

BOXING

Rivals put aside enmities to deliver record global rights fees for 'fight of the century'

By Richard Welbirg

The welterweight clash between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao in Las Vegas this Saturday is set to smash all records for media-rights revenue for a single fight. To achieve that, the promoters of the two boxers put aside a history of rivalry and drew up a flexible market-by-market global sales strategy.

Total media rights income will not become clear until all pay-per-view takings have been calculated. In the US, the fight is expected to gross a minimum of \$285m (€261.5m) from 3m ppv buys – the most conservative prediction. It is expected to gross \$35m to \$40m in the rest of the world.

Talking exclusively to *TV Sports Markets* ahead of the fight late this week,

Todd duBoef, president of Top Rank Boxing, Pacquiao's promoter, said he expected international revenues to be at least twice those of the heavyweight bout between Lennox Lewis and Mike Tyson in 2002, the previous highest earner, which grossed \$12.5m in global media rights fees. "We never saw anything like this [level of interest] then," he said.

Every aspect of the match-up has been negotiated and agreed between bitter rivals Top Rank and Mayweather's eponymous promoter. For the media rights, this meant constant discussion between the camps, and a strategy in each television market that took into consideration not only market conditions

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BATTLE FOR ASIA

Agencies and channels jostle for position

By Frank Dunne

The annual congress of the Asian Football Confederation, which took place this week in Bahrain, was ostensibly a political event. The AFC president, Shaikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, was elected unopposed for a second term and a new executive committee was voted in.

Together with the politics, however, a whole range of media-rights issues were under discussion which will go a long way to determining whether the agencies which are traditionally strong in the region can maintain their dominance and whether others can gain a strategic foothold.

One of the first jobs of the new exco will be to sign off the new deal between the AFC and the World Sport Group agency for the AFC's rights from 2021-2028 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:7).

The deal would cement WSG's role as the pre-eminent Asian football rights agency. Local market sources say the value of the eight-year deal could yet be above \$2bn (€1.83bn), depending on the outcome of a parallel negotiation between WSG/AFC and beIN Media Group. That would be more than double the value of


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Club channel bid delivers Uefa unexpected bonus

Uefa last month secured an increase of about 65 per cent in the value of its Champions League rights in Portugal, from just under €13m (\$14m) per season to almost €20m per season. The Europa League rights stayed steady at about €3.3m per season.

Fierce competition almost doubled the value of the Champions League pay-television rights. Incumbent rights-holder Sport TV will pay about €14.5m per season in a new deal, up from about €7m per season in the current deal. It beat a strong bid from rival pay-television broadcaster Benfica TV.

Sport TV will have rights to all matches, including non-exclusive rights to the matches shown free-to-air. This is not the case in the current deal.

Free-to-air rights were won by public-service broadcaster Rádio e Televisão de Portugal last November in a deal worth about €5.3m per season. This is down on the €5.75m-per-season commercial broadcaster Televisão Independente pays in the current deal (*TV Sports Markets* 18:22).

Commercial broadcaster Sociedade Independente de Comunicação renewed free-to-air Europa League rights for the same fee as in the current deal – about €1.3m per season. Sport TV also renewed its pay-television rights for the same €2m-per-season fee.

SIC will have rights to the first-pick match, either the early or the late kick-off. Sport TV will have rights to all other matches, the same as in the current deal. ■ [www.uefa.com](#)

ESPN pays more for World Cup

World Rugby, rugby union's global governing body, has earned a strong increase in the value of its Rugby World Cup media rights in Latin America.

Exclusive rights to the 2015 tournament, which will be hosted in England, and the 2019 tournament, which will be held in Japan, were

acquired in two separate deals with pay-television operator ESPN Brasil in Brazil, and ESPN Latin America across the rest of the continent.

The total value of the deals is understood to be just over \$4m (€3.7m), with approximately 30 per cent of the value deriving from Brazil. The value in each deal is split about 45:55 between the 2015 and 2019 tournaments.

The total value is just over 50 per cent higher than ESPN Latin America's agreement for rights to the 2007 and 2011 World Cups across the region, which was worth slightly less than \$3m.

ESPN is the major broadcaster of rugby union across Latin America. It paid more to maintain its position in the face of competition, as interest in the sport grows in the region.

Across Latin America, pay-television operator DirecTV and Argentinian pay-television broadcaster TyC Sports are thought to have bid for the rights, but ESPN was the clear winner.

Both deals were agreed with World Rugby, which was advised by the IMG Events & Media agency.

It is the first time rights in Brazil have been carved out of a deal covering Latin America. Brazil is regarded as an important growth market for the sport due to the debut of rugby sevens at the summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro next year.

World Rugby will encourage ESPN Latin America to sublicense some live or highlights rights to free-to-air broadcasters in developing rugby markets, although the broadcaster is not bound by any firm commitment. These territories include Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay. ■

Nova closer to Superleague deal

Greek pay-television broadcaster Nova moved closer to renewing its domestic football rights last month, after a majority of clubs agreed to an extension of the existing contract.

Nova currently holds rights to the Greek top tier, the Superleague, in a four-

season deal, from 2013-14 to 2016-17, worth €39m (\$42m) per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:19).

In March, Nova attempted to renew its contract for two further seasons, 2017-18 and 2018-19. In initial discussions, Nova sought to reduce its rights fee by about €5m per season for the remainder of the 2014-15 season due to the suspension of football in the country following fan violence (*TV Sports Markets* 19:5).

For the rights to the matches of all clubs in a new deal, it has offered to increase its fee by about €1.5m per season, taking the total rights fee to about €40.5m per season.

Three clubs, however, have not agreed to the new deal. Xanthi voted against the deal. The representative for PAOK was not eligible to vote, while Panathinaikos abstained. If these three clubs were not included, Nova's rights fee would be lower than the €39m-per-season it pays in its existing deal. ■

Conference has value for BT

UK pay-television operator BT will maintain its rights fee of about £300,000 (€420,000/\$450,000) per season in its renewal with England's Football Conference, the tier immediately below the Football League. The broadcaster will also pay production costs.

The new deal is for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and includes 25 matches per season. It follows the existing two-season deal.

BT faced no competition for the rights but was prepared to maintain its level of investment because it sees the Conference as good value. The league provides football on weekends when the international matches in Uefa's Week of Football mean there is no top-level club football. Its coverage also dovetails with the broadcaster's focus on lower-league clubs during the early rounds of the FA Cup. Conference matches, especially in the play-offs, can deliver audiences of over 100,000. ■

BOXING

Rivals work together on global market-by-market sales strategy

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but the relationships between broadcasters and the two promoters.

DuBoef said: “We took a completely market-by-market approach. We took the world, carved out pay-per-view where it was certain, then talked about who had what relationships, where they were in common and where they weren’t.”

