve price for the rights.

There is nothing in the tender to suggest the rights cannot be bought in Italy or Germany, where Sky also owns pay-television platforms. One insider said Sky would look to recoup a rights fee in these territories, and if offers were considered low then it could show coverage on its channels.

It is thought that Sky will be looking to increase the value of the international rights by at least 50 per cent, to more than \$3m per season, due to its increased total rights fee.

The most valuable content included in the package are England's autumn internationals and warm-up matches ahead of the 2019 Rugby World Cup. The deal does, however, exclude rights in the country of England's opponent in warm-up matches. ■

CyTA tops up motorsport content

Cypriot pay-television broadcaster CyTAvision has expanded its motorsport portfolio over the past month, striking two new deals.

It agreed a deal worth €30,000 (\$31,740) per year for the 2015 and 2016 MotoGP series. The deal was agreed with commercial rights-holder Dorna Sports, which was advised by the IMG Events & Media agency.

The broadcaster is also close to an agreement with WRC Promoter, the commercial rights-holder of the World Rally Championship. The deal is worth slightly less than €30,000 per year and also covers the 2015 and 2016 competitions.

Both events had been without broadcast partners in Cyprus since the expiry of MotoGP's deal with pay-television channel CY Sports after the 2012 season, and WRC's deal with now-defunct pay-television broadcaster Lumiere TV after the 2011 season. ■

Sky gets Mayweather v Pacquiao

Sky this week acquired the UK rights to the fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao for a rights fee of about £10m (€14m/\$14.8m), beating competition from pay-television boxing channel BoxNation.

Sky's main pay-television rival, BT Sport, is not thought to be interested in boxing rights, and did not bid.

Industry experts expect Sky to get about 600,000 pay-per-view sign-ups for the fight, which will take place on May 2. Sky customers can buy access to the fight for £19.95 until midnight on May 1. After that, the cost will rise to £24.95 for bookings over the telephone.

If Sky gets 600,000 sign-ups for the bout, it would generate about £12m in pay-per-view revenues. Sky would earn a limited amount from advertising on top of this, but would have to cover staff and marketing costs. One UK expert said he expected Sky to break even on the deal, but stressed it was an important marketing tool for the broadcaster. ■

RUGBY UNION

BT Sport renews with Premiership to keep out Sky long term

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director, Dominic Hayes, declined to comment on the value of the BT deal, but told *TV Sports Markets* this week there were several reasons why the league had been able to achieve an uplift in rights fee.

“We have proven that on a pay-television basis we can drive subscribers,” he said. “There is a committed rugby audience out there which is passionate about the Premiership.”

He added that Premiership matches this season were averaging five tries per match, more than any other league in the world, which had helped the Premiership “become a key part of BT’s rights portfolio.”

The deal is seen as vitally important to BT. One former UK pay-television executive said: “Having a long-term deal is absolutely crucial for a pay-TV broadcaster. It puts down a marker for its long-term ambitions.”

BT was determined to renew its Premiership rights and could afford the uplift. The telco budgeted for a greater spend on Premier League rights than it will actually pay.

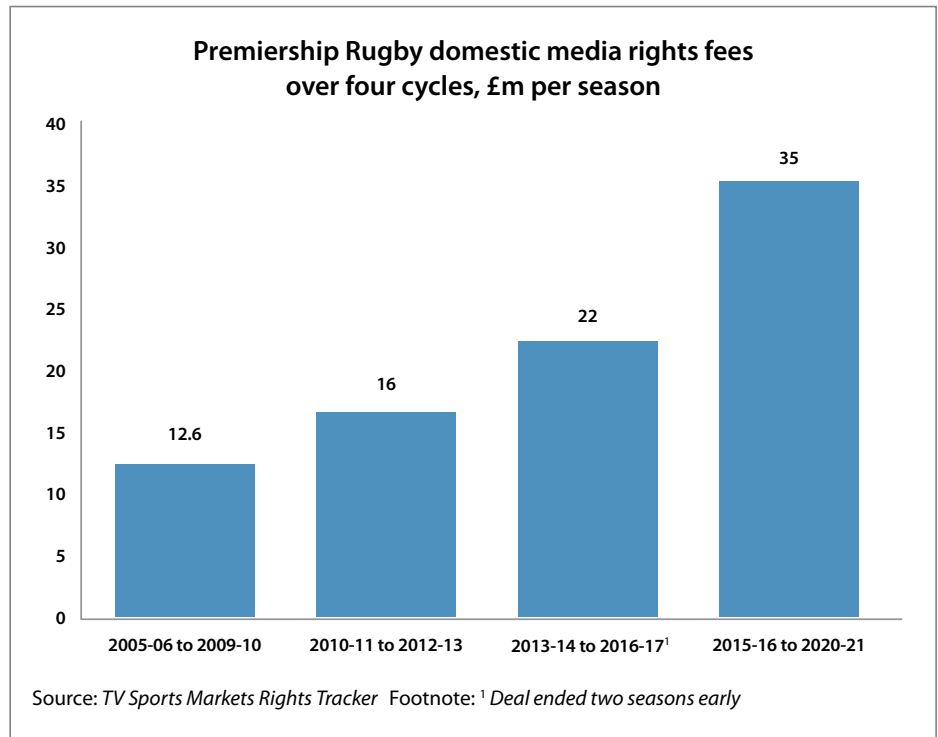
From 2016-17 to 2018-19, BT will pay £320m per season, a 30-per-cent increase on the £246m it pays per season in the current cycle, from 2013-14 to 2015-16 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:3).

BT also lost out to Sky in the bidding for two packages of England international rugby union matches in October (*TV Sports Markets* 18:20).

Audiences up 50%

Over the course of almost two seasons covering the Premiership, BT has increased the live audience of matches by 50 per cent compared to the previous rights cycle, Hayes said.

He added that BT had achieved this “through on-air promotions, by creating an appointment-to-view and through their marketing prowess.”



One reason why BT has been able to increase audiences is that it has exclusive Premiership rights. From 2010-11 to 2012-13, rights were split between Sky and US pay-television sports channel ESPN.

Hayes added that BT had been “innovative” in its coverage by interviewing players pitch-side and speaking with coaching staff at half-time. “They have helped make Premiership matches more compelling and interesting as live events,” he said.

BT will show up to 80 live matches per season, up from a maximum of 69 matches per season in the current deal. This is a 16-per-cent increase, and another reason why BT is paying more in the new deal.

BT will also be able to show near-live extended highlights, which were not included in the existing deal.

The deal also covers highlights rights to all 135 Premiership games each season, and live rights to the Premiership Rugby Sevens – the same as in the current deal.

