

RUGBY UNION

Sanzar negotiates tough home markets and wins big in UK, France and Middle East

By Richard Welbirg

Southern hemisphere rugby rights have increased significantly in global value, driven by explosive growth in the UK, France and the Middle East, and supported by strong returns in difficult core markets.

Sanzar, the joint venture between the rugby unions of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina, will earn at least \$756m (€700m) from its global rights over the five years from 2016 to 2020, or \$151.2m per year. Argentina became a Sanzar member this year.

This is a 73-per-cent increase on its deals across the 2011 to 2015 cycle, which were worth about \$437m, or \$87.4m per year. Fees at least doubled in every non-core territory, with the

exception of Italy and Japan.

Included in the Sanzar package is: the Super Rugby pan-regional club competition; the round-robin Rugby Championship between the four nations; in-bound Tests (against touring nations) in the core territories of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa; and those countries' domestic competitions.

Each of the core territories retains the income allocated to its domestic competitions and in-bound Tests in its local deals. Domestic rights in Australia and New Zealand are sold as part of the Sanzar process, while the South African Rugby Union sells its own domestic rights independently.

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FOOTBALL

'Existential threat' helps league treble value

By Robin Jellis

The threat of an OTT player entering the local television market helped Israel's Premier League to a 198-per-cent increase in the value of its media rights last month.

It is an enormous increase for the country's top-tier domestic league in a market which has long been dominated by two pay-television players – Charlton and the Sports Channel – who rarely bid competitively against one another.

The huge increase in value was driven by the aggression of local telco Partner Communications, which operates under the brand name Orange. Partner sought

Israeli Premier League rights ahead of the launch of an OTT platform in the country.

The league agreed a four-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, with Charlton, worth ILS126.5m (€29.9m/\$32.3m) per season – the most valuable deal in the history of Israeli football.


The broadcaster will be required to pay a 10-per-cent premium on the deal due to a court ruling last month, taking the total value to ILS139.15m per season.

The deal covers all rights. The league has the option to extend the contract for a

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Revamped League Cup gives BT Scottish exclusivity

Securing some Scottish club football on an exclusive basis was the primary reason BT Sport invested in rights to the revamped Scottish League Cup competition.

The UK pay-television broadcaster last month agreed to pay just under £2m (€2.7m/\$2.9m) per season for four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20.

This is more than double the £900,000 per season which public-service broadcaster the BBC pays in its current three-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

BT will televise 13 live matches per season, compared to the BBC's four. The deal was agreed with the Scottish Professional Football League.

BT shows 30 games per season from the top-tier Scottish Premier League, but its rights are not exclusive; rival pay-television operator Sky also shows 30 live games per season.

In September, the two broadcasters extended their five-season deals for an additional three seasons, from 2017-18 to 2019-20 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:17). Sky is not thought to have bid strongly, if at all, for the League Cup rights.

There were two other factors behind BT's acquisition, but neither were critical to the deal. First, the fact it already produces live matches from the Scottish Premier League means its production costs are smaller than if it had been a standalone contract.

Second, the new cup format creates six matches in July, a time of year when little top football is played. This could help reduce churn among subscribers in Scotland, albeit to a modest degree.

From next season, the League Cup will consist of eight groups of five teams playing each other once each in a round-robin format.

The group stage will involve all 38 teams not involved in qualifier matches for Uefa club competitions, plus the winners of the non-professional

Highland League and Lowland League.

All matches ending in a draw will go straight to a penalty shoot-out, with the winner picking up an additional point. The rule is unique in world football.

The eight group winners and four best runners-up go into a second round, where they are joined by the four Uefa qualifying clubs.

The tournament becomes a knock-out competition from the second round. The league consulted widely about the revamp, including talking to prospective broadcast partners.

BT will show six matches from the group stages between July 16 and 30. It will show seven from the rest of the tournament, including the semi-finals and the final. ■

PPTV pays out for UFC

The Chinese digital market's seemingly never-ending growth boosted another property last month, as the Ultimate Fighting Championship agreed a lucrative deal with PPTV Sports.

Internet operator PPTV's agreement covers all UFC content, and is worth between \$7m (€6.5m) and \$8m per year over five years. The deal begins this March and runs until February 2021.

The deal was agreed directly with the UFC, the mixed martial arts promotion.

Currently, rights to UFC events are shared between PPTV and rival Le Sports. Le Sports's current two-year deal, which began in March 2014 and ends next month, is worth between \$100,000 and \$200,000 per year. PPTV is thought to have a similar deal in place, in both duration and rights fee.

Local experts put the size of the increase down to the growth in the country's digital market: competition is fierce as players attempt to mark out territory.

The UFC also has a deal with internet operator Sina. Sina pays a nominal fee: it will expand its digital partnership with the UFC in China, managing the promotion's Chinese web presence and collaborating on original content.

The deal gives Sina non-exclusive live rights to UFC events featuring Chinese fighters on the card, but at present the promotion has only a handful of Chinese fighters and none in its official rankings. ■

Muted response to MCL

Weak returns for the Masters Champions League, a Twenty20 tournament contested by cricket legends and hosted in the UAE, may reflect an Indian market reaching saturation with the format.

Pay-television broadcaster Sony earlier this month struck a deal for exclusive rights to the inaugural MCL across the Indian subcontinent. It will run from January 28 until February 13.

Sony is not paying a rights fee. It has, however, advanced the tournament's organisers a sum against their share of advertising revenues, thought to be 80:20 in favour of the MCL.

One source told *TV Sports Markets* advertising revenue from the Indian market would likely be at most \$80,000 (€74,000) to \$100,000.

The MCL faces one main problem: it overlaps with the Indian national team's tour of Australia, and with the Pakistan Super League Twenty20 tournament, which runs from February 4 to 24 and is held at the same UAE stadia.

Sony already holds rights to the Caribbean Premier League, South Africa's Ram Slam T20 Challenge and the Indian Premier League. Pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports shows the PSL and its Bangladeshi equivalent.

The IPL is one of the key properties in Indian sport, but the appetite for competitions of a similar format spawned by its success is limited. One local expert said "too much cricket without context" meant broadcasters attached little value to these rights.

The MCL's international rights will be sold by the Sporty Solutionz agency, which is working on a commission basis. ■

RUGBY UNION

Sanzar will earn 73% more from global TV rights in 2016-2020

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All other revenue from Sanzar sales is put into a central pot, from which Argentina takes a small cut before the remaining income is split equally between the Australian, New Zealand and South African unions.

Sanzar's sales process was led by then-chief executive Greg Peters. He was advised on the sale of rights in major markets by Australian consultant Jon Marquard.

Deals covering the core countries and the UK were agreed in principle by autumn 2014. Peters announced he would leave Sanzar in May 2015, and took up a position as general manager of the Argentine rugby union – the Unión Argentina de Rugby – in August. By the time he left, deals had been agreed in principle for all major markets.

Several rugby experts said Sanzar rights had historically been undersold, and that the 2016-20 income accurately represented the property's value. Increased fees are seen as a result of Sanzar running a more professional sales process, particularly undertaking detailed analysis of non-core markets for the first time.

From 2006 to 2010, Sanzar earned \$323m, or \$64.6m per year, from deals with Rupert Murdoch's News Corp and South African pay-television broadcaster SuperSport, covering the three core countries plus the UK & Ireland.

Over the 10 years from 1996 to 2005, Sanzar sold global rights to News in a deal worth \$555m, or \$55m per year. Payments rose incrementally, so that News paid \$340m over the final five years, and \$82m in the final year of the deal.

Rugby union's top properties have increased in value in recent times, with fees rising for the English Premiership's domestic and international rights; the French Top 14 and ProD2's domestic rights; the Six Nations in the UK and Ireland; and Europe's club rugby

Sanzar media rights values in major territories, 2016-2020 (\$m per year)		
Territory	Broadcaster	Rights fee
Australia	Fox Sports	24
New Zealand	Sky New Zealand	32
South Africa	SuperSport	45
CORE TOTAL		101
UK & Ireland	Sky	29
CORE + UK		130
The Americas	ESPN	5
France	Canal Plus	13.1
Middle East and North Africa	OSN	
Pan-Asia	Setanta	2.4
Japan	J Sports	0.4
Italy	Sky Italia	0.3
INTERNATIONAL		21.2
TOTAL		151.2

Source: TV Sports Markets Rights Tracker
Exchange rates: £1 = €1.360 = \$1.469
Note: The values for the three core territories include domestic and Sanzar rights.

competitions in deals around the world.

One distributor of rugby rights said the sport as a whole was moving away from a "blazer brigade" selling rights based on personal relationships, to a more professional approach.

Core countries

Sanzar's main challenge in the sales process was that the pay-television markets in its three core territories are each dominated by one main player.

Australia was one of the more difficult markets. BeIN Media Group showed no interest in the rights. Commercial channels Seven and Nine showed more interest than in previous years, but made no concrete offers. Commercial channel Ten, which competed against Fox Sports for the rights in the previous cycle, is now part-owned by the pay-television broadcaster.

Nonetheless, Sanzar earned a 46-percent increase from Fox, which will pay just over \$24m per season from 2016 to 2020, up from \$16.4m per season in the previous cycle.

The deal includes rights to the domestic top-tier National Rugby Championship, but there is no value allocated to it. The Australian Rugby Union created the tournament in 2014 to provide a player development stage between Australian

club rugby and Super Rugby.

In the last cycle Fox initially sold on free-to-air rights to Australian home internationals to Nine, with Ten taking over the contract when Nine pulled out.