The US

An agreement first had to be found over who would broadcast the fight in the US. Mayweather has an exclusive pay-per-view contract with premium channel HBO, and Pacquiao with rival channel Showtime. Difficult negotiations were concluded in February when the two channels agreed to a joint production and distribution deal.

Domestic pay-per-view buys – in the US, Canada and Puerto Rico – will form the majority of the fight’s revenue (see panel). US bookmakers estimate there will be between 3.15m and 3.8m buys.

The fight is priced at \$89.95 for standard definition coverage and \$10 more for high definition. This would generate at least \$285m. The previous record number of ppv buys was for Mayweather v Oscar De La Hoya in 2007, which was bought by 2.48m households. The previous record for gross ppv income was Mayweather v Canelo Alvarez, in 2013, at \$152m.

The first cut of gross revenue goes to the operators delivering the event to homes, such as cable companies like TimeWarner or Comcast, and satellite players like DirecTV or Dish Network.

These carriers traditionally take 50 per cent of a fight’s gross ppv revenue, but the strength of the property allowed HBO, Showtime and the promoters to push the carriage fee down to between 30 and 40 per cent, depending on each operator’s marketing and promotional activity.

“They have had to show us that they

were not just letting us use their pipeline,” DuBoef said. “We, and HBO and Showtime, feel this is worth more than just passage through your pipe.”

HBO and Showtime then share 7.5 per cent. Mayweather and Pacquiao will split the net revenue 60:40.

‘Three buckets’

DuBoef said the promoters divided global media markets into three “buckets.”

Bucket 1: These were pay-per-view markets where there was an obvious partner. Pay-per-view deals have generally been agreed in the territories where the rights are most lucrative.

There was no standard business model with ppv broadcasters. “Each deal was structured differently,” DuBoef said. “If you talk percentage share, guarantees, advances... we’re involved. If anyone says they’ve bought these rights they’re lying.”

He said Top Rank was “projecting upside in every one of the pay-per-view territories.”

The UK is thought to be the most lucrative market outside the US. Pay-television operator Sky will host the pay-per-view for a base price of £19.95 (€27.70/\$29.75). The promoters are thought to have budgeted for an income of £10m, with one source saying Sky paid a £6m advance (*TV Sports Markets* 19:6).

The ‘Fight of the Century’ in numbers

Domestic pay-per-view	\$285m+
International media rights	\$35m+
Closed circuit rights (Las Vegas)	\$13m
Ticket sales	\$72m
Sponsorship	\$13.2m
Merchandise	\$1m
Total	\$419m+
Source: <i>TV Sports Markets</i> , various media sources	

Bucket 2: This contained countries in which Top Rank and Mayweather both had a good relationship with the same broadcaster or broadcasters. In these markets the rights were generally sold in straight rights deals to broadcasters.

About 95 per cent of markets fell into the first two categories. DuBoef said there were some “inbetweeners” markets where it wasn’t clear whether there should be a ppv or a traditional broadcast deal.

Bucket 3: This contained markets in which Top Rank and Mayweather’s representatives had relationships with competing broadcasters. In these territories the promoters each held talks with their respective broadcasters, and then compared bids before choosing a winner.

“Mayweather’s camp and us would open the envelopes from our partners in front of each other,” duBoef said. “It was all jointly handled. We would collectively figure out who wanted to send the first emails. We would confer as the offers came in. The same as in the pay-per-view agreement; we were all on the same page.”

Broadcasters which had a relationship with Top Rank were uniformly victorious outside of South Korea, where commercial broadcaster SBS is a new partner for both camps.

Global coverage

Rights deals have been agreed covering more than 200 countries. There were four territories of value in which deals were awaiting approval as *TV Sports Markets* went to press. Malaysia is thought to be the most valuable territory without a deal.

The majority of the international rights income will come from the UK, the Philippines, Germany and Mexico, where commercial broadcaster TV Azteca and media group Televisa paid \$2.3m for shared coverage.

Other important deals are with: pay-television operator Foxtel in Australia, free-to-air broadcaster Channel 7 in Thailand, SBS in South Korea, state broadcaster CCTV in China and pay-television operator Sky in New Zealand.

The Philippines – Pacquiao’s home country – proved a unique case. Rights were sold to media group Solar Entertainment Corporation on an exclusive basis for \$10m.

A request from Pacquiao that the fight should receive the widest possible coverage in the territory was heeded by Solar. As well as broadcasting the fight on its Solar Sports channel, Solar has also sublicensed non-exclusive rights to free-to-air broadcasters ABS-CBN, GMA-7 and TV5. ■

[www.fox.com](#) For the full interview with Todd duBoef, visit our website.

BATTLE FOR ASIA

Bahrain briefly becomes the focal point in bigger game

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the current deal, from 2013 to 2020.

Not all federation rights are part of the centralised AFC package which is distributed by WSG. Some qualifier matches for the Asian Cup and the World Cup are still sold by the federations. There was a feeding frenzy this week as agencies battled to sign up unaligned federations (see separate story, page 6).

WSG, MP & Silva, IMG Events & Media and Infront Sports & Media were all looking to add to their existing Asian federation portfolios.

The jostling for the federation rights underlined the increasing importance of the Asian rights market, and the fact that significant value is still up for grabs. Two other recent developments also put the spotlight on Asia.

First, Eurosport beat competition from channel syndicator Fox International Channels to land the rights to the Uefa Champions League in Singapore (see separate story, page 5). Eurosport is also favourite to pick up Europa League rights. The deal is the first real sign of the pan-regional broadcaster's aggressive expansion plans in the region under its new owner, Discovery Communications.

Second, Andrea Radrizzani, co-founder of the MP & Silva agency, will launch his own television channels under the brand Eleven, and has agreed to acquire football rights from MP & Silva in Malaysia and Singapore, as well as Belgium (see separate story, page 4).

This follows the roll-out by the beIN Media Group in selected Asian territories, an expansion that is expected to continue.

The value of the Asian sports-rights market is still dwarfed by those of Europe and North America, each of which accounts for about 40 per cent of the global total. However, Asia is still enjoying strong growth and remains a major strategic market for agencies and media groups. ■

BATTLE FOR ASIA 2

Radrizzani moves on and gambles future on football channels

By Frank Dunne

Andrea Radrizzani, one of the founders of the MP & Silva agency, is set to launch his own football channels under the Eleven brand. It had long been anticipated that Radrizzani would create his own business outside the agency, but the nature of the project has surprised many in the industry.

Eleven will launch initially in Malaysia and Singapore in Asia and Belgium in Europe, ahead of the next football season. It could later be rolled out to a second European market, Poland.

The long-term plan is to populate the channels with a combination of domestic league and international football. Initially, only the Malaysian channel will have rights to the domestic league.

The rights have been acquired largely from MP & Silva. Content deals have already been agreed for Malaysia, Singapore and Belgium. Radrizzani is in talks with the agency about rights for Poland. He also bid unsuccessfully for rights to the Uefa Champions League in Singapore (see separate story, page 5).