BT will continue to show all Premiership programming on its BT Sport 1 and BT Sport 2 channels.

Current deal

The existing four-season Premiership deal was agreed in September 2012, and was

BT’s second media rights deal after buying Premier League rights in the current 2013-16 cycle.

The Premiership deal was worth ‘up to’ £152m and, controversially, included rights to matches of English teams in European competitions. The split was set to be £22m per season for the Premiership over four seasons, and £21.3m per season for European rugby matches over three seasons (*TV Sports Markets* 18:7).

At the time, European rugby matches were sold by ERC Ltd, the organiser of the Heineken and Amlin Cups. Rights in the UK were held by Sky in a four-season deal, from 2010-11 to 2013-14, worth £15m per season.

Sky renewed its deal with ERC for four seasons, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, for £18m per season. This meant there were two exclusive deals in place for European rights, with two different organisations.

A sharing deal between BT and Sky was then tortuously negotiated over many months as it became apparent the European rugby competitions would not continue in their existing format.

From 2014-15 to 2016-17, BT is paying about £13m per season and Sky is paying about £11m per season, both for non-exclusive rights to the newly-created European Rugby Champions Cup and the

European Rugby Challenge Cup.

The European rights were not included in BT's new deal for Premiership rights.

French battle

In recent years, some English players have left to play in the top French rugby union league, the Top 14. French clubs can offer higher salaries as they earn more from media rights.

Last summer, England international Toby Flood moved from Leicester to Toulouse, while Delon and Steffon Armitage both play for Toulon. English players who move abroad can no longer play for the national team.

Hayes said the new Premiership deal with BT "narrows the gap between the French and the English leagues" and that it "will help our clubs retain English talent as they won't be as tempted to move abroad" for more lucrative contracts.

The Top 14 will earn €74m per season over the four seasons from 2015-16 to 2018-19 in a deal with pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus (*TV Sports Markets* 19:2). This is still 51-per-cent more than the Premiership will earn in its new BT deal.

Recent press reports have suggested there will be changes to the salary cap, meaning that clubs will be able to pay players more money to prevent them from seeking higher salaries abroad.

However, the cap has already been fixed for the 2015-16 season. Club chairmen and shareholders will now discuss whether or not to increase the cap in future seasons, Hayes said.

There has also been speculation that the Premiership may move from 12 to 14 clubs, and that promotion and relegation to and from the second-tier Championship may be ended. More teams would mean more matches and more content for broadcasters, which could help boost rights fees in future.

Hayes declined to comment on the potential format change, but said it was an issue for chairmen, shareholders and the Rugby Football Union, the governing body of rugby union in England. Proposals are with the RFU. ■

[www. For the full interview with Dominic Hayes, and the related article *Rights-holders face UK price squeeze*, visit our website.](#)

OLYMPIC GAMES

IOC optimistic despite gloomy European outlook

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marketing, was positive about the outlook in Europe. He told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "We take a long-term view. These are the ebbs and flows of the market that you can never avoid," he said. "The only thing that we can control is the timing, and from that perspective we are happy with the timing of the tender."

Based on the €/€ exchange rates at the time deals were signed, the IOC met its 2014-16 media rights target of \$1bn for Europe. Lumme said the IOC didn't "necessarily have a financial target" for 2018-2020. The important thing was that globally the value of the rights continued to increase.

The IOC increased its global media-rights revenues by 6.5 per cent from 2010-12, when it earned \$3.843bn, to 2014-16, for which it has agreed deals worth \$4.1bn.

Lumme said the IOC expected interest from "the whole panorama of media platforms and companies," including pay-television operators, but added that ensuring free-to-air coverage remained a "cornerstone" of its philosophy. He ruled out signing exclusive deals with pay-television operators in any circumstances.

When the IOC agreed a deal in Italy for 2010-2012 with pay-television operator Sky Italia, Lumme said the deal would be a "reference point" for future deals (*TV Sports Markets* 12:5). Sky paid €112m, renewing for 2014-2016 at €152m.

This type of gatekeeper deal, with a pay-television operator putting up a big fee, showing all of the summer Games and sublicensing the top 200 hours of coverage to a free-to-air channel, looked to be an attractive template for the committee.

But other pay-television operators have shown little enthusiasm for an expensive 17-day event every four years which does not drive subscriptions. And having an obligation to sublicense does not put them in a strong bargaining position with free-to-air broadcasters. Sky Italia is not

expected to renew for 2018-2020.

For the winter Games the IOC demands at least 100 hours of free-to-air coverage.

EBU may hold the key

Repeating the 15-per-cent increase in Europe between the previous and current cycles would be an impressive achievement in the current economic climate. Much is likely to depend on the appetite for the Games of the European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters, and its members' reaction to having been cut out last time.

For 2014-2016, the IOC ended a 56-year partnership with the EBU, rejecting a €630m offer that would have covered the region, excluding Italy and Turkey (*TV Sports Markets* 12:22).

The committee instead opted to agree direct deals in six major European markets: Italy, the UK, France, Turkey, Spain and Germany. The IOC sold rights in the other 40 European territories to the Sportfive agency for €236m (*TV Sports Markets* 15:9).

It remains to be seen whether any agency is prepared to take the risk this time around. Lumme said the Sportfive deal had been "a big success" from a coverage perspective, but the agency is thought to have lost money on the rights.

In 2012, Sportfive's parent company, Lagardère Unlimited, made a provision for a €22m loss on the deal, but the eventual shortfall is thought to have been smaller.

A return to the EBU – even with some key markets carved out – would represent a similar U-turn to that of the International Association of Athletics Federations.

The IAAF dropped the EBU for its World Athletics Series in 2009 for the 2010-2013 cycle to agree a \$20m-per-year deal with another Lagardère Unlimited agency, IEC in Sports. It returned to the EBU in 2011 for the 2014-2017 period after the agency struggled to guarantee adequate coverage in certain markets (*TV Sports Markets* 15:22).

Direct deals

In France and the UK, the IOC agreed four-Games deals, from 2014 to 2020. UK public-service broadcaster the BBC agreed to pay £130m (€182m/\$192m) for both cycles, split £60m for 2014-16 and £70m for 2018-20. French public-service

broadcaster France Télévisions paid €171m for four Games across two cycles.

In Turkey, the 2014-2016 rights were acquired by general entertainment channel Fox for €23m.

In Spain and Germany, the rights for 2014-16 were sold to public-service broadcasters: TVE paid €70m in Spain and ARD/ZDF paid €129m in Germany.