Ten paid A\$2.5m (€1.7m/\$1.8m) per year. It has agreed a deal to sublicense rights from Fox in the new cycle at an incremental increase. As part of the deal it will also show one weekly Super Rugby match on free-to-air for the first time, albeit on a delayed basis.

In New Zealand, pay-television broadcaster Sky increased its fee from \$20m per year in the 2011-15 cycle to just over \$32m per year from 2016 to 2020. It is unclear how much of Sky's fee covers Sanzar properties and how much is for the domestic top-tier National Provincial Championship and in-bound Tests.

The per-year increase of just over 60 percent is astonishing given Sky's control of the domestic market. Online subscription service Coliseum was interested in Sanzar rights but lacks the ability to produce that number of domestic matches.

Sky is one of the most profitable broadcasters in the world, and the increased fee represents the importance of rugby to its business model.

Some sources suggested the influence of New Zealand Rugby was key, with Sky conscious of the importance to its

business of a successful – and well-funded – All Blacks national side.

Unlike the other two unions, Saru sells rights to its top domestic competition, the Currie Cup, independently – although the sales process ran simultaneously and with reference to Sanzar's in this cycle.

Ahead of the previous cycle, Saru took its domestic rights out of the Sanzar package in order to profit from telco Telkom Media's attempts to break into the South African broadcast market.

It earned about \$90m from SuperSport over the 2011-15 cycle (*TV Sports Markets* 12:3). But for the new cycle SuperSport faced little competition, and the rights are thought to have increased only slightly, to about \$95m.

Sanzar was more successful in its endeavour, increasing SuperSport's fee from \$110m, or \$22m per year, to about \$130m, or \$26m per year.

SuperSport will have more locally-relevant content in the new deal: a sixth South African team will join Super Rugby from 2016.

Europe & the Middle East

Sanzar briefly considered selling the rights outside the three core territories to an agency. The Pitch International agency is thought to have made an offer for global rights – excluding Australia, New Zealand and South Africa – worth about \$95m over the five years, or \$19m per year.

Sanzar ended up earning more than two-and-a-half times that amount. It found its greatest growth in two deals: the first with Sky in the UK & Ireland; the second a joint deal with Canal Plus and OSN for the rights in France and the Middle East and North Africa respectively.

Competition between Sky and its main pay-television rival BT Sport saw the UK rights fee grow by 640 per cent, from £2.7m (€3.7m/\$4m) per year in the 2011-15 cycle to about £20m per year from 2016 to 2020 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:20).

BeIN bid \$65m for the rights in a deal which would have covered both France and Mena, which forced Canal Plus and OSN to team up. Their \$65.5m fee over the five years is more than four times the total of the 2011-15 cycle, in which Canal Plus paid \$11m for rights in France and OSN paid \$2.5m in Mena.

The rights provide key content for Canal Plus and OSN: rugby is an important subscription driver for Canal Plus, while Sanzar is one of OSN's top properties, alongside International Cricket Council rights and WWE wrestling.

In the 2011-15 cycle, Sanzar made matches available on an online subscription basis in territories where there was no linear broadcast deal – mostly in Europe.

It has chosen not to do so in the new cycle because of the potential impact of regulatory changes in the European Union's digital single market; this could affect its lucrative deals covering France and the UK.

Sanzar also has a five-year deal, from 2016 to 2020, in Italy with pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia. The deal is worth between \$250,000 and \$300,000 per year, a similar fee to the 2011-15 cycle.

The Americas

A deal with international sports broadcaster ESPN has united Sanzar coverage across both North and South America in the 2016-20 cycle.

ESPN is understood to be paying about five times the combined value of its past deal covering Latin America, and deals with pay-television broadcasters DirecTV in the US and Rogers Sportsnet in Canada.

The increase was driven by growing interest in the sport in Argentina and the US; the first sign of interest from rival broadcasters – Fox Sports Latin America and TyC Sports – in Latin America; the entry of Argentina's Jaguares into Super Rugby from 2016; and the premium ESPN paid to be the sole rights-holder across its core territories.

Asia

Rugby-focused pay-television broadcaster Setanta Sports Asia renewed its Sanzar deal in Asia before it was acquired by US media and entertainment company Discovery Communications in June last year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:12).

It is thought to be paying just under \$12m over the new cycle, or about \$2.4m per year. This is about four times what the pay-television broadcaster paid from 2011 to 2015, when its deal was worth about \$3m, or \$600,000 per year.

In the new cycle, Setanta immediately sublicensed rights across the Pacific Islands to telco Digicel.

In the 2011-15 cycle, Setanta sold the rights to the IMG agency for about \$900,000, or \$180,000 per year.

Discovery is currently in negotiations to sublicense digital rights across the region to New Zealand-based Coliseum.

From 2016 Japan will supply a team, the Sunwolves, to the expanded 18-team Super Rugby competition. But their participation has not shifted the dial on rights fees in the country.

Although Coliseum is thought to have bid, only pay-television broadcaster J Sports – Sanzar's long-term partner in the country – was both interested and in a position to meet the Sunwolves' host broadcasting commitments.

Negotiations dragged on over J Sports' reluctance to pay the costs required to meet Sanzar's production quality requirements. The two parties finally agreed a deal, with Sanzar underwriting the cost of eight of the 15 cameras required for each Super Rugby match.

J Sports's fee has remained flat in a new deal at about \$2m, or \$400,000 per year. ■

FOOTBALL

Charlton pays big to renew league rights, looks to refinance

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fifth season, 2020-21, on the same terms.

This is a massive uplift on the ILS42.5m per season the league currently earns from four four-season deals, from 2012-13 to 2015-16. It has deals with public-service broadcaster the Israeli Broadcasting Authority (ILS15m per season), Charlton (ILS17m per season), the Sports Channel (ILS6.5m per season) and basic-tier sports broadcaster One (ILS4m per season).

The deal also vindicates the league's decision to turn down a bid in spring 2014 from Charlton to renew its package of rights. Then, Charlton offered to renew its existing rights, covering six matches each week in a three-season deal from 2016-17 to 2018-19, for ILS18m per

season – a less-than six-per-cent increase.

Dirk Schluez, managing director and founder of the Davnis Sports agency, pitched for a consultancy role with the league at the time when Charlton bid to extend its contract. He advised the league to turn down the offer.

Schluez told *TV Sports Markets*: “I am very glad for the Israeli football clubs that my strategic advice towards the league in April 2014 – to realign all rights packages in one common sales cycle and to wait for the telcos to enter the market – was right and followed, and now leads to higher revenues.”

He added that the increase was “a solid result and reflects the relevance of Israeli football in its home market” and that the deal “corresponds to the increased licence fees of other major sports rights in Israel” (see box).

“This result is solely driven by the brave and aggressive bidding of a new market player in Orange/Partner,” he said.

A source close to the league agreed the increase was driven by Partner, and said the telco’s aggression “was an existential threat to the existing cable and DTH platforms” – Hot and Yes respectively.

The source added that Hot and Yes may have used Charlton as a proxy: neither platform is allowed to bid for the rights in accordance with Israeli legislation.

Hot offers cable television channels, but also has triple- and quad-play bouquets. Hot has about 850,000 subscribers. Satellite operator Yes has about 650,000.

Bid process

Bids were due by December 8, but the sales process was delayed due to an injunction taken out by Partner, contesting demands placed on it by the league.

The league said Partner would have to pay an additional 20 per cent on top of its rights fee were it to win the rights, in order to compensate for lost sponsorship revenue as Partner has no existing subscriber base. Partner contested this in court on December 17, but the court ruled in favour of the league, with additional conditions.

The court said that winning bidders with fewer than 250,000 subscribers would have to pay a 20-per-cent premium, while winning bidders with more than

Premier League benefits from Partner’s planned launch

The English Premier League took advantage of strong competition in the Israeli market last month, securing an enormous rights-fee increase.

Just before the sale of Israeli Premier League rights (see main story), the English league opted to renew with pay-television broadcaster Charlton.

The three-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, will be worth about \$7.5m (€6.9m) per season. This represents a 400-per-cent increase on the current value of the rights. Charlton’s existing three-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, is worth \$1.5m per season.

Charlton and local telco Partner Communications, which operates under the brand name Orange, are understood to have been the only two bidders. Partner is hoping to launch an OTT platform in Israel and had sought rights to both the English and Israeli Premier Leagues.

In the current cycle, the Premier League also has a three-season clips rights deal with basic-tier sports broadcaster One. The new deal with Charlton is thought to include all rights.

The increase continues the trend of Europe’s top football leagues securing more lucrative deals from the Israeli market over the past year or so.

In October 2014, when the market was still relatively flat, Charlton renewed rights to the Bundesliga in a two-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2016-17. That deal is worth about €500,000 per season, up from €400,000 per season in its previous three-season deal, which ran from 2012-13 to 2014-15 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:18).

250,000 subscribers would have to pay a 10-per-cent premium. Charlton has close to 300,000 subscribers. As such, it will pay a 10-per-cent premium, meaning the total fee will be ILS139.15m per season.

The league eventually invited bids on December 20. Five companies paid the ILS15,000 fee required to participate in the auction: Charlton, Partner, the Sports Channel, IBA and the Mediapro agency.

IBA did not bid – it is in a poor financial position and only wanted to bid

This summer, the established pay-television broadcasters – Charlton and the Sports Channel – were surprised by One’s aggressive move for Spain’s LaLiga rights. The three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, is worth €3m per season, up from the Sports Channel’s €1.2m-per-season deal (*TV Sports Markets* 19:23).

Charlton holds rights to Italy’s Serie A in a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, worth €500,000 per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:19).