Radrizzani told *TV Sports Markets* this week that he was currently not looking beyond these three to four markets for a full channel launch, but did not rule out broadcasting football content via OTT services in emerging markets in future.

"I am not going to go after local football in places like the UK, Germany or in Italy," he said. "But the sum of the value of two or three second-tier markets could be equal to the value of one major market. Obviously, you have to be very local, to create a structure in each market, and be very flexible."

In order to fund the channel, Radrizzani will sell all or part of his stake in MP & Silva, and will also look to secure funding from private or institutional investors. He is currently putting together a management team of experienced pay-television executives and is

negotiating carriage agreements with platforms in each of the three markets.

Radrizzani said that the characteristics of the markets, and the fact that rival media groups had not already launched a similar football channel, had provided him with an opportunity.

He pointed out that the number of pay-television homes across Poland, Malaysia and Belgium is about 15m, but that the take-up of premium sports content is low. By contrast, UK pay-television operator Sky has about 11m homes, of which about 6m take a premium football package.

"In the long term, if you can get [the channel] to a penetration of 20 per cent, or even a bit lower, you can have a very strong business," he said.

'Just one more client'

Speculation has been rife for over a year that Radrizzani was going to split from fellow MP & Silva co-founder Riccardo Silva and launch his own business, possibly in competition to MP & Silva.

Given his extensive relationships in Asia, which is core to the agency's operations, this could potentially have been disastrous. But in the route he has chosen, both agency founders see only positives.

"There will be no negative impact on the agency," Silva said this week. "Quite the opposite – there are only advantages.

"This concerns three or four markets out of over 200 globally and in these three or four markets the offers we received were low. If the offers from the market had been higher, Andrea would not have thought of this solution," he said.

He said the agency benefitted by getting a higher offer for its rights and because "the more broadcasters are out there the better it is for all agencies, including us."

Radrizzani concurred. "For the agency, Eleven is simply one more client. All I am really doing is shifting a risk that was shared by me and Riccardo on to my own shoulders."

Content and carriage

One senior industry figure said this week that the channel launch was a "typically entrepreneurial and creative move" by Radrizzani.

He warned, however, that making a profit on a standalone sports channel in a small number of territories would be difficult. Radrizzani had no channel bundles to leverage or economies of scale to exploit – the kind of advantages enjoyed by global syndicators like Fox International Channels, Discovery Communications and the beIN Media Group.

The income derived from carriage deals is also directly related to the strength of content. Maintaining good relations with suppliers like MP & Silva and beIN will be critical, he said.

An Asian television executive said that making the channel work in Malaysia would be “tough going.” Eleven would need carriage on good terms on Astro, the biggest pay-television platform, with 1.8m subscribers, and that this would not be an easy negotiation. Astro had been the incumbent rights-holder of the domestic league and is annoyed at the way it was outflanked (*TV Sports Markets* 19:2).

“I think MP & Silva bought the Malaysian football rights on the hunch that they could sell them on to beIN Sports so beIN could launch there. But that didn’t happen,” he said.

Alone against giants

One executive at a major broadcaster said it was a “strange” decision to “tackle head-on a market already crowded with well-funded big players jostling for position.” This would appear to be borne out by Eleven being comprehensively outbid for the Champions League rights in Singapore. But Radrizzani does not share this concern.

“I am not really getting into competition with the other channel operators,” he said, “because in the markets I have chosen, MP & Silva never received strong or valid offers from these companies. The big groups all had the opportunity to do what I am doing and didn’t take it because they are concentrating on other markets.”

Minority shareholder

If, as expected, Radrizzani retains a small stake in MP & Silva, he will be both the buyer and seller in some negotiations, creating a potential conflict of interest or leading to concerns from rival bidders of

sweet deals. Silva completely dismissed this thesis, however.

“If Andrea remains a minor shareholder it does not create a conflict of interest,” he said. “The agency and the channel will be two different and independent companies and we will always sell the rights to the highest bidder. Andrea is not getting rights cheaply because he is a friend. On the contrary, we will try to maximise the revenues from him considering it’s a new channel and needs rights and content.”

He pointed out that there are other agencies which have shareholders who own, or are linked to, media companies and it has never been raised as an issue.

The Qatar Investment Authority, for example, is a shareholder in Lagardère, parent company of the Lagardère Unlimited agency, and is also owner of the beIN Media Group. The sovereign wealth fund of Abu Dhabi controls Mubadala Development, which holds a three-per-cent stake in the WME/IMG agency. The same sovereign fund also owns the Abu Dhabi Media group. ■

BATTLE FOR ASIA 3

Eurosport plants a flag with Champions League in Singapore

By Richard Welbirg

Eurosport’s acquisition of Champions League rights in Singapore is a message to rights-holders and platforms about the broadcaster’s growing ambitions, according to chief executive Peter Hutton.

Hutton told *TV Sports Markets* this week that while Eurosport was well distributed across Asia, it has historically been perceived as a minor channel, and the Singapore deal indicates a move to change that.

“We wanted to get involved in something that was clearly a premium product in one of the big Asian markets,” he said. “I think it’s good for Singapore, but it’s also a signal from us to rights-holders and platforms that we are changing.”

The broadcaster will increasingly target key local properties in markets across

Asia, and is “open to all opportunities,” including major properties such as the Premier League, Hutton said.

The deal

Eurosport will pay \$4.5m (€4.2m) per season for rights to the Champions League over three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. It did not, however, acquire the Europa League rights, which are still on the market.

In the 2012-13 to 2014-15 cycle, telco Singtel paid the same figure for both the Champions League and Europa League (*TV Sports Markets* 16:22). This is thought to have been split about \$3.5m per season for the Champions League and \$1m per season for the Europa League.

Uefa’s increase for the Champions League is almost 30 per cent. This would make the Champions League the first premium sports property to increase significantly in value since Singapore introduced its cross-carriage regulations in August 2011.

Local sources say there is little competition for the Europa League rights, however, and that Uefa will do well to maintain the current value. The deals are negotiated by Uefa’s sales agent for its club competitions, Team Marketing.

Eurosport comfortably fought off competition from channel syndicator Fox International Channels and a surprise entrant in the form of Eleven, the soon-to-launch broadcaster owned by MP & Silva co-founder Andrea Radrizzani.

Eurosport was awarded the rights in the first round of bidding.

Fox’s bid is believed to have been tacitly supported by Singtel and rival telco StarHub, with new carriage agreements already agreed in principle between Fox and the platforms. It is thought to have bid less than \$4m per season.

Radrizzani’s Eleven is in carriage negotiations with Singtel and StarHub to launch three channels this summer (see separate story, page 4).

Eurosport is currently carried in StarHub’s sports package. The pan-regional broadcaster believes the Champions League acquisition will pave the way for a carriage deal with Singtel, and higher per-subscriber fees from StarHub.

