

REGULATION

Strikes, threats, and insults – but La Liga collective selling decree set to become law

By Richard Welbirg and Frank Dunne

The Royal Decree that paves the way for the collective selling of Spanish Liga media rights generated fallout – a week of strike threats, insults and posturing by all sides – which diverted attention from what remains a momentous change in Spanish football.

The horse-trading between the league, the Liga de Fútbol Profesional, the federation, the Real Federación Española de Fútbol, and the players' union, the Asociación de Futbolistas Españoles, appeared to be heading toward a conclusion as *TV Sports Markets* went to press this week. But this was a sideshow.

The decree, which was approved by the government's Council of Ministers on April 30, will almost certainly be

approved by parliament, where the ruling Popular Party of prime minister Mariano Rajoy enjoys a majority in both chambers.

From the 2016-17 season, La Liga will join England's Premier League, Italy's Serie A, France's Ligue 1, Germany's Bundesliga – and most other major football leagues – in selling its media rights collectively.

The current system of individual selling, introduced in the 1997-98 season, led to a huge polarisation of wealth in which the top two clubs, Barcelona and Real Madrid, at one time earned 12 times the income of the smallest clubs.

In the preamble to the decree, the

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AGENCIES

Ufa bosses go back for 'something big'

By Frank Dunne

The senior management of Ufa Sports supported the sale of the agency to Lagardère Unlimited on the understanding that Lagardère has ambitions to become a major force in the sports-rights market once again, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

The sale last week of Ufa to Lagardère by parent company RTL Group means that the agency's three top managers, Philip Cordes, Robert Müller von Vultejus and Stefan Felsing, and several other senior members of staff, will be returning to an organisation they left, or

were pushed out of, between 2007 and 2009.

The change of senior management at Lagardère Unlimited was critical in opening up the possibility of Ufa being integrated into the company. In May 2014, Seamus O'Brien and Andrew Georgiou from Lagardère Unlimited subsidiary World Sport Group took over the strategic direction of the company. The pair are seen as natural rights-traders, rather than 'accountants' focused on cutting losses.


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Infront's China/Africa axis is threat to Sportfive contract

The Confédération Africaine de Football could be set for a huge increase in the value of its global media and marketing rights, as negotiations with incumbent rights-holder Sportfive and rival agency Infront Sports & Media near a conclusion.

One insider this week claimed that Infront, owned by Chinese conglomerate Dalian Wanda, has made a bid of about \$500m (€450m) for the eight years from 2017 to 2024, or \$62.5m per year. Sportfive, a subsidiary of sports marketing company Lagardère Unlimited, is said to have offered \$400m, or \$50m per year.

Sportfive's current deal with Caf, the governing body of African football, is worth \$160m over the eight years from 2009 to 2016, or \$20m per year. Sportfive is thought to have a matching-rights clause in its existing contract, so still, in theory, holds the aces.

The agency makes a substantial profit on its current deal and the value had been expected to increase by at least 50 per cent. If Caf succeeds in more than doubling the value of its rights it would be an extraordinary achievement, reflecting the strategic importance of the property. Rights experts say that an agency would struggle to refinance investments at such levels.

Informed sources say that senior executives at Wanda, which bought Infront in February, are closely involved in the negotiations with the president of Caf, Issa Hayatou. Wanda, primarily a property and entertainment firm, is said to see a deal as a gateway to wider opportunities. China, and Chinese companies, have made huge investments in Africa in recent years.

Caf's flagship property is the Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon). The new deal will cover four editions of the cup: 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023. It also covers the Afcon qualifiers and the Caf Champions League. ■

Nova renews; but two clubs out

Greek pay-television broadcaster Nova extended its deal for Greek Superleague rights by two seasons last week, although two clubs still oppose the renewal.

The deal covers the 2017-18 and 2018-19 seasons of the Superleague, the top tier of Greek football, and will be worth €40.5m (\$45m) per season. This is only if the deal encompasses rights to the matches of all clubs, however.

Online betting rights are not included. They are held by national gambling monopoly Opap as part of its two-season deal to title sponsor the league, from 2013-14 to 2014-15. The deal is worth about €9m per season. Opap is expected to renew these rights in a new deal at only a slight fee increase.

Nova currently holds the media rights to all Superleague matches in a four-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2016-17, worth €39m per season.

Panathinaikos and PAOK oppose the Nova renewal. If these two clubs are not included in the new deal, the fee will be scaled down to about €34m per season. Negotiations are expected to continue with the clubs over the next two years.

Panathinaikos and PAOK are thought to be against the deal because they feel the league could have earned a greater fee had the rights been tendered.

Nova approached the league about a renewal in February after the Greek government suspended football in the country following fan violence between rivals Olympiacos and Panathinaikos. Nova had hoped to use the situation to negotiate a good deal.

Rival pay-television broadcaster OTE is unlikely to be interested in rights to the matches of one or two clubs. Local experts expect Panathinaikos and PAOK to enter the collective deal with Nova before the start of 2017-18.

Xanthi initially voted against the deal last month, but is included in the extension (*TV Sports Markets* 19:8).

From next season, 2015-16, there will be 16 teams in the Superleague rather than 18. This is in an attempt to make

the league more competitive. Niki Volou and OFI have been thrown out of the league for failing to pay players. ■

Italian club football on the up

Marco Bianchi, president of the B4 Capital agency, this week told *TV Sports Markets* that his company's aggressive bid to win the international rights to Italy's Coppa Italia and Supercoppa showed that Italian football was far healthier than some critics have suggested.

B4 this week renewed its deal for the rights for a further three years, paying more than a fourfold increase. In the new three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, the agency will pay €52m (\$57.2m), or €17.3m per season. In the current three-season deal, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, B4 pays about €4m per season.

"Everybody talks about the success of the Premier League," he said. "Serie A is not at that level but there is a huge and growing interest in Italian football." He said that much of the growth in value came from the Middle East and North Africa, and North America.

Spanish agency Mediapro is thought to have made the second-highest bid, at about €46m over the three years. The IMG Events & Media agency and beIN Media Group also bid.

Italy's second tier, Serie B, enjoyed a big uplift in its domestic media-rights income this week after strong competition between rival pay-television operators Sky Italia and Mediaset Premium.

Sky won the rights, paying about €14m per season for the next three seasons. This is double what the league currently earns in deals with Sky (worth €5m per season) and Mediaset (€2m per season.)