Meanwhile, France’s Ligue 1 agreed a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, worth €750,000 per season with the Sports Channel. This is almost double the €400,000 per season paid by telco Altice in the previous cycle, from 2012-13 to 2014-15. Altice sublicensed its rights in the 2014-15 season to One for €400,000.

Football properties are not the only ones to have benefited from the competition which has recently developed. Last week, the National Basketball Association signed a three-season renewal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, with the Sports Channel, worth close to \$2.5m per season.

This is more than double the value of the Sports Channel’s existing three-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, worth an average of \$1.2m per season.

There was strong interest in the rights from Partner, while Charlton and One also studied the property. But the association was happy to renew with a long-term partner in the Sports Channel, while earning a significant rights-fee increase. ■

for free-to-air rights – other broadcasters were bidding for all rights.

Mediapro had studied the possibility of establishing a league channel, but chose not to bid in the auction process.

Oliver Seibert, Mediapro’s director of media and new business, told *TV Sports Markets* this week that the agency had held lengthy talks with the league over the possibility of jointly establishing a channel to show matches. He said the channel would have been similar to that

set up by Fox International Channels with the Eredivisie, the Dutch top tier.

After the first round of bidding, Partner is understood to have been ahead with an offer of just over ILS70m per season. Charlton had offered about ILS65m per season, while the Sports Channel had offered about ILS60m per season.

The Sports Channel did not bid in the second round as it was up against much higher bids from both Charlton and Partner. The Sports Channel's cut-off point was about ILS70m per season. Partner's final offer was between ILS123m and ILS124m per season.

The rights were sold by the Israeli Professional Football League.

Charlton refinancing

Charlton has two main ways in which it can refinance its investment: it could seek more valuable syndication deals with Hot and Yes, and/or it could agree sublicensing deals with other broadcasters.

Under the terms of its deal, the top-pick match each week must be shown free-to-air. Charlton could make its Sport 1 and Sport 2 channels available free-to-air, but this would have little financial benefit – it is unlikely to attract subscribers and would not substantially increase advertising revenue.

Charlton could sublicense this match and weekly highlights rights. The most likely buyer of the weekly live free-to-air game and the highlights is IBA. IBA currently pays ILS15m per season for these rights.

The Sports Channel may also be interested. The broadcaster is owned by the RGE media group, which last May bought a controlling stake in commercial broadcaster Channel 10.

One local expert said the maximum the weekly live free-to-air match would be worth in a new deal is ILS25m per season.

Charlton could also sublicense other matches, not restricted to coverage by free-to-air broadcasters, to either the Sports Channel or even Partner.

Some sources have suggested that Hot and Yes may have been backing Charlton's offer as they feared the market entrance of Partner – which threatened their business models. Thus, Charlton could possibly use the threat of a sublicensing deal with

Partner to secure greater syndication fees from Hot and Yes.

Charlton has revenue share agreements with both Hot and Yes for the platforms to carry its channels. The deals are very lucrative for the broadcaster – one source claimed the revenue share split was 75:25 in favour of Charlton for all subscribers to its pay-television channels. Charlton's rivals are instead paid fixed costs.

Charlton is also seeking to increase its subscription costs, but is being met with fierce resistance. The Israeli Council for Cable TV and Satellite Broadcasting is set to discuss whether or not pay-television subscription costs can be increased.

Following the sale of the rights, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu said subscription costs would not be raised. ■

FOOTBALL

Coupe de la Ligue secures top dollar from joint deal

By Robin Jellis

Canal Plus's recent loss of English Premier League rights in France helped the value of Coupe de la Ligue media rights increase by 119 per cent last month.

The Coupe de la Ligue – the French league cup – was bought jointly by public-service broadcaster France Télévisions and pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus in a four-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, for €23m (\$24.8m) per season.

The rights were awarded after one round of bidding. The deal was agreed with the Ligue de Football Professionnel, the French football league. The league issued a tender on November 13, with bids due by December 14. The league's reserve price is thought to have been between €18m and €20m per season.

France Télévisions' current four-season deal, from 2012-13 to 2015-16, is worth €10.5m per season. The increase was driven by Canal Plus's desire to secure more domestic football rights – the deal came just one month after the broadcaster lost its grip on English Premier League rights in the country to telco Altice.

Altice will show the Premier League in

France from 2016-17 to 2018-19 in a deal worth €120m per season – almost double the €60.3m per season Canal Plus pays from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

Canal Plus is thought to have feared an offer for the Coupe de la Ligue rights from one of Altice or pay-television rival beIN Sports, but only the latter bid.

Canal Plus has long sought the Coupe de la Ligue rights. The last time they were sold, in January 2012, the broadcaster offered €15m per season – almost 43 per cent more than France Télévisions. The league, however, favoured the exposure offered by the state broadcaster.

The deal is seen as a good one for all parties. Canal Plus has secured a domestic football property at a time when there is little strong content on the market. France Télévisions has retained a property it has shown for many years and has lowered its rights fee, albeit for fewer matches. The league, meanwhile, has hugely increased its media-rights revenue and also maintained some free-to-air exposure.

Although not considered a premium property, there is still relatively high interest in the tournament. Last year's final, between Paris Saint-Germain and Bastia, was watched by 4.1m people. The Coupe de la Ligue is contested by all teams from the top three divisions.

Of the €23m-per-season total, Canal Plus is expected to pay about €16m per season and France Télévisions about €7m per season. The two broadcasters will split additional marketing costs of €900,000 per season equally: this will cover pitch-side advertising boards and branding during press conferences.

Coverage

Under the deal, France Télévisions will show the first-pick match from the round of 16, the quarter-final, the semi-final and the final. It will also provide simultaneous coverage of seven matches in the round of 32 across its various regional channels.

The state broadcaster will show 11 matches in total, down from about 20. All matches will be shown by Canal Plus.

France Télévisions will cover the costs of producing the matches it shows, which are thought to cost between €80,000 and €100,000 each. Canal Plus will cover the production costs of all other matches. ■

OLYMPIC GAMES

IOC's long-term trend continues with latest deal in Brazil

By Richard Welbirg

An eight-Games deal with Brazilian media group Globo has helped the International Olympic Committee lock in the gains of Rio 2016 for the long-term.

The deal covers the 2018 winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, the 2020 summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan, and the 2022 winter Games in Beijing, China. Also included are the summer Games in 2024, 2028 and 2032, and the winter Games in 2026 and 2030 – for which hosting rights are yet to be awarded.

The total value of the deal is about \$600m (€556m). On average, for each two Games, Globo will pay about \$150m plus airtime for rights across all platforms.

However, its free-to-air rights will be non-exclusive. Globo can afford to give up free-to-air exclusivity because of its dominance in that sector.

This is the same structure as the IOC's deal with Globo for the 2014 Games in Sochi, Russia, and the 2016 Games, which will be hosted in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Globo and commercial channel Bandeirantes – the media group's traditional partner for large sporting events – are paying \$140m plus \$40m in airtime for Olympic sponsors for the 2014 and 2016 Games (*TV Sports Markets* 13:16). The new deal represents a seven-per-cent increase per two-Games cycle for the IOC.

The new deal, finalised last month, was brokered for Globo by Michael Payne, formerly the IOC's marketing director.

Payne told *TV Sports Markets*: "Ever since the IOC showed its willingness to explore long-term deals, Globo has looked at the potential. They were investing so much in Rio they wanted to make sure they would have some legacy post-Games."

The deal helps the IOC ensure its legacy planning after the 2016 games – which will be hosted in Rio – without blocking the opportunity to work with

other free-to-air broadcasters.

It also locks in significant income. The IOC's income from its deal covering 2014 and 2016 is inflated by Rio's hosting. Rights to the 2010 and 2012 Games were worth considerably less: \$60m in a deal with commercial channel Record.

The 2006 and 2008 Games were sold to the Organización de Televisión Iberoamericana, a pan-regional broadcast union, for \$29.75m. Globo and Bandeirantes are thought to have contributed about \$12m to this total.

Free-to-air

Non-exclusive free-to-air rights to the 2014 and 2016 Games in Brazil were acquired by Record for \$30m.

Though the IOC has not ruled out a deal for the remaining free-to-air rights over the same term as its agreement with Globo, it is not a priority. If it chooses to do so, Record is the only feasible buyer.

Timo Lumme, the IOC's managing director of television and marketing, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "In terms of timing to begin discussions, there are no immediate plans and we'll be guided by the market, but when we do we would consider interest from broadcasters who are best able to support our objectives." ■

FOOTBALL

State interference clears way for CCTV World Cup deal

By Richard Welbirg and Frank Dunne

The Chinese government has intervened in the sale of media rights to the 2018 and 2022 FIFA World Cups in the country, ensuring a deal will eventually be struck with state broadcaster CCTV.

Rights in China were tendered by the Infront Sports & Media agency across August and September last year. Almost all the major players in the Chinese rights market are thought to have bid, including internet companies Le Sports, PPTV, Sina and Tencent.

One well-placed source said Infront had agreed a deal in principle with one of the bidders by email.

However, the companies were informed by the government that they could not broadcast a World Cup and should take this into consideration when proceeding with their bids. The companies pulled out and the tender process collapsed.

The deal with CCTV is expected to cover both the 2018 and 2022 World Cups. The broadcaster paid about \$125m (€116m) for the 2010 and 2014 World Cups (*TV Sports Markets* 15:22).

One local expert said a deal with CCTV is unlikely to be worth any less than \$150m, but this is considerably less than Infront and Fifa, world football's governing body, could have expected to earn from a competitive tender process.

In October 2014, China's State Council issued guidelines aimed at boosting the country's sports industry through deregulation, allowing private investment and introducing preferential treatment for sport as a developing industry.