IMG renews

The IOC will be advised on deals in Europe for 2018 and 2020 by the IMG Events & Media agency, a renewal of the agreement covering 2014-2016. It is thought that IMG will be paid on a commission basis. All deals will be signed off by the IOC.

Lumme said that working with a large agency was important for the IOC's relatively small sales team. There are just under 50 territories across Europe, and partnering with an agency offers local knowledge and channels of communication. "They can be our arms, legs and eyes in those areas," Lumme said. "We physically can't see everyone."

When IMG first won the contract with the IOC, in March 2008, it overcame competition from about seven other agencies, including Sportfive, Infront Sports & Media, Spectrum and Profile Media. The IOC was "very satisfied" with the agency's performance in the current cycle, Lumme said, and renewed for 2018-2020 without allowing other agencies to pitch for the role. ■

[www. For the full interview with Timo Lumme visit our website.](#)

TV NORWAY

TV2 eyeing up Premier League after C More acquisition

By Robin Jellis

TV2 Norway's deal to buy the C More pay-television operation in Norway last month was driven by a desire to boost subscriber numbers ahead of the upcoming Premier League auction, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

TV2, which operates commercial and pay-television channels in Norway, saw C

More as a strategic purchase to enable it to bundle together premium sport. Under the deal, TV2 will acquire 12 C More pay-television channels in Norway.

Acquiring C More's Norwegian operation means TV2 will take over the broadcaster's sport portfolio, which includes the top domestic football league, the Tippeliga, as well as Europa League, Serie A and La Liga football. TV2 will honour all existing C More deals, many of which expire this year.

The deal is yet to be approved by the Norwegian competition authority, the Konkurransetilsynet. It is expected to go through in early April.

It is not yet known whether TV2 will merge its pay-television operation with C More, or whether the two will remain separate entities. A decision will be taken if and when the deal is approved.

C More, which used to operate across the Nordics, encountered financial difficulties after agreeing deals at inflated prices following the loss of pan-Nordic Premier League rights in 2010 (*TV Sports Markets* 14:6).

C More sold on its business in Denmark to pan-Nordic basic-tier broadcaster SBS last year, and had been seeking a buyer in Norway. It is expected to continue its business in its core market, Sweden.

The acquisition of C More means TV2 will have exclusive Tippeliga rights until the end of the 2016 season.

TV2 pays about NOK480m (€55m/\$58m) in the four years from 2013 to 2016, or NOK120m per year, for rights to two matches per week. C More holds rights to the other six matches per week in a deal worth just over NOK1bn over the same four years, or about NOK250m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 15:21).

C More is thought to have been losing about NOK150m on the deal each year. When Manfred Aronsson became C More chief executive last August, he is thought to have made the ending, or sublicensing, of the Tippeliga deal a priority.

Premier ambitions

One insider said the acquisition of C More was based on the "hope and thought" that TV2 would renew its Premier League rights in Norway. The Premier League is TV2's most important property.

TV2 currently pays €75m (\$79.5m), or €25m per season, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. Commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group holds rights in Denmark and Sweden.

Local experts expect strong bidding across the region from MTG and SBS, which may bid together with pan-regional broadcaster Eurosport. Both are owned by US media group Discovery. BeIN Media Group may bid across the Nordics. C More could bid for rights in Sweden alone.

TV2 will bid for rights in Norway alone. The rights in a new three-year cycle, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, are expected on the market in August. It is thought that a deal will be in place by October this year.

Golf strategy

C More this week acquired PGA Tour golf rights across the Nordics in a six-year deal, from 2016 to 2021. The deal is thought to be worth close to \$6m per year. This is almost double the \$3m-per-year paid by MTG in a five-year deal, from 2011 to 2015, and covers fewer territories.

The MTG deal also includes the Baltic countries, Bulgaria and Russia. These territories are not included in the C More deal. The value of the PGA Tour rights in these territories, however, is low.

MTG was keen to renew its rights, but its interest cooled when it learned that the asking price was close to double the fee it currently pays.

C More is expected to sublicense rights in territories across the Nordics. One local expert said TV2 would probably show coverage in Norway, while commercial and pay-television broadcaster MTV3 may show coverage in Finland. C More and MTV3 are both owned by media group Bonnier. SBS is also a potential buyer of some rights.

The rights will be most valuable in Denmark and Sweden, as they are represented by some top golfers, such as Swedish golfer Henrik Stenson.

The PGA Tour is a strong property, but C More may struggle to encourage MTG subscribers to switch to C More. MTG has a stranglehold on most other golf rights in the Nordics.

Last December, MTG agreed a deal with the IMG Events & Media agency for a host of golf events: the US PGA

Championship; British Open; US Open; Ryder Cup; European Tour; World Golf Championship events; LPGA events and the Asian Tour.

The new deal will run from 2016 to 2018, and will be worth about \$10m per year. This is an increase on the value of the existing deal, from 2013 to 2015, for the same set of rights, which is worth between \$8m and \$9m per year.

Although the loss of the rights is a blow to MTG it is expected to place more prominence on its LPGA golf, which takes places at a similar time to the PGA Tour. There is interest in the performances of Norwegian Suzann Pettersen and Swede Anna Nordqvist. As of last year the LPGA produces a world feed from all of its events. ■

FOOTBALL

Fifa's Asian deal ensured windfall for Infront and Dentsu

By Frank Dunne

Fifa's 2014 accounts, published last week, confirmed that the governing body's deal with the Infront Sports & Media agency and advertising agency Dentsu for the World Cup rights in Asia was an exceptionally profitable one for the two agencies.

Football Media Services, the 50:50 joint venture created by the two companies to sell the rights in Asia from 2007 to 2014, looks to have made well over \$200m (€190m).

Fifa does not mention individual agencies when reporting its finances. It refers only to "sales commission" on its

media-rights deals. For 2014, the year of the World Cup in Brazil, this amounted to \$65.16m (see table). Over the four-year cycle, from 2011 to 2014, it came to just under \$110m. For the whole rights cycle, 2007 to 2014, it was \$225.5m.

Since taking the rights in-house after the 2006 World Cup, Fifa has worked with agencies in two regions: in Asia, with FMS, and in Africa, in a deal with the Octagon agency as part of a wide-ranging collaboration with the African Union of Broadcasting (*TV Sports Markets* 16:3).

Fifa said this week that the total commissions figure also included "revenue sharing with the AUB for the rights and advertising sales in sub-Saharan Africa."

TV Sports Markets understands that FMS was paid a high commission, possibly as much as 15 per cent, and enjoyed a 50:50 share with Fifa on income brought in above its \$350m guarantee. The agency is thought to have closed deals totalling about \$625m (*TV Sports Markets* 18:4).