The uplift rewards the league's decision to make only one package of live rights available this time. Sky was determined to win the rights as it looks set to lose the rights to the Uefa Champions League to its rival from next season. ■ [www](#)

FOOTBALL

Expansion into Asia-Pacific drives revenues for ICC

By Richard Welbirg

Revenues for the 2015 International Champions Cup summer friendly competition are set to double as a consequence of expanding to three tournaments, and adding matches in Australia, China, England, Italy and Mexico to the US and Canada.

In 2014, the ICC is thought to have generated just over \$6m (€5.4m) in media rights revenue (*TV Sports Markets* 18:15). The 2015 competition is projected to earn at least \$12m.

From a single US-based tournament in 2013 and 2014, the 2015 ICC will grow to include three separate events: a 10-team competition across North America, and two three-team competitions hosted in Australia and China. Rights to the three competitions are sold as a single package.

The tournament is organised by Relevent Sports, a division of US investment company RSE Ventures. Media rights to the three competitions are sold by the Catalyst Media agency, in which RSE holds a majority stake.

The expanded ICC was initially conceived as a single tournament spanning North America and Asia, but logistics made the format impossible. The three tournaments are played as round-robins to give the clubs involved security in their scheduling.

Some experts believe that not having a single clear winner of the competition this year does not help in solidifying the brand, after big strides were made in that regard between 2013 and 2014.

The 'European leg' of the North American competition – two matches that will be played in London and Florence – was arranged to satisfy scheduling requirements of Premier League team Chelsea and Serie A team Fiorentina. But the matches also ensure the competition some content in European prime time.

The Club América v Porto match will be hosted in Mexico City, extending the reach

of the competition into another major television market where football is popular.

Pay-television product

Oliver Duss, Catalyst senior vice-president, this week told *TV Sports Markets* the tournament “ticks a lot of boxes” for pay-television broadcasters.

The summer tournament, involving some of Europe's biggest teams, is a useful antidote to churn, maintaining football in the traditional off-season.

Duss highlighted three drivers behind the tournament's increasing income: increased inventory; the expansion into Asia; and the growing strength of the competition's brand.

“The tournament ticks a lot of boxes for pay-television broadcasters”

Oliver Duss, senior vice president, Catalyst Media

The 2015 tournament provides broadcasters with 23 games across the three competitions, up from 13 matches in 2014 and 12 in 2013. The addition of the Australian and Chinese tournaments creates six matches in prime time across Asia-Pacific, and hence increases the value to broadcasters in the region.

Duss claimed the success of the 2014 competition, which saw growth in attendances and audiences from 2013, established the ICC as a proven broadcast property.

Local partners

In Australia and China, operational and promotional rights – including some media rights – have been passed to local partners. Both deals are based on a minimum guarantee and revenue share.

In China, the tournament will be operated by internet company LeTV, which will hold media rights to the three competitions. It will sublicense linear broadcast rights to all games to regional terrestrial broadcasters.

In Australia, the tournament is operated by Nine Live, the events division of media

company Nine Entertainment. Nine Entertainment also owns commercial broadcaster Nine, which has acquired the rights to the three ICC competitions.

Key territories

The involvement of several major English and Spanish teams makes these two countries the most valuable markets for the ICC. The two countries are expected to make up about 15 per cent of the ICC's total media rights revenue.

Negotiations in the UK are currently under way with multiple broadcasters. Uniquely to Spain, Catalyst has opened a formal tender process. This was due to a high level of interest from free-to-air broadcasters in the eight matches involving Barcelona and Real Madrid, some of which will be in Spanish prime time, and some in the afternoon.

“There is interest from both free-to-air and pay-television in Spain,” Duss said. “So in order to maximise revenues and give everyone a fair chance, we thought it would be the best way forward.” The tender was opened late this week with the rights expected to be awarded within the next two weeks.

The new competitions in Asia-Pacific are expected to unlock value in a number of new markets. Outside Australia and China, the key territories are Hong Kong, India, Indonesia and Japan.

Catalyst saw a significant increase in value from Brazil, where free-to-air and pay-television broadcaster Esporte Interativo has signed a three-year deal.

The broadcaster has acquired rights to the Uefa Champions League from the 2015-16 season, and sees the ICC as ideal lead-in content to the European club tournament (*TV Sports Markets* 18:21).

The 2015 tournament is the first time Catalyst has agreed multi-year deals. Duss said that with a competition growing rapidly in value, doing one-year deals generally made more sense, but that some broadcasters sought longer deals.

Pay-television operator StarTimes, for example, signed a five-year deal for sub-Saharan Africa. “We will do this if the financial offer is in line with our projections for the region” he said. ■

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

REGULATION

Spain follows Italy in legislating a return to collective selling

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government was scathing about the failures of individual selling. It said: “The unstable and fragmentary operation of this audiovisual rights trading model has led to structural weaknesses in the system that explain why revenue from these sales is significantly lower than would be expected from a competition of the importance, dimensions and international

impact of Spanish professional football.”

It added that the individual media-rights deals “are not always compatible with the rules of the free market, involve parties with widely varying bargaining powers, are subject to constant judicial disputes and, in practice, lack the participation of the organising bodies of the respective competitions.”

Government intervention in the running of sport is controversial. Fifa, world football’s governing body, has expelled nations on several occasions where government action has undermined the autonomy of the football authorities.

The Spanish government acknowledges that intervention in sport should be

“exceptional.” It justifies its own intervention on three grounds:

1. The undeniable social relevance of professional sports.
2. The repeated and unanimous demand for such intervention from all sectors concerned.
3. The need to promote competition in the pay-television market.

Competitive landscape

Market conditions ahead of the return to collective selling look favourable, with a number of potential bidders for La Liga live rights, including the Mediapro agency, beIN Media Group, Discovery Communications/Eurosport, and telcos Vodafone, which owns the Ono cable

The main provisions of Spain’s historic collective selling decree for La Liga rights

The Royal Decree approved on April 30 by Spain’s Council of Ministers centralises media rights to the top-tier Primera División and second-tier Segunda División under the control of the football league, the Liga de Fútbol Profesional.

The sale of the rights to the cup competition, the Copa del Rey, will be controlled by the national football association, the Real Federación Española de Fútbol.