The guidelines said the government would "relax the rebroadcast rights of sporting events, allowing each television network to directly purchase or resell their broadcast rights to domestic and international events, except the Olympic Games, Asian Games and FIFA World Cup".

How the rules would be applied to these three properties was open to interpretation. One executive at a Chinese online player told *TV Sports Markets* they had believed "times had changed", and that they would be allowed to bid against CCTV, even if some rights were later sublicensed to the broadcaster.

A director at a major rights-holder said there were two significant points raised by the breakdown of the negotiations.

First, that an agency as experienced – and as deeply embedded in the Chinese market – as Infront could misread the market so completely. This, he said, demonstrated how complex and sensitive the market remains.

Second, that the huge economic and lobbying power of Infront's owners, Chinese conglomerate Dalian Wanda, had counted for nothing in the face of the government's decision. Wanda acquired Infront in February 2015. Infront sells the 2018 and 2022 World Cups in Asia, excluding Japan, Malaysia and South Korea, in a \$600m deal with Fifa. ■

FOOTBALL

Nos huffs, puffs, and blows Altice away in Portuguese battle

By Callum McCarthy

Portuguese telco Nos has won the battle for premium domestic football rights, beating rival Altice to deals with nine more clubs after December's blockbuster 10-season agreement with Benfica.

Nos has sealed long-term deals for the home matches of Académica, Arouca, Belenenses, Braga, Marítimo, Nacional, Paços de Ferreira, Sporting Lisbon and Vitória Setúbal. Top-tier Primeira Liga clubs sell rights individually (see table).

Altice, which owns Portugal Telecom and its pay-television operator Meo, bid against Nos for each club's rights but has deals with just two teams: it has acquired the media and sponsorship rights of Porto and Rio Ave, both in 10-season deals from 2018-19 to 2027-28.

Altice is also thought to be close to agreeing deals with Boavista and Vitória Guimarães.

Nos's deal with Sporting and Altice's deal with Porto also include each club's shirt sponsorship rights and club channel distribution rights.

The remaining four clubs – Estoril, Moreirense, Tondela and União da Madeira – are still without deals. Local experts believe Altice is the front runner to acquire the clubs' rights as Nos claims to have exhausted its available funds.

Altice has also secured a collective three-season deal for the home matches of 19 Portuguese Segunda Liga clubs, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, worth a total of €9.5m (\$10.3m) per season.

Under the deal, each Segunda Liga club will receive €500,000 per season. This will rise to €3.5m per season should any team be promoted to the Primeira Liga. The remaining five of the 24 Segunda Liga clubs are 'B' teams of Primeira Liga clubs whose rights have already been sold.

The matches of Benfica, Porto and Sporting, known as the 'big three', are by far the most prestigious league fixtures.

While the home matches of Braga are

Details of the latest Primeira Liga club deals

Sporting Lisbon's deal with telco Nos is worth a total of €446m. Under the deal, Nos will own media rights to Sporting home matches from 2018-19 to 2027-28; shirt sponsorship rights from January 2016 to the end of 2027-28; and distribution rights to club channel Sporting TV from 2017-18 to 2028-29.

Porto's deal with telco Altice is worth a total of €457.5m. Altice will own media rights to Porto home matches from 2018-19 to 2027-28; shirt sponsorship rights from January 2016 to the end of 2022-23; and distribution rights to club channel Porto Canal from January 2016 to the end of 2027-28.

Porto's previous shirt sponsorship deal with pay-television operator Meo, owned by Altice, was worth €5m per season from 2011-12 to 2014-15. The

club was without a shirt sponsor for the first six months of the 2015-16 season.

The third of the 'big three' clubs, Benfica, has a 10-season deal with Nos, from 2016-17 to 2025-26, worth €400m for rights to home games and distribution rights for Benfica TV.

Under the deal, Benfica will receive €36m in the 2016-17 season. The contract includes a clause whereby the club can renegotiate its deal should Sporting earn a certain percentage of its media rights income.

TV Sports Markets understands this clause has been met, and Benfica is keen to renegotiate a better deal with Nos. Should Benfica succeed, this could in turn boost the revenues of rivals Porto due to the matching-fee clause the club possesses.

Primeira Liga clubs' new media rights deals

Club	Buyer	Duration
Académica	Nos	2019-20 to 2025-26
Arouca	Nos	2019-20 to 2025-26
Belenenses	Nos	2019-20 to 2025-26
Benfica ¹	Nos	2016-17 to 2025-26
Boavista	Unsold	N/A
Braga	Nos	2019-20 to 2028-29
Estoril	Unsold	N/A
Marítimo	Nos	2019-20 to 2025-26
Moreirense	Unsold	N/A
Nacional	Nos	2019-20 to 2025-26
Paços de Ferreira	Nos	2019-20 to 2025-26
Porto ²	Altice	2018-19 to 2027-28
Rio Ave ³	Altice	2018-19 to 2027-28
Sporting Lisbon ²	Nos	2018-19 to 2027-28
Tondela	Unsold	N/A
União da Madeira	Unsold	N/A
Vitória Guimarães	Unsold	N/A
Vitória Setúbal	Nos	2019-20 to 2025-26

Source: *TV Sports Markets Rights Tracker*

¹ Includes distribution rights to Benfica TV

² Includes distribution rights to respective club channels (Porto Canal and Sporting TV), shirt sponsorship rights and static in-stadium advertising

³ Includes shirt sponsorship rights

also valuable – Nos has paid about €10m per season for these rights in a 10-season deal from 2019-20 to 2028-29 – the value of the remaining clubs' rights is mostly in

their home fixtures against the big three.

Thus far, Nos holds rights to 58 matches involving Benfica, Porto and Sporting. Altice currently has 20, but this could

increase to 38 should the telco acquire the rights of the six remaining clubs.

The matches of clubs who have deals with Nos are highly likely to be shown on Sport TV – the telco owns half of the pay-television broadcaster.

It is unclear how Altice will exploit its rights. But it is thought likely that it will introduce its basic-tier Ma Chaîne Sport channel into the country.

Oliveira relationships

Altice is thought to have been reluctant to pay high prices for the rights to smaller clubs' matches. The long-standing relationships between the clubs and Joaquim Oliveira – a minority stakeholder in Nos and co-owner of Sport TV – has also acted as a barrier to Altice's entry into the market.

Every Primeira Liga club other than Benfica has agreements with companies controlled by Oliveira until at least the end of the 2015-16 season.

Porto and Sporting's current deals with the PPTV agency – owned by Oliveira – end after the 2017-18 season. Académica, Arouca, Belenenses, Braga, Marítimo, Nacional, Paços de Ferreira and Vitória Setúbal all have deals with Oliveira's companies until the end of 2018-19.

Sporting's deal with PPTV, from 2013-14 to 2017-18, was worth €16m per season. Following Sporting's deal with Nos, its contract with PPTV was renegotiated: Sporting will now receive €23m per season in the remaining seasons of the deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

PPTV will not, however, renegotiate its €20.7m-per-season deal with Porto, which signed with Altice. The PPTV deal runs from 2014-15 to 2017-18. But Porto has a matching-fee clause in its contract entitling it to a minimum of 80 per cent of Benfica's media rights income – which will be €27m in the 2016-17 season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:23).

This means Porto's media rights will be worth at least €21.6m per season until the end of the 2017-18 season.

Altice and fellow telco Vodafone have asked Portugal's competition authority, the Autoridade da Concorrência, to monitor Nos's activity in the marketplace following its long-term deals.

Clubs are forbidden from selling their

media rights for more than three seasons at a time under Portuguese competition legislation as of December 2014.

The authority did not respond to *TV Sports Markets'* requests for comment. ■

REGULATION

Portability should be enough to save geo-blocked rights

By Frank Dunne

The kind of portability clauses included for the first time by England's Premier League in its recent European rights tenders look set to become an industry norm.

Portability means that customers of a pay-television service in the UK, for example, should still be able to access their content online if they temporarily find themselves in another EU country.

The Premier League recently issued two ITT documents: on November 2 for 10 major markets in Europe and on November 6 for Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Both tenders stated that winning bidders in the EU can authorise their subscribers to view the content online, including on mobile devices, when the subscriber is "located outside the Licensed Territory of that Licensee and within the EEA [European Economic Area]".

The rights would be granted to a winning bidder on three conditions:

1) That media companies do not actively market or promote their Premier League content in other EU markets.

2) That online access is through a secure sign-in process to relevant subscribers of the service.

3) That nobody should be able to access matches which are covered by the "blocked hours" rule of that country, which prohibit live broadcasts in a given two-hour window to protect stadium attendances and grassroots participation.

Currently, six national football federations impose blocked hours on broadcasters. They are the federations of Austria, England, Montenegro, Northern

Ireland, Scotland and Wales (Montenegro is not in the EEA).

Geo-blocking concerns

In October 2011, in the case between Karen Murphy and the Premier League, the European Court of Justice outlawed media rights deals which purported to confer absolute exclusivity on a territorial basis.

Rights-holders have continued to sell in this way, but instead of stating that rights are exclusive, they generally offer them in the local language only.

Following the Murphy ruling there was concern among sports rights-holders that the European Commission would outlaw the geo-blocking of internet signals on the grounds that they undermined the single European market. Geo-blocking ensures de facto exclusivity in the internet signal.

The ECJ ruling did not stop market-by-market deals within Europe, but a ban on geo-blocking would make them practically unenforceable.

However, portability clauses should be enough, independent lawyers and rights experts say, to ensure rights can still be sold on a territorial basis within the European Union and that internet signals can still be geo-blocked.