Advertising revenue from the deal will be relatively small, as Uefa retains a significant amount of inventory for its partners.

Carriage negotiations will be handled by the Asia-Pacific branch of US media and entertainment Discovery Communications, Eurosport's majority shareholder. The company sees Eurosport as a 'battering ram' that can help increase the distribution and the value of its portfolio of channels across Asia.

The Champions League deal was considered in terms of "adding value back to the whole Discovery group," Hutton said.

Eurosport has committed to broadcast one live match each Champions League match day, and will show the remaining matches on an OTT basis.

It is unclear what form this will take, but the broadcaster is considering two solutions. First, bringing the on-demand and streaming Eurosport Player service – currently available only in Europe – into Asia. Second, agreeing with Uefa to stream matches through the governing body's website, sharing the resulting revenue.

Cross-carriage

Singtel also held the rights in the 2009-10 to 2011-12 cycle, paying \$13m per season. The value collapsed after the Singaporean government introduced cross-carriage regulation in an attempt to cool subscriber-fee inflation (*TV Sports Markets* 16:17).

This prevents StarHub and Singtel from acquiring sport rights on an exclusive basis, limiting competition in the market and, as a consequence, driving down rights values.

It appears, however, to have created an opportunity for sport channels, especially where the strategy of the channel is to seek distribution on all available platforms.

Hutton said the unique conditions in Singapore were ideal for Eurosport, but noted that the high cost of pay-television subscriptions would limit how much channels could hope to charge in carriage.

He said: "This is certainly not the end of our ambitions, but you still have

to recognise that the pay-television market in Singapore is expensive already, in a territory where broadband penetration is so good that illegal feeds are a problem." ■

BATTLE FOR ASIA 4

Agencies head to Bahrain to snap up federation business

By Richard Welbirg and Frank Dunne

All of the industry's major rights agencies were present in Bahrain this week at the Asian Football Confederation annual congress to try to agree media-rights deals with Asian federations.

Lagardère Unlimited's World Sport Group, Infront Sports & Media, MP & Silva and IMG Events & Media each already have some deals with federations, but a significant slice of business is still up for grabs.

The agencies are mostly striking deals for the second- and third-party media rights to national friendly matches and the small number of Asian Cup and Fifa World Cup qualifier matches which are not part of the centralised package which the AFC has sold to WSG.

Many of the deals also include the right to sell perimeter advertising boards, which in some markets can be as lucrative as the media rights.

The Asian federation business will not come close to making up for what the agencies lost when Uefa centralised the commercial rights to the qualifier rights for European federations. But there are still good margins to be made.

An agency would typically pay about \$50,000 (€45,000) to \$100,000 per match to smaller federations. The rights can be sold into small- and medium-sized television markets for fees in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars. Big markets such as Japan, Australia and South Korea can deliver between \$1m and \$2m per match.

As with the old European federation business, it is something of a lottery. Profits depend on getting a good draw. That is why it is important for agencies to

build up a critical mass of federations – it increases the chances of landing deals in the major markets to offset smaller margins or even small losses elsewhere.

Infront deals

Infront last month agreed deals to distribute the media rights to the home games of the Bangladesh Football Federation, the Lao Football Federation (for Laos) and the Football Association of Thailand. All are four-season deals, from 2015-16 to 2018-19.

Infront said this week that the agency would also assist with the sale of marketing rights where they were available.

They follow closely the deal for AspireInfront – Infront's joint venture with investment company Aspire Katara Investment – to market international media rights and sponsorship for the Qatar Football Association.

The deals includes home friendlies at all age groups, but the key content is home matches in the first, second and play-off rounds of qualifying for the 2019 Asian Cup. The first two rounds function simultaneously as the first two rounds of qualifying for the 2018 World Cup.

The later rounds are included in the inventory of World Sport Group's eight-year deal with the AFC, which runs from 2013 to 2020. The deal is currently being renewed through to 2028 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:7).

Qualifying round

The bulk of the value of the federation deals lies in the Asian Cup's second qualifying round. Only the lowest-ranked AFC teams participate in the first qualifying round. The play-off round combines the least successful teams from the first and second rounds.

The second round consists of eight seeded groups of five, meaning each qualifying federation will play four home matches, at least one against a top eight-ranked AFC nation.

The draw last month was kind to Infront. Bangladesh ended up in a group with Australia, Laos in a group with South Korea, Thailand in a group with Indonesia, and Qatar in a group with both China and Hong Kong. ■

RUGBY

Money and focus help RDA/IEC to land World Rugby deal

By Richard Welbirg

Strong commitments – in both financial and attention terms – offered by the RDA Television and IEC in Sports agencies persuaded World Rugby to eschew larger players in its search for a new distribution partner for its second-tier properties.

In the deal, finalised last month, RDA and IEC will jointly market the media rights to the men's and women's Sevens World Series for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons, and the U-20 Championships rugby union national team tournament in 2015 and 2016.

Rights to both properties had been held by production company Pro-Active Television since 2004-05. World Rugby, rugby union's global governing body, renewed the deal for both privately several times, most recently in a three-season deal from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

World Rugby felt that with rugby sevens to be the global face of the sport when it debuts at the 2016 summer Olympic Games, the rights should be offered to the market.

Several agencies were invited to respond to the world governing body's tender, and RDA/IEC beat competition from rivals including Infront Sports & Media and IMG Events & Media.

It is believed that IEC/RDA was the only bidder to offer World Rugby a minimum guarantee. They offered between \$400,000 (€370,000) and \$500,000 over the duration of the deal.

IMG, which advises World Rugby on the sale of its Rugby World Cup media rights, is understood to have proposed bundling the properties with the World Cup where possible. One rugby expert said this approach would likely have maximised World Rugby's revenue, but it would diminish the identity of the smaller tournaments.

As a smaller agency, RDA was able to promise complete attention to the properties, which would only be a small

part of, for example, IMG's portfolio.

RDA and IEC have a history of collaboration on rugby. In 2014, the two agencies jointly distributed rights to USA home internationals, and to the World Club 7s tournament, which is organised by Premiership Rugby, the organisers of England's top rugby union league.

RDA will handle the day-to-day relationship with World Rugby. IEC, part of the Lagardère Unlimited group, will use its global network to assist with sales.

RDA/IEC's minimum guarantee appears ambitious. But there is additional value for the agencies in having a relationship with World Rugby which could improve their position when the governing body next reviews its deal for its World Cup rights.

IMG sells all World Cup commercial rights, including television, new media, sponsorship, hospitality, ticketing, merchandising and licensing on behalf of World Rugby, in a deal until 2019.

Territories

The U-20 World Championships are thought to account for 60 to 65 per cent of the total value of the deal. RDA/IEC will distribute these rights globally. Key territories include New Zealand and South Africa, where there is interest in the U-20s as an opportunity to follow future All Black and Springbok stars.