Spain thus becomes the second major European football nation to legislate a return to collective selling, after Italy did so in 2008.

As with Italy’s Melandri Law, Spain’s decree lays down rules about how the rights must be sold, sets out a precise framework for how the income must be distributed among the clubs of the two divisions, and establishes a mechanism for solidarity payments to the grassroots and other sports.

It is this final part of the decree, as well as a perceived lack of involvement in the process, which has angered the federation and the player’s union, the Asociación de Futbolistas Españoles.

The decree establishes that the clubs alone are the owners of the rights to the matches they play.

Conditions of sale

The sale of media rights to the league and cup in the domestic market will be bound by the following conditions:

- it must be public, transparent, competitive and non-discriminatory
- successful bids must be evaluated on objective criteria: the economic viability of the offer, the sporting interest of the competition, and the growth and future value of audiovisual rights
- packages must be awarded individually, not conditionally upon certain events or the acquisition of certain other packages
- rights cannot be sold for more than three years
- no entity can hold more than two packages, unless in a particular package there were no bidders or other economically equivalent bids
- clubs retain the rights to deferred transmission of home matches via their own channels.

Observance of these rules will be monitored by Spain’s competition regulator, the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia.

The law does not lay down the same conditions for the sale of the league’s international rights, but says that the league must submit its plan for the sale

of the rights to the competition authority for approval and that the conditions of sale should be made public. The seller must provide updated information on sales contracts online.

The Mediapro agency, which currently sells the international rights, is considered the strong favourite to distribute the collectively-sold package.

The decree mandates that the league create an organ for the oversight and management of the sales and exploitation of Primera and Segunda rights. This will consist of representatives from: the two clubs with the greatest rights fee income over the previous five years; two other Primera Liga clubs elected by their peers; one elected Segunda club; and the LFP president.

The federation may either create a similar organ to oversee the sale and exploitation of Copa del Rey rights, or cede the rights to the league in return for the greater of one per cent of the league’s total media rights revenues or €10m. It is thought likely to pass the rights to the league.

The decree contains a ‘temporary’ clause ensuring that for the next six seasons no club can earn less than it did selling its own rights in the 2014-15

operation, and Telefónica.

Telefónica owns the Movistar TV IPTV platform, and in April was given approval by the competition authority, the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia, for its full acquisition of satellite operator Canal Plus – the largest pay-television platform in Spain.

The acquisition came with conditions, which some observers fear may blunt the company's aggression in the sports-rights market. Telefónica will have to make its 'premium' channels – defined as those carrying top sport or major new films – available to competing operators as a wholesale package. The operators will be allowed to take up to half of the package, in channels of their choosing.

Claudio Aspesi, senior research analyst at Bernstein, told *TV Sports Markets* this week that Telefónica would probably bid aggressively despite the possibility it might have to share sport channels.

"My sense is that you continue to bid aggressively for the rights you really care for. If they are won by someone without a distribution platform it's not such a big problem. But someone like Vodafone's Ono is a worry," he said.

The 20 Primera Liga clubs have agreed one-season deals with either Mediapro or Telefónica covering 2015-16, earning a combined total of about €760m (\$845m). The league hopes to begin selling domestic rights for the 2016-17 to 2018-19 cycle in early June. The

process is expected to be concluded by the end of the summer.

League president Javier Tebas said last year that the league hoped to earn €1bn in the first year of collective selling, with up to €400m coming from international rights sales. By 2020-21 it aims to generate between €1.35bn and €1.4bn per season.

The decree does not change existing law that requires at least one Liga game to be broadcast free-to-air each week. This provision remains a big problem for the league, as it reduces the exclusivity it can offer pay-television broadcasters, and hence the value of the rights. No other major European league is faced with this problem. ■

season. In that case the distribution will be adjusted, taking from clubs earning more than in 2014-15 and giving to those earning less.

The league is confident of earning enough from the collective sale to make this unnecessary.

Income split

Revenue from domestic and international Liga rights sales will be allocated 90:10 between the Primera and Segunda divisions. Each division has specific rules governing the distribution of that revenue between clubs, as follows:

Primera División

- 50 per cent split equally between the clubs
- 25 per cent based on a weighted average of a club's success over the previous five seasons; if the league also sells the Copa del Rey, 22 per cent will be based on league and three per cent on cup success. Results from the previous season are given a 35 per cent weighting. A weighting of 20 per cent is given to the second-to-last season, and 15 per cent to each of the three seasons before that
- 25 per cent based on a club's 'following', split one-third on ticket sales and two-thirds on the live audiences for

pay-television broadcasts. No club will receive more than 20 per cent or less than two per cent of this allocation.

Segunda División

- at least 70 per cent split equally between the clubs
- at most 15 per cent based on the previous season's results
- at most 15 per cent based on a club's following (calculated as for the top division).

Solidarity mechanism

The decree defines the contributions that Liga clubs must make to various sporting bodies, both in football and for other sports.

These commitments are a percentage of each club's media-rights income after payments of debts and taxes. They are:

- 3.5 per cent to a compensation fund for relegated teams
- one per cent to the league
- one per cent to the federation
- one per cent to the Consejo Superior de Deportes, the government body for developing Spanish sport, to support elite athletes in other sports
- 0.5 per cent to the CSD for, in the following order: women's football, the third-tier Segunda B and the unions or associations of the players, referees and coaches.

Opposition

The approval of the decree met with immediate criticism from the federation, which suspended all football in Spain from May 16. The federation claims it was insufficiently involved in discussions over the decree, and is thought to want a bigger contribution from the clubs.

It is supported by the player's union, which also felt it was overlooked in the drafting of the decree. It is also angry that the decree first allocates club contributions to women's football and the minor leagues.

As *TV Sports Markets* went to press, the Spanish High Court had struck down the strike announced by the players' union on May 10. The court said the strike would have caused "serious organisational disorder" and caused problems for the international commitment of the Spanish national side, the summer schedules of the clubs, and players' holidays. The federation lifted its suspension of football, providing competitions are played according to the original schedule.

League president Javier Tebas told the media on Thursday: "The cronyism between the AFE [players union] and RFEF [federation] has been displayed for everyone to see. Now there will be football." ■ [www.football.com](#)

ATHLETICS

Diamond League secures coverage in two vital markets

By Robin Jellis

Pan-regional sports broadcaster Eurosport took advantage of a lack of competition to secure live rights for the Diamond League athletics series in the key German and UK markets ahead of the 2015 season.