The Premier League's rights and conditions appear to satisfy the requirements set out by the European Commission in its proposed 'Regulation on the cross-border portability of online content services' on December 9, just over one month after the second ITT was issued by the league.

Its objective was described by Andrus Ansip, EC vice president for the digital single market, as follows: "People who legally buy content – films, books, football matches, TV series – must be able to carry it with them anywhere they go in Europe." The proposed regulation does not contain any outright banning of geo-blocking.

A senior official from another major rights-holder said the signs were positive that portability clauses would save territorial deals which require broadcasters to geo-block their internet signals.

"Our sense is that it will be enough to save territorial deals, but it is a bit of a gamble, politics being slightly unpredictable. We believe there's

consensus amongst major rights-holders on this issue, so the biggest risk remains politics in Brussels.”

He added: “From the broadcasters’ point of view we believe they would largely buy into the concept, so commercially we don’t see any harm in portability. It would simply reflect what’s increasingly happening in reality already.”

In practice, many EU citizens moving between member states already enjoy the kind of access offered by the proposed portability rights by using virtual private networks or proxy servers to access internet content as they would in their home country. However, their use is still something of a grey area legally.

Modest requirements

One sports law expert said the “modest requirements” of the proposed regulation did not fully address the bigger issue of EU consumers being able to acquire pay-television services from companies based in other EU member states.

Ben Van Rompuy, senior researcher at the Asser International Sports Law Centre in the Netherlands, said: “The cross-border portability only applies to temporary presence in another member state, so that would not help if you would like to get a subscription from a service provider in another member state.

“Arguably, post-Murphy there should be no contractual impediments for consumers to do that.” ■

TV UK

Free-to-air windfall for Uefa, F1 and British horse racing

By Robin Jellis

Concurrent auction processes for three UK media rights deals in recent weeks generated strong competition between free-to-air broadcasters, helping each rights-holder to a healthy fee increase.

Motor racing series Formula One agreed a three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018, with commercial broadcaster Channel 4 worth about £25m (€34m/\$36.7m) per year. This represents

an increase of 67 per cent in the value of the series’ free-to-air rights: public-service broadcaster the BBC previously paid £15m per year.

Rival commercial broadcaster ITV displaced Channel 4 as the holder of UK horse racing rights from next year. The four-year deal, from 2017 to 2020, will be worth about £7.5m per year – a 50-per cent increase on Channel 4’s deal.

And ITV renewed its deal for European Qualifier rights for four seasons, from 2018-19 to 2021-22, and picked up highlights to the new Nations League tournament over the same period, as part of a combined deal with pay-television broadcaster Sky. Its total value is worth well above the £200m reported.

C4 wins F1 race

The last time Formula One sold its rights in the UK – in 2011 – a joint deal was agreed with public-service broadcaster the BBC and Sky worth a combined £60m per year. It was Formula One’s first ‘hybrid’ deal, with one free-to-air and one pay-television broadcast partner.

That deal was set to run for seven years, from 2012 to 2018, and was agreed with Formula One Management, the series’ commercial rights-holder.

The BBC paid £15m per year for non-exclusive rights to half of the grands prix every year, while Sky paid the remaining £45m per year for rights to all races: non-exclusive rights to the BBC’s races, and exclusive rights to the remaining races.

In November last year, the BBC announced it needed to make cuts of £150m, £35m of which would have to come from its sports budget. The broadcaster approached FOM about the possibility of reducing its coverage and rights fee, or ending its contract early.

FOM was thereafter approached by Channel 4, ITV and Sky about the rights. Channel 4 and ITV were interested in acquiring the same rights held by the BBC, while Sky hoped to extend its exclusivity to cover all rights. FOM was keen to retain free-to-air coverage of its races in the UK.

There is understood to have been little between the financial offers of Channel 4 and ITV, and the reach of both and the

cross-promotion offered was similar. But Channel 4 offered ad-free coverage of all live races.

As the Channel 4 deal was agreed, FOM ended the BBC contract. The move will save the BBC £25m per year, as production costs were an additional £10m per year.

It follows the BBC’s moves to share Six Nations rugby rights with ITV (saving about £18.5m per year) and its loss of Open Championship golf rights (saving £10m per year in rights fee and production). The broadcaster has, however, paid an £8.1m-per-year increase for Premier League highlights rights, and an increase of £19m per year for Wimbledon tennis rights (*TV Sports Markets* 19:3; 19:14; 19:18).

Competition drives increase

The interest from Channel 4 was not unexpected. The broadcaster made an aggressive bid for all rights last time they were sold, offering £45m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 15:15).

In the new deal, the free-to-air rights fee has increased for two main reasons.

First, the rights were undervalued the last time they were sold. The BBC brought Sky to the negotiating table as it sought to reduce the cost of its £42m-per-year deal from 2009 to 2013. As a result, the package was never offered to the market.

Second, the competition for the rights in the latest auction was strong, especially considering the other two auctions were taking place concurrently.

Channel 4 is expected to struggle to refinance its investment as it will not show adverts during live races, when its coverage will have the highest audience. It will not be able to offer split-screen ads.

Since acquiring the rights, the broadcaster has agreed a production deal with Whisper Films worth £10m per year. Channel 4 part-owns Whisper Films, with a stake of up to 25 per cent. The other company pitching for the production contract was North One Television.

FOM sought a three-year deal from a free-to-air broadcaster so its free-to-air and pay-television deals would end at the same time. This leaves it open to all options, including an exclusive pay-television deal, when it sells its rights for 2019 onwards.

ITV jumps for racing

Free-to-air horse racing rights will move from long-time partner Channel 4 to ITV in 2017, a switch which will earn the racecourses a 50-per-cent fee increase.

ITV's £7.5m-per-year fee for 2017 to 2020 is up from the £5m per year paid by Channel 4 in a four-year deal from 2013 to 2016 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:10).

The deal was agreed by Racecourse Media Group, which distributes media rights on behalf of 34 UK racecourses. It was advised on the sale by representatives from the Jockey Club, Arena Racing Company, Ascot racecourse, large independents, and Great British Racing.

There was not much between the financial offers from ITV and Channel 4. Sky also bid, and is thought to have bid more than ITV's winning offer. It was rejected, however, as the racecourses prioritised exposure over rights fee.

RMG first approached broadcasters to establish what rights they wanted. As well as the three bidders, RMG held talks with pay-television broadcaster BT and media company Discovery Communications, which owns sports broadcaster Eurosport.

Despite the increase, the deal is thought to be a good one for ITV. The Grand National, held at Aintree racecourse, is thought to be worth between £3m and £4m per year alone as it can pull in large audiences. Channel 4 had an average audience of 8.9m for last year's race.

ITV is expected to agree lucrative advertising and broadcast sponsorship deals; one expert claimed ITV could make a substantial profit on the deal.

In its current deal Channel 4 has a broadcast sponsorship deal with the emirate of Dubai, from 2013 to 2016, worth about £10m, or £2.5m per year.

Audience drop

ITV will show a minimum of 34 races on its flagship channel, and 60 on its digital-terrestrial ITV4 channel. The broadcaster wanted the rights as it is short of content which appeals to male viewers, as it lost Uefa Champions League rights to BT when they were sold in November 2013 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:21).

Audiences for some races have fallen sharply since coverage moved exclusively to Channel 4, with audiences for Royal

Ascot and the Epsom Derby particularly hit. Ascot's audience has halved, while Epsom's has fallen from 1.1m in 2012 to 367,000 in 2015.

In the previous cycle, from 2010 to 2012, marquee events were shown by the BBC in a deal worth £7.5m per year, while Channel 4 was paid £1m per year for covering the remaining races.

Critics of the ITV deal say coverage for the smaller racecourses will further decrease in the new deal as it will be switching from Channel 4 to ITV4, a channel which has lower reach.

Juliet Slot, Ascot's commercial director and a member of the auction's steering committee, told *TV Sports Markets* the racecourses were confident audiences would increase on ITV4.

"They will get a significant amount of the Channel 4 audience," she said. "We have spoken at length with ITV about their commitment to grow and promote ITV4. They have bought other sports rights to house on the channel. We are very confident they can deliver good audiences."

Slot added: "A decision to move to a new partner, especially after a relationship that has lasted for 30 years, brings a sense of the unknown and some nervousness, but everyone is extremely excited by the ITV deal and is keen to make it work."

TV Sports Markets understands Channel 4 has no plans to sublicense any of its coverage for 2016.

ITV is set to produce coverage of races in-house from 2017. The IMG agency currently produces Channel 4's coverage in a deal which costs Channel 4 about £8m per year on top of its rights fee.

ITV's coverage will be non-exclusive as race coverage will also be shown on pay-television channels At The Races and Racing UK. At The Races shows coverage from the 15 racecourses operated by ARC, while Racing UK shows races from the 34 racecourses run by RMG.

ITV wins and loses with Uefa

Meanwhile, ITV renewed its rights to show England national team football matches in qualifying for major tournaments, but lost out to Sky on live coverage of the new Nations League.

The BBC is thought to have studied a

bid for the European Qualifiers package, but could not afford the rights due to its ongoing cost-cutting.

Sky is thought to have been keen to acquire rights to all England matches. However, the Football Association – which was involved in the sales process along with Uefa and its sales agent CAA Eleven – was not keen on a complete switch to pay-television. BT is said to have been interested in the Nations League, but not to the same extent as Sky.

Under the deal, ITV will show all first- and second-party England matches. Sky will show all third-party qualifiers, as well as the matches of other home nations – Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Sky will also show all games from the Nations League – ITV will only have highlights.

The value of the new deal is said to be worth close to three times the value of Uefa's current European Qualifier deals.