Rights to the men's and women's Sevens World Series are less comprehensive. From the 2015-16 season, World Rugby retains broadcast rights in countries which host an event in the series. These are either ceded to local unions or sold to broadcasters by the governing body.

As such, RDA/IEC's deal for the women's tour currently excludes: Brazil, Canada, the Middle East, the Netherlands, the US and the UK. Its deal for the men's tour currently excludes: Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, the Middle East, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, the US and the UK.

Countries which participate in the series but do not host events have the greatest potential for extracting rights fees. These include France in the men's series and Australia and New Zealand in the women's series.

RDA/IEC's priority is to ensure that as

much of the Sevens World Series is broadcast in as many new territories as possible. The agencies have not guaranteed levels of coverage, but they will be paid bonuses based on exposure in specific territories. [www.](#)

FOOTBALL

Champions League gives MTG Finland the 'right balance'

By Robin Jellis

Modern Times Group this month capitalised on a U-turn by MTV3 to pick up the pay-television rights to the Uefa Champions League in Finland.

MTG, the multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster, will show Champions League rights on a new channel in Finland: Viasat Sport Finland. The rights will also be used to drive take-up of Viaplay, the broadcaster's OTT subscription service. MTG currently runs the Viasat Hockey Finland and Viasat Golf channels in the country.

Peter Nørrelund, MTG's head of sport, told *TV Sports Markets* this week that the Champions League would help MTG differentiate its content in the country.

"We have a strong portfolio of ice hockey, which is the national sport in Finland – we have exclusive NHL and KHL rights and the best Finnish team, Jokerit, plays in the KHL," he said.

"For the last couple of years we have been looking for a football property to enhance our offering. The Champions League is a fantastic property and is very popular in Finland."

It is thought that MTG will pay about €1.1m (\$1.2m) per season for the rights in the new cycle, up from the €900,000 per season that MTV3 pays in the current cycle, from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

"When buying a property it has to be the right balance between attractiveness of the property and the price," Nørrelund said. "There was a good balance in this deal."

He said the rights were very important for Viaplay due to the high level of broadband penetration in Finland.

MTG's Viasat sports channels are carried in the Gold and Sport packages in Finland, which cost €20 and €15 per month respectively. MTG's main revenue is from subscription fees, but it also generates some revenue from advertising online and on linear broadcasts.

Although the Champions League is a strong property, ice hockey is the most popular sport in Finland. MTG holds NHL rights across the Nordics and the Baltics in a five-season deal, from 2011-12 to 2015-16, worth a total of between \$8m and \$9m per season.

MTG also holds Kontinental Hockey League rights in a three-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. There is strong interest in the performances of Finnish side Jokerit.

Second bite at the cherry

MTG bid for the pay-television rights when they were first offered to the market in October last year, but incumbent rights-holder MTV3, the commercial and pay-television broadcaster, agreed a deal in principle with Uefa for both the free-to-air and pay-television rights.

MTV3 is understood to have offered about €2m per season. Uefa accepted the offer and informed losing bidders they had been unsuccessful. MTV3, however, pulled out of the deal, forcing Uefa back into talks with broadcasters it had already turned down (*TV Sports Markets* 19:6).

Local sources say there are two main reasons why MTV3 pulled out of the deal. First, Swedish media group Bonnier, which owns MTV3, felt the €2m-per-season offer was too high. Second, the broadcaster wants to keep its powder dry to improve its chances of renewing its Premier League rights when they are offered to the market later this year.

MTV3 currently holds Premier League rights in a three-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, worth close to €7m per season.

The withdrawal of MTV3 from the table meant Uefa was in a weak negotiating position. MTG took advantage of the situation to pick up the pay-television rights, while state broadcaster YLE was able to renew its free-to-air rights at a steady fee. It is understood that YLE pays about

€400,000 per season in the current deal and is thought to be paying a similar amount in the new cycle.

Overall, Uefa will earn an increase of about 15 per cent in the total value of the rights, up from €1.3m per season in the current cycle to €1.5m per season.

MTG will show all Champions League matches live. YLE's rights to first-pick matches on Tuesdays, the final and the Super Cup, are all non-exclusive. YLE will show coverage on the YLE TV2 channel, the same as in the current deal.

Europa League rights were renewed by commercial and pay-television broadcaster Nelonen at a fee thought to be only marginally up on the €100,000 per season it pays in the current deal.

All deals were agreed by Team Marketing, Uefa's exclusive sales agent for its club competitions, and are for the three seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18. ■ [www.yle.fi](#)

GOLF

Growing Sky pays more to keep grip on top golf rights

By Robin Jellis

German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland was forced into an increase to renew rights to a host of golf properties, consolidating its position as the dominant pay-television broadcaster in the country.

Sky acquired rights to the European Tour, four annual World Golf Championship events and two editions of the Ryder Cup, in 2016 and 2018. The deal also covers the Asian Tour, the Sunshine Tour, and highlights rights for the European Seniors Tour and Challenge Tour.

The deal is for four years, from 2015 to 2018, and is worth close to €3m (\$3.2m) per year. This is understood to be an increase of close to 20 per cent on the previous four-year deal, from 2011 to 2014, up from about €2.5m per year. The new deal covers both Germany and Austria, and is for broadly the same rights.

The deal was agreed between Sky and European Tour Productions, the joint venture of the European Tour and the IMG Events & Media agency. A tender document, detailing the available rights, had been issued in the middle of last year.

For the previous cycle, from 2011 to 2014, there was said to be interest from Deutsche Telekom, and the telco is thought to have shown relatively strong interest in the rights again in the new cycle. This is thought to have been one factor behind the rights-fee increase.

ETP also secured a bigger rights fee due to Sky's increased subscriber base. Sky currently has 4.225m subscribers across Germany and Austria, of which about 300,000 are from Austria. This is about 1.5m more subscribers than when the last deal was negotiated.

Golf is a niche sport in Germany, but there is some interest in the performances of top German golfer Martin Kaymer. The deal provides Sky with lots of content and is important as it appeals to the wealthier demographic of Sky subscribers.

Although the deal was only announced in March, Sky has been broadcasting events since January. This was because the two parties had agreed a deal in principle in December last year.

There is one minor change in the new contract. Rights to European Tour events held in Germany were previously acquired from local event organisers. However, they are now included in the deal with ETP.

There are two European Tour events held in Germany each year: the BMW International Open, which alternates yearly between Munich and Cologne; and the Porsche European Open, held in Bad Griesbach.

The renewal means Sky retains its complete stable of golf rights in Germany and Austria. It holds US Masters rights in a deal worth about €300,000 per year, and rights to the other three majors – the US Open, the British Open and the US PGA Championship – for about €200,000 per year each (*TV Sports Markets* 18:6).