In the UK, Eurosport will have live rights to 12 of the 14 Diamond League meetings each year. The two other events, hosted in the UK, are held by public-service broadcaster the BBC as part of a separate deal.

In Germany, Eurosport is expected to have live rights to all 14 meetings. Talks about the two meetings held in Switzerland each year are ongoing, but the other 12 events are guaranteed.

Both deals are for five years, from 2015 to 2019. The UK deal is worth about £300,000 (€410,000/\$450,000) per year.

The rights fee in Germany is thought to be about €50,000 per year.

Athletics is an important part of Eurosport's portfolio. It holds rights to the World Championships in 2015 and 2017 as part of the European Broadcasting Union deal with the International Association of Athletics Federations, the sport's global governing body. The deal is worth \$20m per year from 2014 to 2017 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:17). Eurosport also holds Diamond League rights in Asia.

Diamond League AG was set up to exploit the commercial rights of the series. The concept was developed by the IAAF and the event organisers of the individual meetings.

The Diamond League pools the international rights from each meeting. Each local meeting organiser sells its own domestic media rights.

All Diamond League international rights are sold by the IMG Events & Media agency under a five-year deal, from 2015 to 2019. IMG pays a guarantee of about \$10m per year, plus a share of revenues above that figure.

The 2015 season begins today (Friday) in Doha, Qatar.

Uphill UK struggle

The BBC held international Diamond League rights between 2010 and 2014 in two deals – one from 2010 to 2012, the other covering 2013 and 2014. In the first deal the BBC paid about £250,000 per year, and slightly more in the second deal (*TV Sports Markets* 17:2).

However, the broadcaster found it difficult to schedule meetings as they often aired on Friday evenings, clashing with popular entertainment programming. As a result, coverage alternated between the BBC3 channel and the interactive red button service and only achieved low audiences. The BBC was not keen to renew its rights.

There was little competition for the rights from other broadcasters. IMG struggled to sell the rights when it approached the market, and instead sold them to the Great Run Company, formerly known as Nova International. The agency, run by former British athlete Brendan Foster, specialises in organising and commercialising athletics events.

The deal between IMG and the Great Run Company is also from 2015 to 2019, and is worth about £300,000 per year.

'Global appeal' of Diamond League doubling audiences and revenues for meetings

Media rights fees for the Diamond League have risen significantly compared to its predecessor, the Golden League, according to Petr Stastny, general coordinator and chief financial officer of the league.

Stastny told *TV Sports Markets* this week that growth had been triggered by the "global appeal" of the Diamond League. "If you look at the revenue and the audiences of meetings formerly in the Golden League and compared them with the Diamond League today, it has increased," he said.

The Diamond League replaced the Golden League in 2010 in an attempt to reverse the decline in popularity and broadcaster interest in the property (*TV Sports Markets* 13:5).

One key factor which has increased revenue compared to the Golden League is the extension of the number of events

– from six to 14 per year. Hosting events in Asia (China), the Middle East (Doha) and the US (Eugene and New York) has further widened the audience.

Media-rights revenues for the Diamond League, compared to media-rights fees earned by the same meetings in either individual events or as part of the Golden League, doubled from 2009 to 2010. Distribution, in terms of the number of households in which events are shown, is also understood to have grown strongly.

There has also been growth in Latin America, with the hosting of the summer Olympic Games in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the catalyst.

Europe, however, accounts for well over half of the total broadcast revenue for the international rights. Key markets include the UK, France, Italy and Scandinavia.

Coverage of Diamond League

meetings will be shown in about 150 territories in 2015, up from about 130 last year. The IMG Events & Media agency, which sells the international rights, is also understood to be in advanced negotiations over a deal in the Caribbean.

IMG marketed the international Diamond League media rights under a five-year deal from 2010 to 2014. The agency paid a minimum guarantee of about \$7m (€6.3m) per year. The next \$1.5m per year went straight to IMG, with revenue thereafter split 50:50.

Renewal

In April 2014, IMG renewed its deal to cover the five years from 2015 to 2019. Renewal talks had begun in late 2013. IMG pays a guarantee of close to \$10m per year in the current deal, and is said to earn the next \$2m per year, with revenue thereafter split 50:50.

Great Run Company then sold the live rights on to Eurosport for about the same fee. It did not tender the rights but held direct talks with broadcasters.

Diamond League meetings outside the UK will receive wider coverage than before after the BBC agreed a three-year deal with the Great Run Company for highlights. The deal, from 2015 to 2017, is worth a nominal rights fee.

From 2010 to 2014, the BBC showed 24 hours of Diamond League coverage each year across BBC3 and the red button. From 2015 to 2019, the Diamond League will receive 36 hours of coverage each year – 24 hours live on Eurosport and 12 hours of highlights on BBC1 or BBC2. The Diamond League is understood to be delighted with the extent of the coverage it will receive.

The BBC holds rights to the two Diamond League events in the UK, in Birmingham and London, in a separate deal with British Athletics, the sport's national governing body. That deal is worth about £4m per year over the six years from 2014-15 to 2019-20.

The deal also covers the British Championships and the Indoor Grand

Prix. For all of these, the BBC covers production costs on top of the rights fee. Production is thought to cost at least £200,000 per event per day.

German exposure

The Diamond League has been without a broadcast partner in Germany in each of the past two seasons, 2013 and 2014, having previously been shown by basic-tier sports broadcaster Sport1.

Sport1 held the rights from 2010 to 2012, paying about €200,000 per year as it sought to establish itself in the market.

IMG failed to agree a deal thereafter, mainly due to a lack of interest from pay-television broadcasters – it received low offers.

There was also a desire not to agree deals with free-to-air broadcasters that can be accessed in other countries, as this would have eroded the exclusivity of broadcasters in other territories.

German free-to-air broadcasters, such as public-service channels ARD and ZDF, and commercial channels ProSiebenSat.1 and RTL, are available in neighbouring countries. This also hampered a free-to-air deal in Germany for this year's

International Handball Federation World Championship (*TV Sports Markets* 19:1).

Eurosport will show coverage on the Eurosport 2 channel, which is encrypted. The Eurosport 1 channel is unencrypted in many territories. The rights were not tendered, but IMG held talks with broadcasters in Germany.