Those deals are worth £110m over the four seasons from 2014-15 to 2017-18; ITV pays £80m, Sky pays £30m (*TV Sports Markets* 17:11). ■

TENNIS

ATP and WTA see decent returns in Canadian deals

By Richard Welbirg

The premier men's and women's tennis tours struck new media rights deals in Canada last month, both earning decent rights-fee increases.

Pay-television broadcaster TSN usurped its major rival, Rogers Sportsnet, to secure rights to the ATP World Tour.

Competition between the two helped to push the value of the rights up to just over \$2m per year. The new deal with TSN will run from 2016 to 2020.

Rogers paid about \$1m (€900,000) per year for the ATP rights in a five-year deal, from 2011 to 2015. It bid again for the rights in a new deal, but its spending ability is hampered by the need to service its C\$5.23bn (€3.47bn/\$3.75bn) deal for National Hockey League rights (*TV Sports Markets* 17:22).

Rogers will however retain the rights to the Rogers Cup – the men’s ATP Masters 1000 and women’s WTA Premier 5 events alternating annually between Toronto and Montreal – in a deal from 2016 to 2020. These rights are sold domestically by the tournament organiser.

Meanwhile, French-language Canadian pay-television network TVA Sports struck a three-year deal for Women’s Tennis Association rights, from 2017 to 2019.

The deal is thought to be worth just under \$600,000 per year for French-language rights only. This is thought to be a decent increase on the value of its current sublicensing deal with Rogers – Rogers holds English- and French-language rights to WTA Premier events in Canada until the end of 2016.

The new deal was agreed with WTA Media, the joint venture between the WTA and the Perform Group, which holds global WTA rights in a 10-year deal, from 2017 to 2026, worth \$52.5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:23).

It is unusual for a French-language deal to be completed in advance of its English-language equivalent, but there are unique circumstances that meant WTA Media agreed an early deal.

First, women’s tennis is relatively popular in French-speaking Canada, thanks largely to a string of successful Québécois players of the past (four-time Grand Slam winner Mary Pierce), present (world number 37 Eugenie Bouchard) and future (former junior world number four Françoise Abanda).

Second, there is more relevant content in the latest deal. TVA currently only has rights to the Premier tournaments and was unable to follow Bouchard as she played in two lower-tier tournaments – in Shenzhen, China, and Hobart, Australia – early in 2016.

Both TSN and Rogers have been slow to move for the English-language rights: Rogers because of its financial limitations following its NHL deal, and TSN because of its focus on finalising the ATP contract.

WTA Media felt no need to set a deadline for an English-language deal, and preferred to wait and see if competition develops – particularly from beIN Media Group, which launched its channels in the country in early 2014. ■

FOOTBALL

Salman election win could lead to major Fifa rights shake-up

By Frank Dunne

A victory for Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim al-Khalifa in next month’s Fifa presidential election could have major repercussions on the sale of media rights to competitions organised by both Fifa and the Asian Football Confederation.

The commercialisation of Fifa rights would be affected if Salman enacted his manifesto pledge to separate the commercial and regulatory functions of world football’s governing body.

The AFC rights are currently in limbo. The governing body agreed a renewal in principle with the World Sport Group agency last year, but has yet to sign it off. The \$1.25bn (€1.16bn) deal would run for eight years, from 2021 to 2028 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:7).

Some senior sources in Asian football believe that if Salman does not sign it off before the election on February 26 – and he is not expected to – a new AFC president may choose to offer the rights to the market. The current WSG deal, like its predecessor, was agreed without a formal tender process.

WSG, part of the Lagardère Sports and Entertainment agency, is understood to be relaxed about the situation and confident the deal will be signed off following the upcoming Fifa election.

Separation of powers

On December 30, Salman, the current AFC president, issued his election manifesto. It contained a pledge to split Fifa’s regulatory and commercial functions, creating what he calls “Football Fifa” and “Business Fifa” – the latter being “a commercial body of savvy marketing and rights professionals”.

The proposal was part of Salman’s strategy to eliminate corruption from the beleaguered governing body. He said: “Only by strictly separating the generation of funds and supervising the flow of all monies spent can we guarantee

the rebirth of a new Fifa that is accountable.”

If he were elected on that platform, he would almost certainly have the support to push through such a reform. At the time of going to press, Salman – a member of the royal family of Bahrain – was the bookmakers’ second favourite after Prince Ali bin Al Hussein of Jordan.

Such a separation of powers could open up a huge opportunity for a sports-rights agency. Details in the manifesto of how such a separation would work are scant.

There would be different ways of achieving this. One would be to create a separate legal entity, which remains part of Fifa but is autonomous of the executive committee, such as the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) has with its Fiba Media & Marketing Services subsidiary.

Another would be to appoint a one-client agency, responsible for all of Fifa’s commercial rights, along the model that Uefa currently uses with Team Marketing for club competitions and CAA Eleven for national team competitions.

Even on a straight commission basis, as Team and CAA Eleven operate, it would still be one of the most lucrative contracts in the business. Fifa earned revenues of \$5.718bn in the 2011-2014 cycle, of which \$2.484bn came from the sale of media rights (*TV Sports Markets* 19:6).

Single client

In media interviews in December, Martin Wagner, a member of the Team board, extolled the benefits of the Uefa-Team model and said it was an effective way of ensuring transparency and accountability in the sale of commercial rights.

He said Fifa’s in-house marketing team was “way too close” to Fifa and that negative headlines about football corruption had “severely damaged the football industry”.

Neither Team nor CAA Eleven would be able to bid for Fifa rights due to restrictions in their agreements with Uefa.

Wagner told *TV Sports Markets* this week that Team had “a single focus on Uefa as its sole client”, adding that Team had “no future without Uefa”.

He said Team, and its parent company Highlight Communications, were not

aligned with any of the presidential candidates. “Our motto is: stay out of politics, stay out of the dark. Team is a purely commercially oriented entity.”

Questions for AFC

The problem for Salman, some senior football officials say, is that he can hardly run on a platform of openness and transparency but sign off a billion-dollar deal that was never put out to tender.

The sale of AFC rights without a tender was controversial, leading Ioris Francini – president of the IMG agency – to attack the deal last October. He said IMG had been “locked out” of negotiations, despite having made a far larger offer – \$2.5bn over eight years – for the same rights.

Salman is positioning himself as a reformer, using his track record at the AFC to support his claim.

He was elected in May 2013, two years after then-president Mohamed bin Hammam was removed from office in 2011. Bin Hammam was banned for life from all football activities by Fifa due to conflicts of interest and other allegations of impropriety.

Salman says in his manifesto that he inherited a governing body with “serious

challenges” and was responsible for changing the culture there.

The problem for WSG if Salman is elected Fifa president is there is no guarantee the new AFC president will sign off the deal – especially in the climate of intense scrutiny of football federation dealings following the US Department of Justice indictments of officials from Conmebol and Concacaf, the governing bodies for football in the Americas.

Upside, downside

WSG is understood to have delivered a big cash boost to the AFC late last year, paving the way for a big increase in prize money for teams competing in the Asian Champions League.

The agency brought in \$92m of upside revenue, above the \$600m it paid for all AFC rights for eight years, from 2013 to 2020. Of this it retained \$32m, which was the repayment of a loan made to the AFC.

The remaining \$60m was split 50:50 between WSG and the AFC, as per the terms of the agreement between the two.

The revenues were a welcome boost to the agency in the wake of it losing its long-running Indian Premier League case at the International Court of Arbitration.

As a consequence of the defeat, WSG was forced to pay \$27.7m to Indian pay-television broadcaster Sony.

O’Brien steps back

WSG founder Seamus O’Brien has stepped down from his senior role in the company to concentrate on running his US business affairs.

Andrew Georgiou, chief operating officer at Lagardère Sports and Entertainment, said the company had agreed for O’Brien to spend more time on running his football club – the New York Cosmos – and on his US sports channel One World Sports, in which Lagardère is a minority shareholder.

“We’ve agreed with Seamus that he will no longer act as deputy chairman of the executive committee at Lagardère Sports, due to his other commitments and time constraints,” he said.

“He wants to spend more of his time on his US business activities but he remains involved in our football business, particularly in Asia, as well as some other key areas of our business.

“We are happy that he remains involved and look forward to continuing to work with him in this capacity.” ■

FOOTBALL

Uefa rides the Russian storm for Euro 2016 deal

By Callum McCarthy

Uefa has agreed a deal in principle with the Telesport agency for Euro 2016 rights in Russia, a deal which appears to have been worth the wait for European football’s governing body. It took two years to negotiate.

According to a memorandum of understanding agreed with the agency in October, Uefa will receive just under €30m (\$32.4m) from Telesport for Euro 2016. The fee also includes a retrospective payment for Russia’s qualification matches from 2014-15 to 2015-16. The vast majority of the deal’s value is in the tournament itself.

During the qualification period, Telesport had been negotiating deals with Uefa on behalf of broadcasters for Russian national team matches on a game-by-game basis. Third-party matches were not broadcast.

The Euro 2016 deal was agreed with CAA Eleven, Uefa’s sales agent for its national team competition. It does not include European Qualifier rights from 2016-17 to 2017-18 for the 2018 Fifa World Cup.

According to a source close to the deal, the latest agreement represents a solid increase in value for the European Championship. State-owned broadcasters Channel One and RTR (now known as Rossiya-1) contributed just under €20m to the European Broadcasting Union’s €130m deal across 36 territories for Euro 2012 (*TV Sports Markets* 13:9).