Sky also holds rights to the US PGA Tour in a three-year deal, from 2013 to 2015, which is thought to be worth about €1.5m per year. ■

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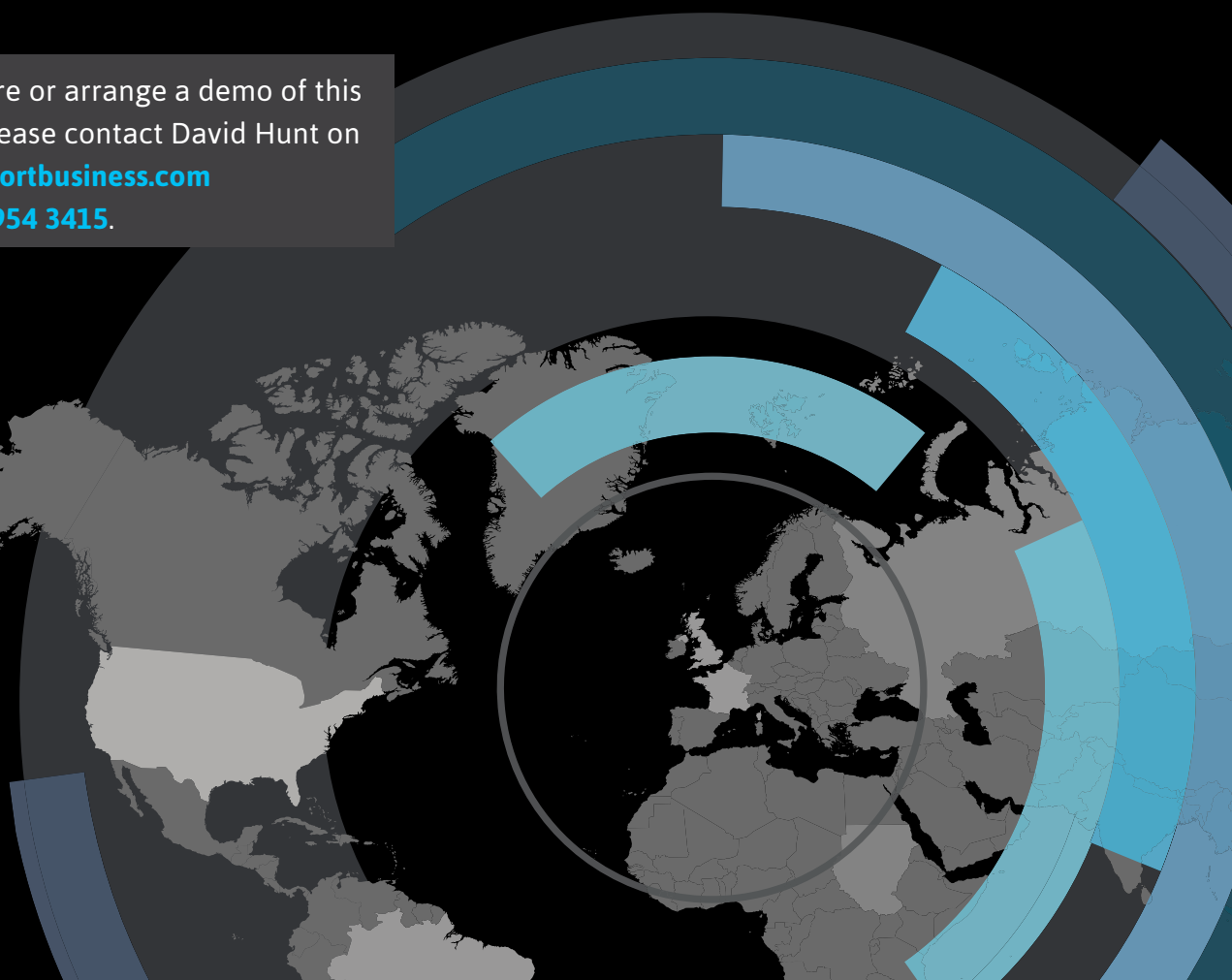
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 16 to April 29**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: Asian associations, Champions League, U-20 World Cup and more**

- **Football:** The Infront Sports & Media agency secured multi-year rights agreements with the Bangladesh Football Federation, the Lao Football Federation and the Football Association of Thailand (page 6).
- **Football:** Pan-regional broadcaster Eurosport struck a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, for exclusive rights to the Uefa Champions League in Singapore (page 5).
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand acquired rights for the 2015 U-20 World Cup in a deal with Fifa, the sport's world governing body. Sky will broadcast live coverage of every match. It will show some coverage on its free-to-air channel Prime.
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired live rights for the Scottish Premiership 2015 play-offs in a deal with the Scottish Professional Football League.
- **Football:** US broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights for the 2015 International Champions Cup North America in a deal with Relevant Sports, the pre-season tournament's organiser. Fox Sports will show all 17 matches live.
- **Football:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven acquired rights for a friendly match between English Premier League club Chelsea and Australian A-League club Sydney on June 2. Seven will exploit the rights via digital-terrestrial channel 7Mate.

SINCE LAST TIME

- The boards of Time Warner Cable and Comcast admitted defeat in their efforts to salvage a proposed \$45.2bn (€42bn) takeover of the US pay-television operator by the US media company. The takeover, which was approved by the shareholders of both companies in October 2014, would have led to Comcast taking control of the NBC Sports Group division of the Time Warner Cable-owned NBCUniversal media company, as well as other sports-media services and channels. The deal was scuppered by regulatory opposition from the Federal Communications Commission, the country's media regulator, which was prepared to issue a hearing designation order to delay the merger process.
- Spain's competition regulator, the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia, gave the green light to telco Telefónica's takeover of Spanish pay-television operator Canal Plus. In July, Telefónica struck a deal to secure a 100-per-cent shareholding in Canal Plus through its acquisition of Mediaset España's 22-per-cent stake for a price of €295m (\$312m) after having already increased its stake to 78 per cent by acquiring a 56-per-cent shareholding from media company Prisa for €750m.
- The International Olympic Committee plans to launch its new Olympic channel in April 2016, according to Olympic Broadcasting Services chief executive Yiannis Exarchos.
- Golf's US PGA Tour agreed a multi-year partnership with MLB Advanced Media, Major League Baseball's digital media subsidiary, to launch a new digital OTT subscription service. PGA Tour Live will feature exclusive live Thursday and Friday coverage of more than 30 PGA Tour events per season when it launches later this year. The service will be available initially in the US, Canada and "other key markets worldwide."
- BeIN Media Group agreed a takeover deal for Turkish pay-television operator Digiturk, which has exclusive media rights for the country's top-tier football league, the Süper Lig, through to the end of the 2016-17 season. The deal, which will be worth between \$1bn (€909m) and \$1.2bn, must be approved by Turkey's Savings Deposit Insurance Fund.
- Racecourse Media Group, the holding company responsible for a range of media and data rights from 34 of the UK's premier racecourses, reported a 15-per-cent year-on-year increase in media rights revenue. The group's racecourses generated £74.4m (€103m/\$111m) in income in 2014, up from £65m in 2013.