This would be the same structure as the deal that Fifa had struck with the Kirch Group for the rights for 2002 and 2006 – and which was inherited by the newly formed Infront in late 2002 when Kirch went bust.

For the 2015-2022 cycle, Dentsu and Infront bid separately and in competition with each other.

The rights in Asia – excluding Japan, South Korea and Malaysia – were won by Infront alone in 2011 with a \$600m guarantee. The agency is thought to be working on a lower commission than

Fifa in numbers, 2011-2014

Total revenues	\$5.718bn
Net result	\$338m
Media rights (total)	\$2.484bn
World Cup TV rights	\$2.428bn
World Cup revenues	\$4.826bn
TV production costs	\$370m

FMS – around 12 per cent – and a far lower share of the upside, about 20:80 in Fifa's favour.

Dentsu acquired the rights in Japan for \$400m, an increase of \$100m on its deal for the 2007-14 rights. The rights in South Korea were acquired by media group SBS, and in Malaysia by the M-League agency.

The costs Fifa ran up for selling the remainder of its global rights in-house amounted to over \$101m across the 2007 to 2014 cycle.

Added to the sales commission, this brought Fifa's total costs for selling the media rights for the World Cups of 2010 and 2014 (excluding production or technical costs) to \$326.8m – or 6.7 per cent of the total \$4.836bn income.

Windfall

The \$200m-plus paid out to FMS raises the question of whether Fifa would not have been better off handling sales in Asia itself, as it did in Europe and the Americas.

When Fifa announced in April 2004 that it would take the sale of its rights

The cost to Fifa of selling the media rights to its events, 2007-2014 (\$m)

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	Total
Sales commission	65.162	26.7	12.09	5.939	59.244	38.042	18.285	0	225.462
In-house costs	21.022	10.984	9.445	10.249	19.802	11.510	9.559	8.775	101.346
Total									326.808

Source: Fifa, *TV Sports Markets Rights Tracker*

Media rights revenue for the 2010 and 2014 FIFA World Cups by region (\$m)

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	Total
Europe	295.662	302.639	287.685	281.144	334.089	354.142	308.550	292.443	2,456.354
Asia and North America	218.247	152.158	126.459	107.054	157.625	146.673	113.183	86.000	1,107.399
South/Central America	97.050	92.650	83.025	83.025	85.528	83.550	80.100	80.100	685.028
North America/Caribbean	58.812	63.952	61.229	61.159	51.67	53.090	52.875	53.252	456.136
Rest of the world	22.828	14.800	6.498	9.909	34.425	17.796	11.309	8.166	125.731
Other revenues ¹	108.888	1.606	591	376	110.954	5.728	2.353	0	230.496
Total	801.487	627.805	565.487	542.667	774.388	660.979	568.370	519.961	5,061.144

Source: Fifa, *TV Sports Markets Rights Tracker* Footnote: ¹ Service revenues paid by broadcasters on top of rights fee/VIK transactions

in-house, the assumption was that this was for two main reasons.

First, to avoid having a single partner with the burden of a bank guarantee for the total value of its global rights. Two of its previous global rights partners had gone bust due to overstretching themselves – the ISL agency in 2001 and Kirch in 2002. Second, selling rights directly to broadcasters meant paying out far less in commissions.

Some independent rights experts working in the Asian market said this week that FMS had been able to achieve things that Fifa would have struggled to deliver.

Most importantly, the agency made a breakthrough in China, which had been an extremely tough market up to that point. For the 2002 and 2006 rights, Fifa earned just \$25m. FMS brought in \$125m for the 2010 and 2014 World Cups. Infront's relationships in the market are said to have been critical to securing the rights fee increase.

Another agency source said that Dentsu and Infront had people on the ground and good relationships across the region. They would be better placed to pick up on market developments that would have enabled them to play operators off against each other.

The source added: "There's no question that FMS helped Fifa to secure a much better result. Whether that was worth \$200m is a moot point. Ultimately, the World Cup sells itself."

Asian bidders

In 2011, for the rights in the 2015-2022 cycle, Infront beat strong bids from Dentsu and the IMG Events & Media and MP & Silva agencies. The rights were for Asia, excluding Japan, South Korea and Malaysia.

When the rights across Asia were sold in 2005 for the 2007-2014 cycle, excluding Japan and Thailand, there were at least nine bidders. From these, Fifa shortlisted five: Dentsu, Infront, Sportfive, Nimbus and TSA (*TV Sports Markets* 9:22).

In subsequent negotiations, Fifa is understood to have persuaded Infront and Dentsu to submit a joint bid, which proved to be the winning one. ■

SKIING

ARD/ZDF reduce fee for World Ski Championships

By Robin Jellis

German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF will pay a smaller rights fee for the Alpine and Nordic World Ski Championships in 2019 and 2021 than they did for 2015 and 2017, following a deal agreed last week.

The deal for 2019 and 2021 is understood to be worth between €14m (\$14.8m) and €15m. This is down about 25 per cent from a fee of €20m which ARD/ZDF paid as part of the European Broadcasting Union deal for 2015 and 2017. It covers two Alpine and two Nordic World Championships.

The SportA agency agreed the deal on behalf of ARD/ZDF with the Infront Sports & Media agency. The deal was agreed in direct discussions, without a formal tender process. Talks went on for more than a year.

Infront holds global media and marketing rights to the 2019 and 2021 World Ski Championships in a deal with the Fédération Internationale de Ski worth €110m. This is up from the EBU fee of €93.5m for 2015 and 2017 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:11).

There was no real competition for the rights. The first championship is in four years, which is before a commercial broadcaster would budget any spend on rights fee.

Infront is understood to have been looking for between €15m and €16m, lower than the value of the existing deal. ARD/ZDF had made it clear early in the talks that they considered the existing fee in Germany to be too high compared to other nations. The sales process has been going well so far, meaning Infront could afford to take a slight financial hit in Germany.

The value of the rights was propped up by the popularity of winter sport in Germany, which delivers large audience figures for the two broadcasters, and strong interest in top German athletes.

Ski jumper Severin Freund won two gold medals and one silver medal last month at the Nordic World Championship in Falun, Sweden. Nordic combined skier Johannes Rydzek won two gold medals, one silver medal and one bronze medal at the same championship.

The audience figures, however, are highly dependent on the success of German athletes. Also, some coverage from the World Championships takes place during the week, meaning audiences are lower.

Coverage will be split between ARD and ZDF. For 2015, ARD showed the first week of the championship and ZDF showed the second week. Coverage for 2019 and 2021 is yet to be decided, but it will alternate between ARD and ZDF either each week or each day.