The value of the Euro 2016 deal is lower than the projection Uefa made in 2010 for Russia, well before coming to market, but

equal to its original asking price when negotiations began in November 2013 – a positive outcome in the current tough market conditions.

The depreciation of the rouble and the collapse of the Russian advertising market has badly affected broadcasters’ and agencies’ ability to meet the fee expectations of rights-holders.

The Euro 2016 deal’s value in roubles is about RUB2.45bn. When Rossiya-1 and Channel One paid just under €20m for Euro 2012 rights in September 2009, the deal was worth about RUB870m.

Uefa itself has suffered from these conditions: the value of its Champions League and Europa League rights halved in a deal with pay-television broadcaster NTV Plus. That deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, is worth about €15m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:20).

The new deal with Telesport is yet to be signed off as the agency does not yet have the funds to pay for the rights.

It will receive some financial backing from Gazprom Media, a state-owned subsidiary of energy group Gazprom, as its terrestrial sports channel Match TV will broadcast the majority of Euro 2016 matches in Russia.

This money will be available to Telesport by the end of February, after Gazprom Media's board of directors finalise Match TV's budget. The deal is likely to be finalised in March.

Qualifiers and negotiations

During the Euro 2016 qualification period, Telesport secured the rights to Russia's games from Uefa on behalf of Rossiya-1 and Channel One.

TV Sports Markets understands neither Telesport nor the broadcasters were required to pay an upfront fee for the rights. Part of the €30m fee now agreed with Uefa covers these matches.

Uefa permitted the broadcasting of matches to show goodwill to long-standing partners, and as part of a gentleman's agreement whereby a deal would eventually be agreed for Euro 2016.

Telesport had taken over negotiations once it became clear the broadcasters could not match Uefa's asking price. However, Telesport was also unable to afford the rights after Russian businessman Roman Rotenberg's planned acquisition of the agency fell through in May 2015. Telesport owner Peter Makarenko also made several attempts to negotiate a lower price for the rights.

Sourcing the money for Telesport's acquisition has been the responsibility of Russian sports minister Vitaly Mutko. It is thought Mutko initially sought a benevolent investor to fund the purchase, but is now relying on Gazprom Media to provide the remainder of the money.

Competition coverage

Telesport has guaranteed Uefa that at least one match per day of Euro 2016 will be shown free-to-air in Russia, with the remaining matches on Gazprom Media outlets, including pay-television channels.

Matches involving Russia will be shown on either Rossiya-1 or Channel One.

It is unknown whether the broadcasters will pay Telesport upfront, via an advertising revenue-share agreement, or a

combination of the two. Telesport will sell advertising around matches on Rossiya-1 and/or Channel One. Uefa has also entered discussions with Telesport and Gazprom Media about rights to the Nations League friendly tournament, the Euro 2020 tournament and European Qualifier rights.

Russia matches in qualifying for the 2018 World Cup, from 2016-17 to 2017-18, will be friendly matches – Russia does not need to qualify as it will host the tournament. ■

FOOTBALL

Saran's Premier delight tempered by Euro 2016 loss

By Callum McCarthy

The Saran Media agency has suffered mixed fortunes in Turkey over the last fortnight, securing rights to England's Premier League but losing out on Euro 2016 to Turkish state broadcaster TRT.

Saran's three-season deal for Premier League rights across all platforms, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, is worth just below \$15m (€13.9m) per season.

This is a 36-per-cent increase on the \$11m per season the agency pays in the league's current three-season cycle, from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

The deal is a good result for the Premier League: it has renewed with a long-term partner and secured a good increase. Saran's current deal is 25-per-cent more valuable than its previous three-season deal, from 2010-11 to 2012-13, when the agency paid about \$8.8m per season.

Meanwhile, Saran's attempts to buy rights to the Euro 2016 tournament in Turkey were scuppered by TRT.

The state broadcaster will pay about €16m for the tournament, an increase of about 23 per cent on the €13m it paid as part of the European Broadcasting Union's 36-territory deal for Euro 2012.

Euro 2016

TRT's winning bid is about 14 per cent higher than its original offer as part of the EBU's pan-regional bid in 2014.

Then, the state broadcaster's offer of about €14m was rejected by CAA Eleven, Uefa's sales agent for its national team competitions, and a tender was sent out shortly after Turkey's qualification for the tournament in October 2015.

Competition for the rights is thought to have been plentiful but not particularly aggressive. Saran and pay-television broadcaster Digiturk – which has been acquired by beIN Media Group – both made bids, and the latter is keen to sublicense matches from TRT.

The state broadcaster will struggle to show all 51 matches, and is instead likely to retain rights to Turkey's matches and marquee fixtures such as the final.

CAA Eleven can perhaps consider themselves lucky – Turkey's qualification for Euro 2016 was sealed with a late goal against Iceland in its final qualifying match.

Had Turkey failed to qualify, local experts say the tournament's value would have fallen well below TRT's original contribution as part of the EBU offer.

Premier League

A source close to the Premier League negotiations described the tender process as "very competitive"; bidding went to a second round. Digiturk and telco Türk Telekom were Saran's main rivals.

TV Sports Markets understands Digiturk's final offer to the Premier League was \$40m in total, or \$13.3m per season. Türk Telekom – which successfully acquired Uefa Champions League and Europa League rights in 2014 – is also thought to have bid aggressively.

Saran is expected to hold private talks in the coming months with broadcasters interested in sublicensing the rights. Incumbent broadcaster Digiturk and Türk Telekom are still thought to be keen to acquire the rights from the agency.

While local experts believe the Premier League to be the second-most important sports property in Turkey – behind Turkey's top-tier Süper Lig – Premier League rights in Turkey are not believed to be crucial to Saran's business.

It is thought that the agency has to work hard to make a profit on the rights; it is mostly attracted to the property for the prestige it conveys. ■

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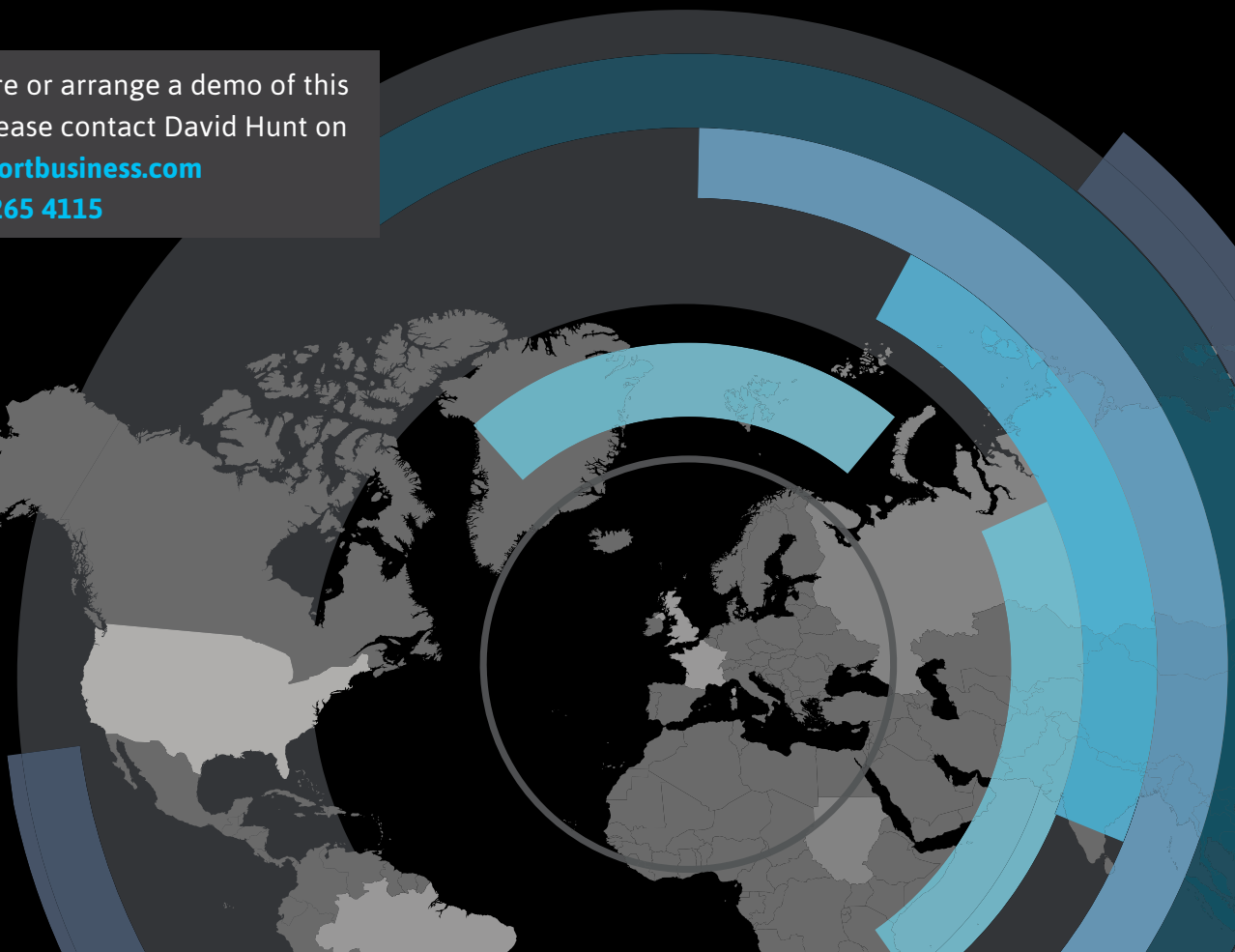
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 17 to January 20**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: Fifa World Cup, Primeira Liga, Israeli Premier League and more**