Eurosport had created goodwill with the Diamond League and IMG following its deal in the UK, while it also holds rights in 17 territories across Asia. One source close to the series said Eurosport is recognised as a “significant partner” and that the process in Germany was not viewed as completely standalone.

The deal does not yet cover the two events held in Switzerland, in Lausanne and Zürich. Rights to these events, and the international meetings, are held by public-service broadcaster SRG-SSR. Discussions are ongoing between IMG and SRG as to whether Eurosport can also show the two Swiss events.

IMG was eager to agree a deal in Germany to placate sponsors who want as much exposure as possible. The agency is also in discussions over extended news coverage deals in the country. ■ [www.](#)

The guarantee increased by around 40 per cent from 2010-14 to 2015-19 due to the fact IMG was earning decent fees for the international rights – IMG was understood to be earning at least \$10m per year in media rights fees last year.

The contract was renewed directly between IMG and the Diamond League, without a tender process, although the latter is understood to have been contacted by agencies who were interested in acquiring the rights.

Stastny said: “It has been a relationship of mutual benefit. If you find out you can work on a positive note as a partner and there is a benefit for both parties, it makes sense to continue that relationship.”

The Diamond League pushed for two main things when approached by IMG about a renewal. First, an increased guarantee. Second, to be formally involved in rights discussions.

In the 2010-14 cycle IMG consulted the Diamond League before agreeing

deals, although this wasn't obligatory under the terms of their deal.

“The product in general, and the television product in particular, have improved very much under the guidance of IMG compared to the Golden League,” Stastny said. The league is understood to be pleased with the work IMG has done to standardise the broadcast quality of events.

Revenue share

Revenue from the IMG deal is split as follows:

- 25 per cent to the IAAF
- 25 per cent split equally between organisers of the Brussels and Zürich meetings
- 50 per cent split, on a sliding scale, between the remaining 12 meeting organisers (with Rome earning the least, at about two per cent).

There have in the past been talks about pooling the domestic and international

rights into one centralised package which would give IMG far greater leverage. But this is unlikely to take place, at least for the foreseeable future, as long-term broadcast deals are already in place in certain territories.

The majority of sponsorship rights to Diamond League meetings are retained by local event organisers, with two main exceptions: title sponsorship and timing sponsorship rights. These are acquired by the IAAF from the Diamond League. The association then tries to sell them. For 2015, the IAAF has failed to find a buyer and will act as title sponsor itself.

Electronics company Samsung was title sponsor in the three years from 2010 to 2012, paying about \$4.5m per year – roughly the amount the IAAF had guaranteed meeting organisers. The current timing sponsor is luxury watch brand Omega. ■

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

AGENCIES

Acquisition of Ufa is part of Lagardère's return to rights fray

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As one informed source put it: “Seamus and Andrew convinced the Ufa management that they are out there to do something big in sports rights and made them believe that they were the guys that they wanted to do it with. They convinced them that this was a very different Lagardère from seven or eight years ago.”

The long-term commitment of Cordes, Müller and Felsing is understood to be contingent upon Lagardère making good on that promise.

Lagardère Unlimited looks close to renewing one of its most important football contracts: WSG's deal with the Asian Football Confederation (*TV Sports Markets* 19:1). And it is fighting hard to hold on to a second: Sportfive's deal with the Confédération Africaine de Football (see separate story, page 2).

But for new properties coming on to the market, there are few signs of the company troubling rival agencies like IMG Events & Media, MP & Silva and Infront Sports & Media, or media groups like beIN Media Group, Fox International Channels and Discovery Communications/Eurosport.

As one rival agency boss put it this week, “they have the people, they have the money. The question is: do they have the appetite for risk? They have not shown that appetite in the last two to three years. There are big tenders coming on the market every year, so it won't be long before we find out.”

However, one source close to the deal countered: “Like any good management operation, you will only see the signs once the deal has happened.”

In November 2011, Lagardère's managing partner, Arnaud Lagardère, said the company was moving away from the rights brokerage business due to Lagardère Unlimited's losses (*TV Sports Markets* 15:21). At the time, Deutsche Bank described the division as a “black

hole” in the company's accounts.

In the intervening four years the rights business has become tougher, but O'Brien and Georgiou appear to have convinced Arnaud Lagardère to return to the fray. Many of those working at ground level for Lagardère Unlimited subsidiaries say there is a noticeable difference in approach – for the better – under their management.

Complementary

In buying Ufa, Lagardère has acquired a reasonably strong football club marketing business, which is complementary to that of the Sportfive operations in France and Germany. At the same time, it has removed a competitor from that market, making future acquisitions less onerous.

The group has also acquired a reasonable, but not exceptional, media-rights portfolio. Like many medium-sized agencies in the last five years, Ufa has been squeezed by the consolidation in the market, which has come to be dominated by five or six very powerful companies.

In January 2014 for example, the agency lost its most important rights contract, when beIN Media Group outbid it for the global rights to the International Handball Federation (*TV Sports Markets* 18:1).

Agency experts say that Ufa's Polish operation is also desirable, despite the loss of its long-term advisory contract for the domestic football league, the Ekstraklasa, last autumn (*TV Sports Markets* 18:17).

More importantly, independent observers say, Lagardère has been able to acquire one of the most experienced sports-rights management teams in the business, one which has worked with virtually every major rights-holder over a period of 20-25 years.

A senior executive at one rights agency said the switch could be a liberation for the Ufa management. “RTL has not taken a completely strategic approach to acquisitions,” he said. “They are not prepared to overpay for content just for the sake of having it.”

One insider said that having to work within a corporate structure like that of the RTL Group, which in turn is owned by media giant Bertelsmann, could make rights acquisitions a tortuous business.

“If you want to invest serious amounts of money, you have to have senior management who understand the business,” he said. “The risk assessment RTL have to undertake as a corporate structure is very complex. If you have someone like Seamus on the other side of the table [when justifying pitches for new business], it makes life easier because he has been doing the same thing for the last 30 years.”

The deal also works well for RTL. The company has been able to offload a non-core asset at what is said to be a decent price. The group had been convinced by Cordes in 2009 to go back into the sports marketing business, but has since decided to focus on core media activities and has been looking to sell Ufa for about a year.

The agency's financial performance has been hit by the loss of some good rights contracts, particularly the handball deal.