FOOTBALL

- Fifa did "nothing wrong" in awarding a rights extension for the World Cup to US network Fox and pay-television broadcaster Telemundo without holding an open bidding process, according to Jérôme Valcke, the general secretary of football's world governing body. According to Valcke, the four-year extension, from 2023 to 2026, was required to protect Fifa's decision to shift the 2022 World Cup in Qatar from the summer to the winter.
- Fifa TV, Fifa's production arm, will use at least 20 cameras per match during coverage of the 2015 Women's World Cup in Canada to ensure the "most advanced" coverage of the tournament in its history. Fifa and Japanese public-service broadcaster NHK will collaborate to produce 10 matches in ultra high definition 8K visuals, including the final on July 5.
- US pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN launched a dedicated North American Soccer League channel on its digital streaming service ESPN Player. The channel will stream a minimum of 130 matches on a live basis during the 2015 season to viewers in the UK, Europe, Middle East and Africa.
- The German football league, the Deutsche Fussball Liga, will launch a new video-on-demand platform ahead of the 2015-16 season, focusing on the history of the domestic top-tier Bundesliga, with pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland having signed on as the service's first carriage partner.
- Bundesliga football club Bayern Munich sealed a US content partnership with Microsoft under which the computer services company's online portal, MSN, will be provided with exclusive video and editorial content.
- Miguel Cardenal, Spanish Secretary of State for Sport and president of the government's sports council, the CSD, hit out

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 16 to April 29

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

Major League Baseball, Philly Eagles, French Swimming Fed and more

- **American Football:** US pay-television broadcaster Comcast SportsNet and the NBC10 regional affiliate of the NBC network acquired regional rights for the Philadelphia Eagles NFL franchise. NBC10 will broadcast all four Eagles pre-season games and news coverage throughout the 2015-16 regular season.
- **Aquatics:** BeIN Media Group acquired rights in France for events operated by the French Swimming Federation in a four-year deal, from 2015 to 2018. The deal includes coverage of the national championships, Golden Tour, l'Open de France de Vichy and Chartres' staging of an annual leg of the Swimming World Cup.
- **Baseball:** BeIN Media Group acquired rights in France for the 2015 Major League Baseball season. The deal includes one regular-season game per week on a delayed basis plus live coverage of the play-offs, all-star game and World Series.
- **Basketball:** SuperSport, the pay-television broadcaster which operates in sub-Saharan Africa, acquired rights for live coverage of the NBA-organised game between Team Africa and Team World on August 1 in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- **Boxing:** Deals were struck in a number of territories for the welterweight clash between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao on May 2 (page 1). Filipino commercial broadcaster ABS-CBN struck a deal to distribute rights across the Middle East. ABS-CBN agreed the deal with the event's co-promoters, Mayweather Promotions and Top Rank. As part of the agreement, pay-per-view coverage will be shown through the OSN, eLifeTV and Du pay-television channels in the Middle East, with Novo Cinemas also showing the fight in cinemas in the Gulf region. In France, basic-tier broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport acquired exclusive rights. In Italy, digital-terrestrial free-to-air channel DeeJay TV, owned by Discovery Communications, secured exclusive rights in a deal with the Infront Sports & Media agency. In Spain, the Mediapro agency acquired rights, with the fight to be shown free to subscribers of OTT platform TotalChannel.com, and on a pay-per-view basis to non-subscribers. In Russia, the rights were acquired by state broadcaster Channel One. Commercial and pay-television broadcaster Fiji TV acquired rights in Fiji and the Pacific Islands. In Hong Kong, telco PCCW acquired the rights. It made the fight available on pay-television broadcaster Now TV for a one-off fee.
- **Boxing:** BET, the Viacom-owned US pay-television channel, struck a deal with the Roc Nation Sports agency to show live coverage of up to nine boxing events over the next 18 months.
- **Boxing:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky acquired exclusive live rights for the IBF super-middleweight world title bout between British fighter James DeGale and Andre Dirrell on May 23.
- **Cricket:** SuperSport renewed a deal for Cricket South Africa properties for six years, from 2015-16 to 2020-21. SuperSport will continue to serve as the host broadcaster of all South Africa national team home matches and will cover a minimum of 60 per cent of the domestic T20 Challenge and One-Day Cup matches. SuperSport also acquired rights for the governing body's inaugural Africa T20 Cup Twenty20 tournament.

over the delay in introducing the collective sale of media rights for domestic club football, which is being caused by disagreements between various factions.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- US pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN launched legal proceedings against Verizon after the latter included the ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPNU channels in a sports pack add-on option available for \$10 (€9.30) per month on top of new programming package Custom TV, which starts at \$55 per month. Accusing Verizon of a "breach of contract," ESPN asked a New York State court to prevent the telco from "unfairly depriving (ESPN) of the benefit of its bargain". Verizon, which was also criticised by the Fox Sports division of the Fox network and NBC Sports division of media company NBCUniversal, signed up pay-television broadcaster CBS Sports Network as a partner of Custom TV.
- The NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal expanded the reach of its live streaming service NBC Sports Live Extra by striking carriage deals with the Roku and Apple TV online platforms.
- US telco Verizon will launch Campus Insiders, a new mobile OTT service offering access to live coverage of college sports, including the Atlantic Coast, Big 12, Mountain West, West Coast, Patriot League and A-10 conferences, later this year. The service will also feature content provided by the new 120 Sports digital sports channel, which is operated by US media group Time.
- Italian pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia is maintaining "informal contact" with media group Mediaset after being rebuffed in an approach to acquire pay-television business Mediaset Premium. Separately, Sky struck a partnership with telco Telecom Italia under which a new IPTV service will be launched featuring the former's sports content. The jointly-branded service will be available to all TIM broadband customers using Telecom Italia's network and a dedicated Sky decoder.
- The Fox International Channels broadcast division of media company 21st Century Fox linked up with several Asian media companies to make its Fox Sports content available on an OTT basis in the region. FIC signed partnerships with Japanese entertainment group Avex, Chinese internet company Tencent and its OTT partners, Malaysian pay-television operator Astro and pay-television provider Cignal in the Philippines.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 16 to April 29**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****Tour de Yorkshire, French handball, Asian Judo Championships and more**