The broadcasters are understood to be in discussion with Infront about renewing rights to World Cup skiing events outside Germany and Austria. The current ARD/ZDF four-season deal, from 2011-12 to 2014-15, expires this season.

ARD/ZDF hold rights to World Cup events in Germany in a five-season deal with the German Ski Association, the Deutscher Skiverband, from 2011-12 to 2015-16, worth €8m per season in rights fee and production costs (*TV Sports Markets* 18:9).

ARD/ZDF has rights to World Cup events in Austria due to its membership of the EBU consortium of public-service broadcasters. The EBU pays just under €8.5m per season in the four seasons from 2014-15 to 2017-18.

Global Infront picture

Industry insiders feel that Infront will probably break even on its deal for the World Championships with Fis. The total €110m fee was split roughly 70:30 between media and marketing rights.

Infront has so far agreed media rights deals with public-service broadcaster SVT in Sweden and pan-regional broadcaster Eurosport.

The agency is also understood to be in advanced negotiations over deals in Austria, with public-service broadcaster ORF, and in Norway, with public-service broadcaster NRK. ■

FASTRACK 2

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tough talks for Uefa in Finland after MTV3 bails

Uefa is in difficult discussions over a deal for Champions League rights in Finland after an initial deal collapsed, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

Champions League rights are currently held by public-service broadcaster YLE and commercial and pay-television broadcaster MTV3 in three-season deals, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, worth a total of €1.5m (\$1.6m) per season.

Uefa, European football's governing body, is understood to have been close to a deal with MTV3, for all Champions League rights, worth about €2m per season – an increase of more than 30 per cent.

MTV3, however, pulled out of the deal and Uefa is now negotiating a deal with broadcasters it has already turned down. One local expert said that MTV3's owner, Swedish media group Bonnier, was looking to scale back its spending.

At present, YLE shows the first-pick match on Tuesdays as well as the final. MTV3 shows all other matches.

Europa League rights are held by commercial and pay-television broadcaster Nelonen over the same three-year period, 2012-13 to 2014-15, for €200,000 per season.

Tenders for both Champions League and Europa League rights were issued on October 27 last year, with bids due on November 26. Uefa's sales agent, Team Marketing, is handling the sales process.

Meanwhile, YLE last month picked up exclusive rights to the top Finnish football league, the Veikkausliiga.

The deal is initially for one season, 2015, but may be extended to cover the 2016 season. It is understood that YLE is not paying a rights fee, but will cover production costs to matches, which are estimated at about €5,000 per match. The season starts on April 12 and runs until October.

YLE will show one live match per week, and will cut to show important moments in other matches. The state broadcaster is not thought to have faced any competition as there was little interest in the rights – the league is not hugely popular.

The Veikkausliiga was previously shown by sports pay-television and internet service Urho TV under a five-year deal, from 2010 to 2014, worth about €6m, or €1.2m per year.

Urho TV ceased operations in early 2014 after going bankrupt. The broadcaster struggled after losing rights to the top domestic ice hockey league, the SM Liiga, the top subscription-driving property in Finland (*TV Sports Markets* 16:11).

The SM Liiga and the Formula One motor racing championship are the two strongest sports properties in Finland. ■

Astro still holds key in Malaysia

The matching-rights clause held by pay-television broadcaster Astro in its previous agreement with the Football Association of Malaysia is continuing to cause complications for the association.

Astro's broadcast and sponsorship deal for the top-tier Super League ran for four years, from 2011 to 2014. The deal was worth RM30m (€7.7m/\$8.1m) per year.

Beginning in 2016, the association has agreed a 15-year advisory deal with the MP & Silva agency which will guarantee an average income of RM84m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:2).

The association had originally sought a deal starting from the current 2015 season, and in negotiations was keen to find a way around Astro's matching-rights clause. This remains a problem now that it is seeking to agree a one-year deal covering the 2015 season only.

The association has approached Astro about a one-year agreement, but the broadcaster remains upset at the negotiation process that resulted in the deal with MP & Silva and has so far rebuffed the association.

Other broadcasters are loath to agree a one-season deal with the association if Astro has the ability to match the rights. The clause is believed to expire in April.

In the meantime, the association is agreeing coverage on a week-by-week basis with public-service broadcaster RTM and media group Media Prima. There is no rights fee but the broadcasters are covering production costs to matches.

Sources said that once Astro's matching-rights clause expires, the association will seek to agree longer deals with broadcasters covering the remainder of the season. ■

Sony Six believes in wrestling

Indian pay-television channel Sony Six's decision to extend its deal for TNA Wrestling last month is a strategic buy for a property the channel believes it can develop.

Sony Six agreed a three-season deal with the promotion in summer 2013, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. The new seven-season deal supersedes the remaining year of that agreement, and runs from 2015-16 to 2021-22. It is thought to be worth \$25m (€23.6m), or \$3.6m per season on average.

Professional wrestling is a major sport in India. The sport's pre-eminent promotion, WWE, is the biggest television sports property in the market outside of Indian cricket, generating consistently high television ratings.

It is held by pay-television network Ten Sports for five years from 2015 to 2019 in a \$28m-per-year deal (*TV Sports Markets* 18:18).

Sony Six believes the strength of WWE indicates there is space for another professional wrestling promotion in the market, particularly if it can be tailored to an Indian audience.

In 2013, TNA and Sony Six promoted a search for an Indian wrestler, and the debut of Mahabali Shera in September 2014 has contributed to the uplift in value. ■