In its full-year results for 2014, RTL Group revenue was down slightly year-on-year, from €5.824bn (\$6.465bn) to €5.808bn. It said that higher revenues in its German media business was offset by, among other things, “lower revenues from Ufa Sports.”

A source at one rival agency, which had looked briefly at bidding for Ufa, suggested the company would have been valued somewhere between €5m and €10m, based on ebitda of €1m in 2014.

Going back

Ufa Sports was created in 1992 in Hamburg by Bertelsmann when its film distribution company Ufa Film moved into the sports-rights sphere.

In 2001, Ufa merged with the Canal Plus-owned agency Sport Plus and French marketing agency Groupe Jean-Claude Darmon to create Sportfive.

Lagardère bought Sportfive in December 2006 for €865m from its owners, private equity firm Advent International, RTL, investment bank Goldman Sachs, and management.

In the following years several senior managers, including Cordes, Müller and Felsing, left Sportfive.

In 2008, they persuaded RTL to re-launch Ufa Sports. The following year, Ufa took the IHF handball contract from Sportfive. ■



The most accurate assessment ever of the global sports media rights business

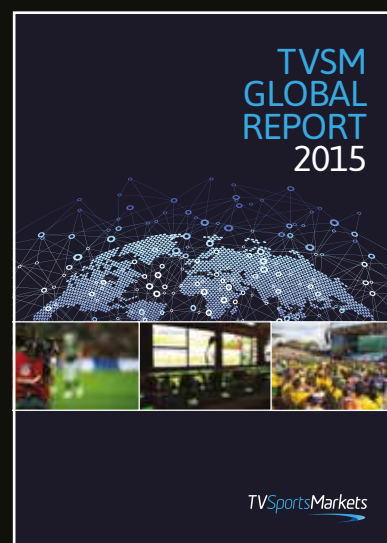
For the first time, *TV Sports Markets* is opening its sports media rights database to provide an analysis of the value of the global market, in the *TVSM Global Report 2015*.

Essential reading for anyone working in sports media, the report will help you understand the global value of the rights industry, and of the top sports, properties and markets. It includes historical and projected future figures, with written analysis looking at the movements in value. The *TVSM Global Report 2015* includes information on:

- The total value of all sports media rights globally
- The world's top sports by media rights value
- The world's top sports properties by media rights value
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TVSportsMarkets

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 30 to May 13**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: Copa América, Serie A & B, English Football League and more**

- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster DirecTV acquired rights across Latin America for the 2016 Copa América Centenario national team tournament. DirecTV, which also holds rights to the 2015 Copa América, will show live coverage of all 32 matches.
- **Football:** Uruguayan commercial broadcasters Teledoce, Saeta TV and Monte Carlo TV acquired rights for the 2015 Copa América in deals with the Full Play agency.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Latin America sealed a three-season extension, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, to its exclusive deal across the continent for Italy's top-tier Serie A. The broadcaster agreed the deal with the MP & Silva agency.
- **Football:** UK commercial broadcaster Channel 5 confirmed a three-season rights deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, to show highlights of the English Football League. Channel 5, which dislodged public-service broadcaster the BBC as the rights-holder, will broadcast a 90-minute highlights programme on Saturdays, immediately before the BBC's *Match of the Day* Premier League highlights programme. Channel 5 will also broadcast highlights of the League Cup and Football League Trophy knockout tournaments.
- **Football:** Italian pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia acquired exclusive rights to the second-tier Serie B for three seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (page 2).
- **Football:** Greek pay-television broadcaster Nova agreed a two-season extension, from 2017-18 to 2018-19, to its deal for rights to the Superleague, the top division in the country (page 2).
- **Football:** Polish internet company Onet and the Polish division of media company Ringier Axel Springer agreed four-season extensions, from 2015-16 to 2018-19, to their digital rights deals for the top-tier Ekstraklasa.
- **Football:** Irish commercial broadcaster TV3 acquired rights for the final of the English FA Cup in a four-year deal, from 2015 to 2018.
- **Football:** Argentinian state broadcaster TV Publica acquired free-to-air rights for both legs of the Copa Libertadores clash between rivals Boca Juniors and River Plate on May 7 and 14. It sublicensed the rights from pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports.
- **Football:** German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF acquired rights for the 2015 Uefa U-21 Championship in the Czech Republic. ARD and ZDF will broadcast Germany's group games against Serbia, Denmark and the Czech Republic, plus knockout matches if the national team progresses.
- **Football:** Basic-tier broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport acquired exclusive rights in France and Belgium for the 2015 Uefa U-21 European Championships. MCS will broadcast 15 games.
- **Football:** Papua New Guinea media company Telikom PNG agreed a deal for Oceania Football Confederation rights over three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The deal includes exclusive rights to OFC-sanctioned tournaments and matches, plus Australian A-League matches. Coverage will be shown on commercial broadcaster EMTV, online and mobile platforms, plus EMTV's digital pay-television channel which will launch in January 2016.

SINCE LAST TIME

- The world welterweight title boxing clash between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao on May 2 set a new US record for pay-per-view buys. Showtime and HBO, which co-produced coverage, generated a total of 4.4m buys – beating the previous best of 2.48m for Mayweather v Oscar De La Hoya in May 2007. Pay-per-view sales generated revenue of \$400m (€359m) in the US and \$40m internationally.
- The European Commission unveiled plans to create a 'digital single market' – a move that could have significant repercussions for the sports media-rights industry. The new approach would outlaw geo-blocking – an approach commonly used by sports properties that sell digital rights on a market-by-market basis. The proposals could be introduced by the end of next year.
- Kayvon Beykpour, the co-founder of Periscope, defended Twitter's new live video streaming application against criticism that it was used to infringe copyright of coverage of the world welterweight title clash between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao on May 2. Periscope received 66 complaints from rights-holders during the fight and took down 30 illegal streams, with

the remaining streams having finished before Periscope had a chance to act, according to Beykpour. The event's co-promoter, Top Rank, will pursue legal action against companies which allowed illegal streams to be shown.