- **Cycling:** UK commercial broadcaster ITV acquired rights for the inaugural 2015 Tour de Yorkshire. Free-to-air digital channel ITV4 will provide live coverage of the three-day race and nightly highlights of every stage.
- **Handball:** Ligue Nationale de Handball, France's domestic league, signed a digital media partnership with the Sportfive agency, which will market online rights to games.
- **Ice Hockey:** The NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal acquired rights for the International Ice Hockey Federation's 2015 World Championship in Prague and Ostrava, Czech Republic. More than 40 hours of coverage will be shown via pay-television channel NBC Sports Network and live streaming service NBC Sports Live Extra.
- **Judo:** The IEC in Sports agency struck a deal with the Judo Union of Asia to market the rights for the 2015 Asian Judo Championships.
- **Martial Arts:** O2 Sport, the yet-to-be-launched subscription sports channel operated by telco O2 in Czech Republic, struck a deal with combat sports agency Fighting Spirit. The length of the deal, which will begin on August 15 when the channel is launched, was not disclosed. O2 Sport will show live coverage and support programming of Fighting Spirit properties from sports such as boxing, kickboxing and mixed martial arts.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** Fox Sports Asia, the regional subsidiary of Fox International Channels, agreed a deal for Ultimate Fighting Championship rights. The deal excludes the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan. The Fox Sports Play on-demand mobile service, available in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, will also show coverage.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** US pay-television broadcaster CBS Sports Network struck a deal with the Cage Fury Fighting Championship for exclusive broadcast of at least four events in 2015, starting with the CFFC 48 event on May 14.
- **Motorcycling:** Dutch commercial broadcaster RTL acquired rights for the 2015 Motocross World Championship in a deal with series promoter Youthstream and Dutch promoter LDP International. RTL will broadcast the remainder of the 2015 Championship.
- **Multi-sport:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired rights for the inaugural 2015 European Games.
- **Olympic Games:** Telco Cable & Wireless Communications acquired rights across the Caribbean for the 2016 summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in a sublicensing deal with Canoc Broadcasting. Canoc was set up by the body comprising the region's National Olympic Committees and Commonwealth Games Associations.
- **Paralympic Games:** The International Paralympic Committee struck a number of deals for rights to the 2015 Ice Sledge Hockey World Championships A-Pool in a number of territories. These were with: the NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal in the US; public-service broadcaster CBC in Canada; state broadcaster Rai in Italy; pay-television operator Sky PerfecTV in Japan; KHL-TV, the pay-television channel operated by the Kontinental Hockey League pan-European ice hockey club competition, in Russia; SportDeutschland.TV, an online platform operated by the DOSB, the German Olympic Committee, in Germany.
- Dutch pay-television broadcaster Sport1 launched a dedicated motorsports channel, Sport1 Racing. The channel is available on a free-to-air basis for subscribers of cable television operator Ziggo over the weekend of May 8-10, when coverage of the Formula One Spanish Grand Prix will be shown on the channel.
- Australian pay-television operator Foxtel is in talks to acquire a 14.9-per-cent stake in commercial broadcaster Ten for A\$85m (€61m/\$67m).
- Goal.com, the football news website which is operated by digital sports media company Perform, agreed a partnership with Times Internet, the online and mobile arm of Indian publishing company Times Group. Times Internet will have exclusive rights to the Goal brand in India and will drive local commercialisation of Goal across desktop and mobile platforms. Perform and Goal have video content rights for a host of football leagues and properties.
- The production rights cover the league's KHL-TV and KHL-TV HD channels as well as game coverage. Bids for both sets of rights are due in by May 15.
- The National Rugby League, which operates the top division of rugby league in Australia, brought forward the start of talks over its next cycle of domestic rights by one year. Starting with the 2018 season, the NRL could sell rights to the State of Origin series between New South Wales and Queensland as well as the Grand Final and Finals series separately from its rights for the top-tier Premiership, according to chief executive Dave Smith.
- US pay-television provider Dish Network is in talks to seal a new long-term rights deal with mixed martial arts series Ultimate Fighting Championship, with short-term agreements having bridged the gap since the parties' previous long-term deal expired in January.
- Richard Lewis, the chief executive of the All England Lawn Tennis Club, ruled out switching domestic broadcast coverage of the Wimbledon tennis championships from free-to-air to pay-television platforms "in the foreseeable future."

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The Kontinental Hockey League launched invitations to tender for media and production rights for the pan-European club ice hockey competition. The worldwide media rights exclude Russia.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 16 to April 29**MEDIA RIGHTS 4****Rugby Sevens, Round the World Yacht Race, America's Cup, Wimbledon**

- **Rugby Union:** World Rugby, the sport's global governing body, appointed the RDA TV and IEC in Sports agencies to market global television rights to its Sevens and U-20 Championships for two years, from 2015-16 to 2016-17 (page 7).
- **Sailing:** Chinese satellite and internet-television service BTV acquired rights for the 2015-16 Clipper Round the World Yacht Race in a deal with Clipper Ventures, which organises the event.
- **Sailing:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus acquired rights across more than 50 territories for America's Cup events leading up to the 2017 finals in Bermuda. The deal covers France, Monaco and French-speaking Switzerland. It includes live coverage and highlights of the America's Cup World Series, Qualifiers, Challenger Play-Offs, Finals and the Youth America's Cup. Coverage will be shown on the Canal Plus Sport channel and the Canal Plus On Demand service.
- **Tennis:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven and pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports renewed rights deals with the All England Lawn Tennis Club for the Wimbledon championships starting with the 2015 edition.
- **Tennis:** Pay-television broadcasters Globosat and ESPN renewed rights deals with the AELTC for the Wimbledon championships, starting with the 2015 edition.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The Sunset+Vine APP division of UK sports production and media company Sunset+Vine reached an agreement with the International Sailing Federation to produce live coverage of the medal races at three of its Sailing World Cup regattas: in Hyères, France, and Weymouth and Portland in the UK.
- Britain's Lawn Tennis Association signed a two-year agreement, from 2015 to 2016, for Sunset+Vine to serve as the host broadcaster of four of the national governing body's annual tournaments in June. The deal covers the Women's Tennis Association events in Nottingham, Birmingham and Eastbourne plus the ATP World Tour men's tournament in Nottingham.
- US media and marketing company Gannett agreed a partnership with video platform ViewLift to explore the development of a new digital sports video service featuring a library of footage about prominent players, teams and other characters in US sports.
- Philip Browne, the chief executive of the Irish Rugby Football Union, rugby union's governing body in Ireland, warned against the national team's matches in the Six Nations tournament being reserved exclusively for free-to-air television ahead of talks with the country's Communications Ministry. The Six Nations is currently listed as a 'B' event in Ireland, which means deferred coverage must be available for free-to-air television.
- Spanish-language US broadcaster Univision Deportes linked up with Snapchat to offer sports video clips via the social media platform.
- The International Paralympic Committee president Sir Philip Craven expects the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to set a new viewing record for the event, exceeding a cumulative global audience of 4bn people for the first time, and beating the 3.8bn cumulative audience achieved by both the 2008 Games in Beijing, China, and the 2012 Games in London, UK.
- The Sporty Solutionz agency, the commercial rights-holder and promoter of the Indian Badminton League, threatened legal action against the Badminton Association of India for the governing body's decision to terminate its contract.
- Social video platform Grabyo launched Grabyo VIP, a new service which aims to encourage greater sharing of video content by famous athletes on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.
- The Infront Sports & Media agency appointed Anne Zhao as the new managing director of its Infront China division.

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