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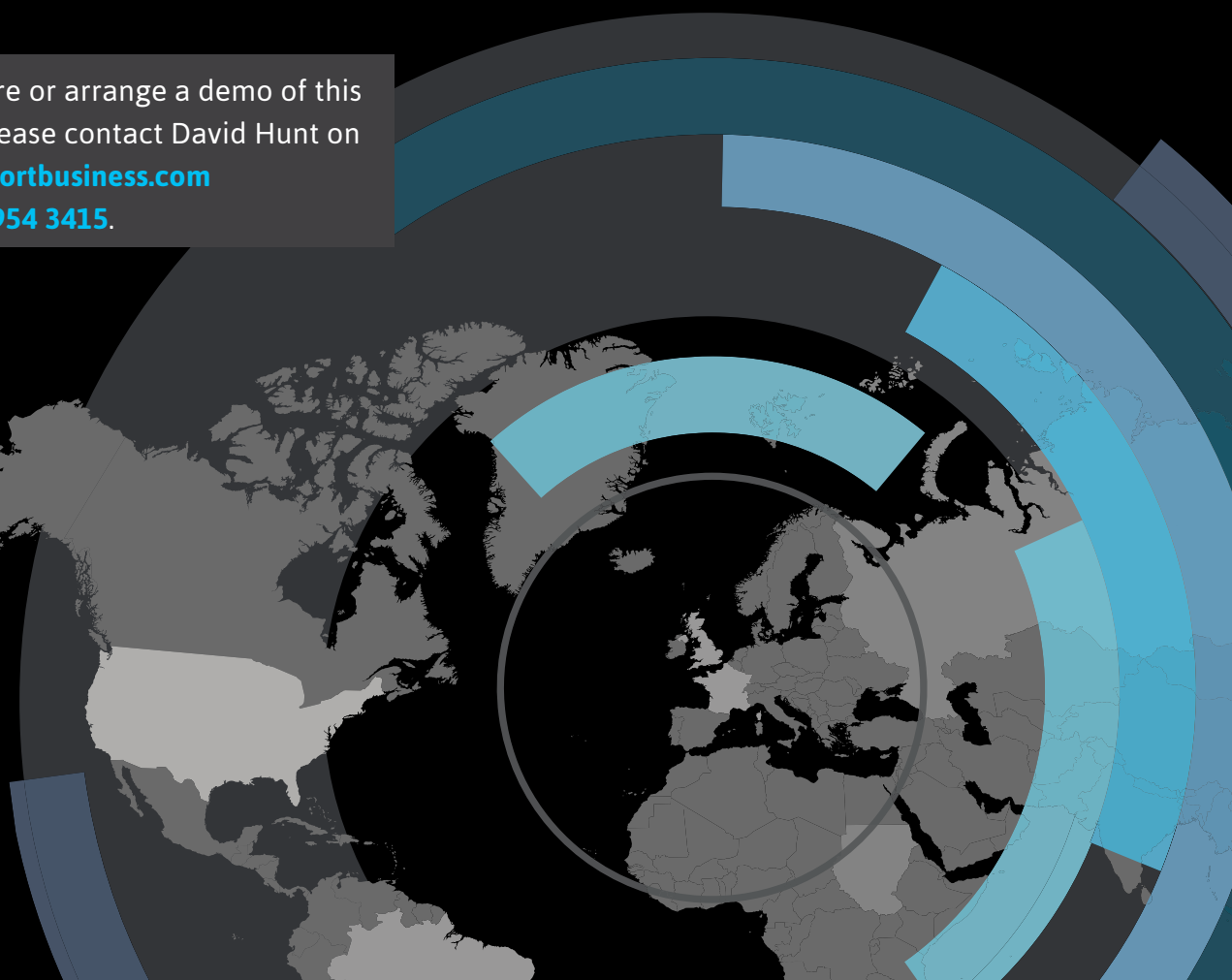
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from March 12 to March 25**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: Champions League, European Qualifiers, MLS and more**

- **Football:** AMC Networks International – the Central Europe division of US entertainment company AMC Networks – agreed a three-season extension, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, for rights in Hungary to the Uefa Champions League. The Sport1 and Sport2 channels will provide live coverage of more than 60 matches per season. The rights were acquired from the Team Marketing agency, which brokered the deal on behalf of Uefa, the sport's European governing body.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster ESPN Brasil acquired rights for the European qualifying games to the Uefa Euro 2016 and 2018 Fifa World Cup in a sublicensing deal with pay-television broadcaster Globosat. Globosat's SporTV channels will retain exclusive rights to games featuring some of Europe's top teams such as Germany and Spain, but will share matches featuring other nations such as England, the Netherlands and Portugal, plus some friendly games. The deal starts immediately and runs for two-and-a-half years, until 2017.
- **Football:** Maltese telco Go retained rights for the Uefa Champions League in a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, in a deal brokered by Team Marketing. Live coverage, highlights and a magazine programme will be shown on the Go Sports pay-television channel plus online and mobile platforms.
- **Football:** Major League Soccer club Orlando City signed a multi-year local rights deal with Sun Sports/Fox Sports Florida, a regional subsidiary of the Fox network. The deal includes live coverage of 18 games in Spanish on Fox Sports Florida or Sun Sports. Matches will also be available via mobile or tablet through the Fox Sports Go application.
- **Football:** US pay-television channel GolTV acquired rights for the Scottish Cup in a deal with the IMG Events & Media agency, starting immediately.
- **Football:** The Football Kenya Federation reached an agreement with Tanzanian digital satellite-television provider Azam Media to show live coverage of its top-tier Premier League. The deal will run for three years, from 2015 to 2017, and is worth a total of Ksh207m (€2.12m/\$2.24m). Azam Media will show two games per week.
- **Football:** Brazilian sports broadcaster Esporte Interativo agreed a three-year rights deal, from 2015 to 2017, for the International Champions Cup pre-season tournament. The deal covers free-to-air and pay-television rights.
- **Football:** Spanish agency Mediapro struck a deal for live coverage of the country's top-tier Liga to be shown on Turkish Airlines flights. The deal was activated with coverage of the Barcelona v Real Madrid game on March 22.

SINCE LAST TIME

- The NFL American football league suspended its 'blackout' policy for the 2015 season. The policy – that a game must be sold-out 72 hours in advance of kick-off in order to be broadcast in the home team's market – has been criticised by US media regulator the Federal Communications Commission, plus senators from both US political parties. The league will evaluate the impact of the suspension after the 2015 season before making a decision over the long-term future of the rule. Separately, the NFL will experiment with streaming live coverage via online platforms on a global basis next season. The league's owners approved a proposal for Buffalo Bills v Jacksonville Jaguars game on October 25 in London to be available for free worldwide via the NFL.com website. The match will also be shown on free-to-air television in the Buffalo and Jacksonville markets. The NFL is still seeking an internet distributor for the game.
- The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, the country's media regulator, dismissed a complaint from Bell Media that rival telco Rogers was unfairly offering exclusive access to its GamePlus mobile application. GamePlus offers extra NHL ice hockey content to Rogers customers watching games via its online GameCentre Live service. Bell argued that GamePlus should be available for free to all GameCentre Live subscribers, regardless of whether they are Rogers customers.
- The Lagardère Unlimited sports marketing division of media conglomerate Lagardère posted a 6.6-per-cent year-on-year fall in turnover in 2014 to €394m (\$416.9m).