FOOTBALL

- The Argentinian Football Association assumed control of distributing global rights to the domestic Primera División under the government's 'Football for All' scheme, which ensures that matches are shown on domestic free-to-air television. The agreement was part of a deal to increase the government's financial commitment to the scheme by A\$162.5m (€16.4m/\$18.2m) on top of the previously determined figure for this year to a total of A\$1.44bn. The government put a value of A\$40m on the international rights.
- The Chilean Football Association, the ANFP, is seeking to secure outright ownership of Canal del Fútbol, the broadcaster which has exclusive rights to domestic football in the country. The ANFP's Comisión CDF division will propose at a board meeting in June that the association should acquire a 20-per-cent stake in Canal del Fútbol currently held by businessman Jorge Claro to

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 30 to May 13

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

NFL, Fina World Championships, Diamond League, Aussie rules and more

- **American Football:** US network ABC will broadcast its first NFL game in 10 years after pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN agreed to a simulcast deal for the Wild Card Weekend on January 9-10, 2016. The Wild Card play-off game, as well as ESPN's *Monday Night Countdown* pre-game show, will be simulcast on ABC for the first time.
- **Aquatics:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven acquired platform-neutral rights for the Fina World Championships. The deal with Fina, the sport's global governing body, will cover the 2015 and 2017 editions.
- **Athletics:** International sports broadcaster Eurosport secured the rights for the International Association of Athletics Federations' Diamond League series for five years, from 2015 to 2019, in the UK and Germany. The UK deal covers 12 of 14 meetings. The German deal is expected to cover all 14 meetings (page 6).
- **Athletics:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights for highlights of the IAAF Diamond League for three years, from 2015 to 2017, to supplement its live coverage of the series' British meetings (page 6).
- **Aussie Rules:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven struck a deal to show live coverage of an Australian Football League-sanctioned women's exhibition match on August 16 between Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs.
- **Boxing:** Argentinian state broadcaster TV Publica acquired live rights for the world welterweight title fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao which took place on May 2.
- **Canoeing:** The Broadreach Media agency struck a deal to distribute the International Canoe Federation's global media rights.
- **Kickboxing:** Eurosport renewed a rights deal for the Glory Sports International league in an agreement with the Total Sports Asia agency. The deal includes live coverage of various league properties, including the Glory, Glory SuperFight Series and Glory Rewind programmes.
- **Kickboxing:** South Korean commercial broadcaster KBS acquired rights for Glory Sports International properties in a deal with Total Sports Asia.
- **Kickboxing:** Pan-African pay-television operator StarTimes acquired rights for the Glory Sports International league in an agreement with Total Sports Asia. The deal covers 23 countries in sub-Saharan Africa until the end of 2015.
- **Kickboxing:** Pay-television broadcaster Digi Sport acquired rights in Hungary and Romania for the Glory Sports International league in a deal with Total Sports Asia.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** Chinese internet company LeTV acquired rights for the Ultimate Fighting Championship. LeTV Sports will show coverage via applications serving PC, tablet, mobile phone and IPTV platforms.

take its shareholding to 100 per cent. The 20-per-cent stake is thought to be worth about \$180m (€161.5m).

- UK telco BT will add a "small subscription charge" for customers of its BT Sport pay-television channel who wish to access its full package of Uefa Champions League and Europa League coverage from the start of the 2015-16 season, according to chief executive Gavin Patterson.
- Spanish-language US broadcaster Univision Deportes agreed a content partnership with German Bundesliga top-tier football club Bayern Munich. Univision Deportes will offer a Spanish-language version of the club's FCB.tv online platform plus repeats of matches in the Bundesliga, DFB Pokal cup competition and Uefa Champions League.
- The English Football League, comprising the three divisions below the top-tier Premier League, agreed a three-season production partnership, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, with ITN Productions.
- Charles Brown, head of investment company Lake House Group and part of telco PCCW's failed bid to acquire video-sharing website Dailymotion, criticised the French government's "cynicism" in blocking the deal. The collapse of PCCW's bid preceded French media group Vivendi entering into exclusive talks in April to acquire 80 per cent of the platform, which has numerous sports partners, from telco Orange for €217m (\$242m). The French government has a 24.9-per-cent stake in Orange.
- Irish Minister for Communications Alex White launched a public consultation on plans to reserve Ireland's games in the Six Nations rugby union championship for free-to-air television. The Six Nations is currently listed as a 'B' event in Ireland, which means deferred coverage must be available for terrestrial television, and the current rights deal with UK public-service broadcaster the BBC ends after the 2017 Six Nations.
- The Azerbaijan State News Agency, Azertac, struck a deal to become the official news agency of the 2015 European Games in Baku in its home country. Azertac will produce a video news service that will be available via a dedicated Baku 2015 section on the agency's website.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- Pay-television operator Charter Communications is in talks with banks to secure a debt package of between \$25bn (€22.4bn) and \$30bn to aid a merger with fellow cable-television operator Time Warner Cable. Last month, board members of TWC and Comcast