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- Pay-television operator DirecTV struck a carriage deal in several Latin American countries for the Mediapro agency's Canal F1 pay-television channel, which is dedicated to the Formula One motorsport series. The deal covers standard and high definition channels in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Mediapro, which is producing the channel for the Americas, also agreed carriage deals with pay-television operators Izzi, Sky and Televisa in Mexico.
- US media group Scripps Networks Interactive acquired a 52.7-per-cent stake in Polish media company TVN from investment company ITI and French media group Vivendi for €584m (\$618m). In October, TVN applied for a licence to launch a new sports channel.
- Digital sports video company SendtoNews and SNTV, a joint venture between IMG and the Associated Press news agency, agreed a three-year extension to their sports content partnership in North America, from 2015 to 2017. SendtoNews will distribute SNTV's highlights, press conferences, interviews and other programming from various sports properties.
- UK pay-television broadcaster Sky will increase the price of its sports package to £47 (€65.75/\$69.56) per month from June. The £1 price rise was announced six weeks after the broadcaster agreed to pay a record rights fee of £4.2bn to retain live domestic rights for the English Premier League for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19.

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

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

European Athletics, NBA, Mayweather v Pacquiao, PGA Tour and more

- **Athletics:** The European Athletics governing body renewed a worldwide rights deal with the European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters for four years, from 2016 to 2019. The deal covers rights for the European Championships, European Indoor Championships, European Team Championships and European Cross Country Championships.
- **Badminton:** Indian pay-television channel Sony Six acquired rights for the 2015 India Open in New Delhi.
- **Basketball:** US Spanish-language pay-television broadcaster Univision Deportes acquired rights for a range of NBA programming. Univision Deportes will broadcast the all-star game, play-offs, finals and weekly magazine shows on its UniMás and Univision Deportes Network channels. Univision Deportes and the NBA will launch co-branded websites which will feature feature video highlights.
- **Basketball:** Nova Broadcasting Group, part of multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group, agreed a deal with the NBA in Bulgaria. Nova will show coverage on its Diema Sport sports channel, including one live game on Sundays and weekly magazine programme NBA Action.
- **Boxing:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky acquired exclusive rights for the welterweight world championship unification clash between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao on May 2. Sky will exploit the rights via its Sky Box Office pay-per-view service. Viewers will be able to access the fight for £19.95 or €24.95 (\$26.40) (page 2).
- **Boxing:** Pay-television broadcaster Solar acquired rights to the Pacquiao v Mayweather Jr. fight in the Philippines for a fee of \$10m (€9.5m).
- **Boxing:** Pay-television broadcaster ESPN acquired worldwide rights for the Premier Boxing Champions series in a deal with promoter Haymon Boxing. In the US, ESPN will show the first of 12 live events each year on July 11.
- **Boxing:** The ABC network acquired rights in the US for the Premier Boxing Champions series in a deal with Haymon Boxing.
- **Boxing:** The TSA agency extended a deal to distribute rights for the International Boxing Association Open Boxing property on a global basis for two years, from 2015 to 2016. The rights include the men's and women's world championships and continental qualifying tournaments for the 2016 Olympic Games.
- **Boxing:** US pay-television broadcaster Showtime acquired rights for Kell Brook's International Boxing Federation world welterweight title defence against Jo Jo Dan on March 28.
- **Golf:** IMG extended a deal to distribute international rights for the Ladies Professional Golf Association for five years, from 2015 to 2019.
- **Golf:** Nordic pay-television broadcaster C More signed a six-year exclusive rights deal, from 2016 to 2021, with the PGA Tour. C More will launch a dedicated golf channel in Sweden to exploit the rights, which have been acquired on a pan-Nordic basis. The deal covers the Web.com Tour, Champions Tour, PGA Tour Latinoamerica, PGA Tour Canada, PGA Tour China, the Presidents Cup and Challenge season (page 5).
- **Golf:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland extended a rights deal in Germany and Austria with European Tour Productions, a joint venture of the sport's European Tour and IMG. The length of the deal was not disclosed, but will cover the 2016 and 2018 editions of the Ryder Cup, four editions of the World Golf Championships, the Asian Tour, Sunshine Tour, European Seniors Tour and Challenge Tour. The agreement includes exclusive live pay-television, internet, IPTV and mobile rights.
- **Golf:** Photographic agency Getty Images acquired distribution rights from European Tour Productions for certain video highlights and clip packages to its media partners on a global basis for four years, from 2015 to 2018.

- Euroleague basketball agreed a partnership with digital sports media company Spox.com to provide supplementary online video content for German viewers. Spox.com will launch a dedicated portal through its own website, which will feature video highlights, features, analysis and interviews.
- Pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN launched a new channel dedicated to the Extreme Fighting Championship mixed martial arts series on its ESPN Player live and on-demand sports streaming service in the UK, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia.
- French telco Orange is set to enter exclusive talks to sell a 49-per-cent stake of video-sharing platform Dailymotion, which has content partnerships with a number of sports properties, to Hong Kong-based telco PCCW. The offer tabled by PCCW reportedly values Dailymotion at \$264.5m (€250m).

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- Racecourse Media Group, which manages the rights for 34 of the UK's leading racecourses, will ask UK broadcasters which horse racing events they wish to bid for in the next cycle, beginning in 2017, rather than restricting them to specific packages.
- Italy's Lega Serie A began private talks with four broadcasters for the rights to the Coppa Italia and Supercoppa for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Public-service broadcaster Rai, commercial and pay-television broadcaster Mediaset, and pay-television channel operator Discovery/Eurosport all bid for live broadcast rights on all platforms. Telco Telecom Italia bid for digital rights, including near-live highlights and interviews.
- Australian commercial broadcaster Ten is interested in acquiring rights for the A-League, with public-service broadcaster SBS

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from March 12 to March 25**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****NHL, Glory Sports, Nascar, IndyCar, Formula E, European Games and more**

- **Handball:** The European Handball Federation will show coverage of Germany's top-tier Bundesliga on its streaming platform, ehfTV.com, after acquiring rights for the domestic league. The EHF's coverage will be geoblocked in Germany and other markets where existing rights agreements are in place.
- **Horse Racing:** Online bookmaker Sportsbet acquired non-exclusive digital rights for events operated by the Australian Racing Victoria body. The deal is worth A\$3m (€2.2m/\$2.3m) over five years, from 2015 to 2019.
- **Ice Hockey:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights in the Netherlands for the NHL. The deal, which started immediately, covers five games per week.
- **Ice Hockey:** US media company EverSport acquired rights for Germany's Deutsche Eishockey Liga play-off games in a deal with the Sportsman Media Group agency. Live coverage and highlights will be streamed via the EverSport.tv online platform.
- **Kickboxing:** Pay-television broadcaster Combat Channel renewed a deal for the 2015 Glory Sports International series in a deal with TSA. The agreement covers Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
- **Kickboxing:** ATV, a free-to-air broadcaster operated by the Telesur media company, extended a rights deal in Suriname with TSA for the 2015 Glory Sports International series.
- **Motorsport:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Latin America extended a deal for the Nascar racing series. The deal is for seven years, from 2015 to 2021, and covers Latin America. Fox Sports will provide live coverage of every race in Nascar's Sprint Cup, Xfinity, Camping World Truck and K&N Pro series. The Fox Sports 3 channel will show coverage in Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America, with coverage in Brazil broadcast on Fox Sports 2. The deal includes the Central Fox Nitro magazine programme.
- **Motorsport:** ESPN struck a deal for live and on-demand coverage of the 2015 US IndyCar series on a new channel on its digital subscription service ESPN Player in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The deal excludes the UK, France, Italy and South Africa. All races, qualifying sessions and highlights from the 16 race meetings will be shown.
- **Motorsport:** US pay-television broadcaster CBS Sports Network acquired rights for the Formula Drift series in a multi-year deal. CBS Sports will show 20 half-hour highlights shows this year plus 13 special episodes and seven behind-the-scenes programmes.
- **Motorsport:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus acquired rights for the 2015 IndyCar series. Every race will be shown live by Canal Plus Sport, unless there is a clash with a major event.
- **Motorsport:** Polish pay-television channel Motowizja acquired live rights for the Formula E racing championship. The length of the deal, which started immediately, was not disclosed.
- **Multi-sport:** Public-service broadcaster AzTV acquired domestic rights for the inaugural 2015 European Games in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- **Multi-sport:** Indian pay-television broadcaster Neo Sports acquired rights for the 2015 European Games. The Neo Sports and Neo Prime channels, plus the Neo website, will show daily news and highlights and live coverage of the opening and closing ceremonies.
- **Multi-sport:** The World Sport Group agency acquired rights in Asia to the B4 Capital agency's portfolio of European football and Italian rugby union properties. The deal includes: Spanish football's Copa del Rey and Supercopa de España pre-season event, plus the Spain national team's home friendly matches; Italian football's Coppa Italia and the second-tier league, Serie B; and all Test and pre-World Cup matches featuring Italy's national rugby team.

looking to offload the final two seasons, 2015-16 and 2016-17, of its deal for one live game per week. Football Federation Australia, which manages the league, favours a partnership between Ten and pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports. Commercial broadcaster Seven is also interested in the rights. SBS is planning to scale back its coverage of football.

- Talks over the next rights deal for the AFL, the top Aussie rules division in Australia, will begin before the start of the 2015 season on April 2. The next cycle will run for five years, from 2017 to 2021. In December, the AFL Commission, the organisation responsible for negotiating the next cycle of domestic rights, postponed talks until this year due to uncertainty surrounding the future of commercial broadcaster Ten, a likely bidder in the process. The commission is unwilling to delay talks any further, despite Ten's future remaining unresolved following several investment proposals.

- Social media platform Snapchat is working on rights deals with sports leagues and broadcasters to allow coverage via its Our Story service, which allows photos and videos to be combined into a multimedia story. Snapchat is reported to have agreed a partnership with the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the US organisation's media partner, pay-television broadcaster Turner Sports, to include coverage of the NCAA Final Four basketball tournament in the service.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The International Cricket Council made television umpire communications during the 2015 Cricket World Cup national team tournament available to host broadcaster, pay-television broadcaster Star Sports, for the knockout stages.
- US media company NBCUniversal will show some coverage of

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from March 12 to March 25**MEDIA RIGHTS 4****Netball World Cup, Olympic Games, Premiership, Rugby World Cup and more**

- **Netball:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky acquired rights for the 2015 Netball World Cup in Sydney, Australia, in a deal with the tournament's local organising committee. Sky will broadcast all England matches, plus both semi-finals and the final.
- **Olympic Games:** The Caribbean Broadcasting Union consortium of broadcasters acquired rights for the 2016 summer Games in a sublicensing deal with Canoc Broadcasting, a venture set up by Canoc, a body comprising the region's National Olympic Committees and Commonwealth Games Associations.
- **Rugby Union:** Premiership Rugby agreed a six-season exclusive rights deal with UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport, from 2015-16 to 2020-21 (page 1).
- **Rugby Union:** Welsh public-service television channel S4C acquired rights for the 2015 Rugby World Cup. S4C will broadcast live coverage of nine matches, including every Wales game, plus one quarter-final, one semi-final and the final. S4C will also show magazine programmes and stream live coverage and highlights.
- **Skiing:** German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF acquired rights for the 2019 and 2021 Alpine and Nordic World Ski Championships (page 7).
- **Table Tennis:** Sportsman Media Group agreed a long-term deal with the European Table Tennis Union to market the global rights to the body's European Table Tennis Champions League for men.
- **Tennis:** Canadian pay-television sports broadcaster TSN and French-language sister channel RDS agreed an eight-year extension to its deal for the French Open, from 2017 to 2024 (page 2).
- **US College Sport:** Pac-12 Networks, the content and multi-platform media company for the Pac-12 in the US, agreed a multi-year distribution partnership with the Metta Sport agency. Metta Sport will distribute live, near-live and video-on-demand action throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.
- **US College Sport:** Metta Sport struck deals for the Pac-12 Networks with América Móvil's pay-television service, Claro Sports, in several Latin American countries, and with the mobile platform of Uruguayan telco Antel.
- **Wrestling:** USA Wrestling sealed domestic deals with the NBC Sports Group division of NBCUniversal and pay-television broadcaster Universal Sports Network. Pay-television channel NBCSN and Universal Sports Network will share coverage of five events during 2015.

the NHL ice hockey league's 2015 play-offs on its pay-television channel USA Network.

- Football's world governing body Fifa will collaborate with the Pitch International agency to launch a new weekly magazine show entitled *Fifa Football*, starting on May 29.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Pitch International appointed Guy Le Grew, the former head of the agency's Asia-Pacific division, to a new role as head of North America. Tammie Tsang replaced Le Grew as head of Asia-Pacific with immediate effect. • Media company Constantin Medien, which

operates German sports broadcaster Sport1 and the Sport1 Media sports marketing company, reshuffled its management team. Hanns Beese, chief financial officer of Constantin Film, took on the same role at parent company Constantin Medien. Fred Kogel will serve as chief officer of Constantin Medien in addition to his existing role at Constantin Film. • BT's head of television Alex Green, head of business development Richard Young, and director of content Kate Dean left the UK telco. • The England and Wales Cricket Board hired James Lord as its head of commercial rights, and Nick Shaw as its head of digital. Lord was previously head of commercial affairs at UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport. Shaw was previously head of Now TV Sports at UK pay-television broadcaster Sky.

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