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 30 to May 13

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

European Games, Rugby World Cup, America's Cup, taekwondo and more

- **Multi-sport:** Dutch public-service broadcaster NOS acquired rights for the inaugural European Games in 2015 in a deal with the organisers of the event.
- **Multi-sport:** The Setanta Sports Eurasia division of international sports broadcaster Setanta Sports acquired rights in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for the 2015 European Games.
- **Multi-sport:** Austrian public-service broadcaster ORF acquired exclusive free-to-air rights for the 2015 European Games and will show a daily hour-long highlights programme on its ORF Sport Plus channel.
- **Multi-sport:** Public-service broadcaster Česká Televize and pay-television broadcaster Digi Sport acquired rights in the Czech Republic for the 2015 European Games.
- **Multi-sport:** Free-to-air Lithuanian broadcaster TV6, owned by Modern Times Group, acquired rights for the 2015 European Games.
- **Multi-sport:** Cuban state broadcaster Instituto Cubano de Radio y Televisión acquired rights for the 2015 European Games.
- **Rugby Union:** Eurosport acquired exclusive rights in Germany for the 2015 Rugby World Cup. Eurosport Germany will broadcast a minimum of 20 games, including the opening game and final.
- **Sailing:** Pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired live rights in the UK and Ireland for the events leading up to and including the 2017 America's Cup, starting this summer.
- **Sailing:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC struck a deal to show highlights of all racing under the banner of the 2017 America's Cup.
- **Taekwondo:** The World Taekwondo Federation agreed a rights deal with South Korean sports channel SBS Sports, which is operated by commercial broadcaster SBS. The channel will show coverage of several WTF events including the 2015 World Championships and the World Grand Prix series and finals. SBS Sports will also provide the WTF with production services.
- **Tennis:** Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE extended a rights deal for the Madrid Open for four years, from 2016 to 2019. TVE's sports channel, Teledporte, will show live coverage of at least four men's matches and three women's matches each year. TVE's free-to-air channel La 1 will show daily highlights. If a Spanish player reaches the semi-finals or finals of the men's tournament, the contests will be shown live on La 1, which will broadcast live coverage of any women's final featuring a Spanish player.
- **Tennis:** Canadian pay-television broadcaster Rogers Sportsnet renewed and expanded its rights deal for the Rogers Cup men's and women's tournaments in the country for five years, from 2016 to 2020. The new deal gives Rogers platform-neutral rights to every round. French-language coverage will be shown by Rogers' broadcast partner TVA Sports.
- International media company Discovery Communications plans to launch a new regional version of its pan-European Eurosport channel in Norway later this year, according to Dee Forbes, the head of Discovery Networks Western Europe.
- The IMG Events & Media agency expanded the reach of its action sports and lifestyle channel EDGEsport by agreeing a carriage deal with Abu Dhabi Media Company.
- Boguslaw Biszof, the chief executive of the Ekstraklasa, football's top division in Poland, expects the next cycle of rights, starting with the 2015-16 season, to generate record income for the league. The league has until mid-July to finalise the sale of all of the rights. The MP & Silva agency is advising the league on the sales process.
- Australian commercial broadcaster Ten is preparing to launch a bid for rights to the NRL rugby league competition and AFL Aussie rules league after chief executive Hamish McLennan identified a lack of major Australian sport on the channel over the winter months as a problem. McLennan said that Ten could be "flexible and creative" in negotiating for the rights.
- New Australian video-on-demand subscription service Stan could link up with commercial broadcaster Nine in bids for sports rights, according to chief executive Mike Sneesby. Stan is owned by Nine and news agency Fairfax Media.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The International Olympic Committee launched a sales process for the rights to the 2018 winter and 2020 summer Olympic Games across Europe, excluding France and the UK. IMG is acting as a consultant during the process. Bids are due by June 15. Bidders will be asked to outline how they would support the IOC's Olympic Channel, which could launch later this year. The IOC will consider bids on a multi-territory basis and on a country-by-country basis.
- US pay-television broadcaster ESPN is not expected to retain rights for the British Open golf tournament beyond 2017. IMG is trying to broker a 10-year deal, from 2018 to 2027, on behalf of the R&A, which operates the tournament. A deal is expected to be confirmed before this year's championship in July, with the Fox Sports division of the Fox network and the NBC network, which operates pay-television service Golf Channel, among the interested parties.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The Learfield Sports agency, which markets rights for numerous US colleges, signed a partnership with social media service Snapchat. The agency will launch Snapchat Live Stories on the platform, allowing social media users to contribute personal perspectives through video and photo 'snaps' to one collective story.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 30 to May 13**MEDIA RIGHTS 4****World Triathlon Series, university sport, Atlantic 10 and Boise State**

- **Triathlon:** The International Triathlon Union renewed a deal for the IEC in Sports agency to distribute rights for the World Triathlon Series for four years, from 2017 to 2020.
- **University Sport:** The International University Sport Federation, Fisú, struck a rights deal with the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union for three years, from 2015 to 2017. The agreement includes the 2015 and 2017 editions of Fisú's flagship multi-sport event, the summer Universiade, in Gwangju, South Korea, and Taipei, Chinese Taipei, plus the 2017 winter Universiade in Almaty, Kazakhstan.
- **US College Sport:** The Atlantic 10 Conference reached a multi-year rights deal with media company Sinclair Networks Group, starting this autumn. Sinclair's American Sports Network will show at least 52 of the conference's events per year across seven sports, including baseball, softball, volleyball and men's and women's basketball and football. The deal includes television and online platforms, with ASN also producing two weekly 30-minute magazine programmes.
- **US College Sport:** KTVB-TV, a regional cable-television affiliate of the NBC network, struck a five-season extension, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, with Boise State University. KTVB-TV agreed the deal with Bronco Sports Properties, which is operated by the Learfield Sports agency. Programming will be shown on KTVB and sister channel KTFT.
- Several advertising agencies in Australia criticised the "aggression" adopted by some of the country's sports properties in trying to drive significant increases in rights fees. Simon Ryan, chief executive of the Carat agency, said rights deals were "getting out of control." Henry Tajer, global chief executive of the IPG Mediabrands agency, added that the AFL Aussie rules league, the NRL rugby league competition and Cricket Australia would "implode" if they "don't moderate their aggression for increased valuation on their rights."
- The RCS Sport agency, the organiser and commercial rights-holder of the Giro d'Italia cycling race, agreed a deal with the Velon umbrella group of WorldTour teams for on-bike footage to be used during the 2015 edition. Velon, which represents 11 teams, will deliver footage for RCS Sport across eight of the Giro's 21 stages. The footage will be used on television and digital platforms.
- The International Ice Hockey Federation's 2015 World Championship will be broadcast in nearly 160 territories, according to the Infront Sports & Media agency, the event's exclusive rights distribution partner. Infront expects the cumulative audience for the tournament, which is taking place in the Czech Republic cities of Prague and Ostrava, to surpass last year's total thanks to new deals with Italian state broadcaster Rai and pay-television broadcasters Fox Sports in the Netherlands, Sportcast in Chinese Taipei and Astro in Brunei and Malaysia.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- International sports broadcaster Eurosport made a number of appointments aimed at integrating its operations with parent company Discovery Communications. Arnaud Simon, previously managing director of Eurosport France and director of television content, was promoted to senior vice-president of content and production for the Eurosport Group. Laurent Prud'homme was promoted to senior vice-president of rights acquisitions and syndication, while Jonathan Davies will join the group as managing director of advertiser partnerships for Eurosport and Discovery Pan-Europe. Former development director for Eurosport, Julien Bergeaud, was appointed senior vice-president and country manager for France and sports rights in southern Europe. • Rajesh Sethi, chief executive of pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports, was promoted to the same role at parent company Taj TV.

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2nd Floor, 5 Thomas More Square, London E1W 1YW
© TV Sports Markets Ltd 2015.
Printed by Rapidity, Citybridge House,
235-245 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7JD



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