- **Football:** Fifa, the sport's global governing body, awarded pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports and commercial broadcaster TF1 rights in France for the 2018 and 2022 editions of the World Cup. BeIN Sports will show every match from the World Cups of 2018 and 2022, in Russia and Qatar respectively. TF1 will broadcast 28 matches from each tournament on free-to-air television.
- **Football:** Chinese internet company LeTV, which operates Le Sports, acquired exclusive rights in Hong Kong for the 2018 Fifa World Cup. LeTV also confirmed plans to rebrand as LeEco.
- **Football:** US media company Univision confirmed a deal for Spanish-language rights to all national team competitions operated by Uefa, the sport's European governing body. The deal, which will run for four seasons, from 2018-19 to 2021-22, was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 19:20.
- **Football:** German commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1 acquired a package of six group games from Uefa's Euro 2016 national team tournament, in a sublicensing deal with public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF.
- **Football:** Portuguese telco Nos sealed rights deals with Primeira Liga clubs Académica, Arouca, Belenenses, Braga, Marítimo, Nacional, Paços de Ferreira, Sporting and Vitória Setúbal (page 8).
- **Football:** Primeira Liga club Porto agreed a new rights deal with telco Altice over 10 seasons, from 2018-19 to 2027-28 (page 8).
- **Football:** Meo, the Portuguese pay-television operator owned by telco Altice, struck deals with Primeira Liga club Rio Ave, and for the second-tier Segunda Liga. The Rio Ave deal will run for 10 seasons, from 2018-19 to 2027-28, while the Segunda Liga agreement will run for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 8).
- **Football:** Israeli pay-television broadcaster Charlton acquired rights for the country's top-tier Premier League. The deals will run for four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20 (page 1).
- **Football:** Charlton renewed its deal with the English Premier League for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 5).
- **Football:** The Saran Media agency confirmed its new deal for English Premier League rights in Turkey. The deal, which runs for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 19:23 (page 14).
- **Football:** International sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired rights in France for Italy's Coppa Italia club competition. The deal, with the B4 Capital agency, will run at least until the end of the 2015-16 season.
- **Football:** Singaporean pay-television broadcaster StarHub sublicensed rights to Spain's LaLiga in a multi-year deal with beIN Media Group.
- **Football:** North American Major League Soccer club Orlando City agreed a multi-year local rights partnership with Cox Media Group, a subsidiary of US media company Cox Enterprises. Cox Media-owned channel WRDQ-TV 27 will broadcast all of the team's regular-season and play-off matches that are not shown on national television.
- **Football:** US television broadcasting company Sinclair Networks Group secured a multi-year local rights deal with Major League Soccer club DC United, starting in 2016. Sinclair will broadcast matches that are not available nationally in Washington DC via regional ABC network affiliate WJLA and local cable-television channel NewsChannel 8.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports struck a deal with Spain's LaLiga to show coverage of the Primera División Femenina, the top women's division in the country. The deal will run until the end of the current season.

SINCE LAST TIME

- North America's Major League Baseball settled a lawsuit filed by fans complaining of restrictions imposed on watching their favourite teams on television. MLB agreed to expand the range of online packages for games and offer lower prices for packages. Previously, viewers who did not live in their favourite team's home market had to acquire access to coverage of every game included in the nationwide package. MLB will reportedly offer unbundled online packages for the next five years, including single-team packages for \$84.99 (€78.70) next season – a 23-per-cent drop on the current cheapest package – with the league-wide package priced at \$109.99 per season. MLB also agreed to provide live local team coverage online for pay-television subscribers by the start of the 2017 campaign.
- The Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia, Spain's competition regulator, ruled that LaLiga, which operates football's top two divisions in the country, must provide a 90-second summary of every game from the top-tier Primera División to non-rights-holding broadcasters and give media access to stadiums. The ruling was confirmed following a complaint by commercial broadcaster Mediaset, whose cameras were banned from matches in September by LaLiga after Mediaset refused to accept the time limits imposed on highlights.
- Italian pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia, media company Mediaset, the top Italian football league – Lega Serie A – and its adviser – the Infront Sports & Media agency – could face fines if the country's antitrust authority finds them guilty of violating competition law during the sale of the league's domestic media rights for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18. The parties will respond to the findings on February 16.
- Competitors of German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland were lobbying the country's federal cartel office, the Bundeskartellamt, to introduce a 'no single buyer rule' to the

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 17 to January 20

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

NFL, MLB, NBA, Liga ACB, boxing, Commonwealth Games and more

- **American Football:** The Ali Sports division of Chinese e-commerce company Alibaba Group struck a deal for NFL rights in China. Ali Sports will broadcast games, highlights and weekly programming through online video platform Youku Tudou as well as OTT and mobile services in mainland China.
- **American Football:** American Sports Network, a subsidiary of US broadcasting company Sinclair Networks Group, secured rights to the country's new Major League Football competition. The deal will run for two years, covering the inaugural 2016 season and the 2017 campaign. American Sports Network will broadcast live coverage of all 40 regular-season games plus every post-season match.
- **Baseball:** Chinese internet operator Le Sports sealed a three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018, to stream exclusive live coverage of Major League Baseball games. Le Sports will broadcast 125 games per season, plus Mandarin-language MLB programming, via its internet platform, mobile applications and OTT devices in mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau.
- **Basketball:** Pay-television broadcaster the Sports Channel extended its exclusive deal for NBA rights in Israel. The channel will continue to provide up to three live regular-season games per week, plus extensive coverage of the NBA Playoffs and all finals (page 5).
- **Basketball:** The Saran Media agency agreed a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, for global rights to the Turkish Women's Super League and Turkish Men's First Division. The agreement with the Turkish Basketball Federation covers exclusive rights across all platforms.
- **Basketball:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Sport Austria acquired rights for the Austrian top-tier Bundesliga for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, with an option to extend by two more.
- **Basketball:** Commercial and pay-television broadcaster Nova Broadcasting Group agreed a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, for rights in Bulgaria to Spain's top-tier Liga ACB.
- **Boxing:** UK free-to-air entertainment channel Dave acquired rights to British heavyweight David Haye's fight against Australia's Mark de Mori on January 16.
- **Commonwealth Games:** New Zealand public-service broadcaster TVNZ acquired rights for the 2018 Games, to be hosted in Gold Coast, Australia. Broadcasters across the Pacific Islands will also be able to access TVNZ's coverage.
- **Cricket:** Star India was awarded the Asian Cricket Council's next cycle of rights, while the Novi Digital Entertainment division of the pay-television broadcaster became the exclusive digital clips licensee in India for all International Cricket Council events. The Asian Cricket Council agreement will run for eight years, from 2016 to 2023, while the ICC deal will run for four years, from 2016 to 2019.
- **Cricket:** The Sporty Solutionz agency acquired exclusive worldwide distribution rights for the 2016 Masters Champions League Twenty20 tournament in the UAE in a deal with promoter GM Sports (page 2).
- **Cricket:** Sony Pictures Networks India acquired exclusive rights in Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka for the 2016 Masters Champions League (page 2).
- **Cycling:** The French Cycling Federation awarded domestic rights jointly to public-service broadcaster France Télévisions and the Eurosport France division of sports broadcaster Eurosport for five years, from 2016 to 2020. The deal covers cyclo-cross, road, BMX, mountain bike and track cycling events.

bidding process for rights to the Bundesliga, the top division of German football. A tender for the next cycle, from 2017-18 to 2020-21, is expected by mid-2016.

- A group of 15 leading South American football clubs joined forces to establish a new organisation designed to strengthen their position concerning the distribution of media-rights income by the South American football confederation (Conmebol). The South American League of Clubs comprises teams from Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. The group asked for an increase in the amount clubs receive from the Copa Libertadores and Copa Sudamericana equivalent to the increase in rights fee in the recent three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018, agreed between Conmebol and pay-television broadcaster Fox International Channels.
- Chinese internet operator LeTV agreed to acquire a 20-per-cent stake in media technology company TCL Multimedia, and will

form a joint venture with Digital Domain Investments to provide live sports virtual reality services.

- Interactive entertainment company Activision Blizzard acquired Major League Gaming, which organises and streams coverage of competitive gaming leagues, for \$46m (€42.6m).

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- International pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN launched a new online platform dedicated to coverage of eSports competitions around the world.
- Spanish telco Telefónica agreed a deal with the Mediapro agency to carry the new beIN Sports LaLiga pay-television football channel in Spain. Telefónica's DTS unit will pay €2.4bn (\$2.6bn) to carry the channel for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. The channel will show the top-tier Primera División, second-tier

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 17 to January 20**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****UK darts, PGA Tour, European Handball Championships, UFC and more**

- **Darts:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired live rights for the British Darts Organisation's 2016 World Professional Darts Championship.
 - **Golf:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland extended a rights deal for the US PGA Tour in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, beginning in January 2016. The deal covers exclusive platform-neutral coverage of more than 40 events per season, including all FedEx Cup tournaments.
 - **Handball:** Public-service broadcaster France Télévisions struck a sublicensing deal with pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports for coverage of the latter stages of the 2016 men's and women's European Handball Championships in Poland and Sweden, respectively. France Télévisions will show live coverage of any semi-final or final featuring the French men's or women's national team.
 - **Handball:** Sportdeutschland.tv, the online sports channel of the German Olympic Sports Confederation, acquired rights for the 2016 men's European Handball Championship. The deal was struck with the tournament's rights-holder in Germany, SportA – the rights agency of public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF. Sportdeutschland.tv will show all games from the competition live, except those featuring the German national team.
 - **Horse Racing:** UK commercial broadcaster ITV acquired exclusive rights for the sport in Britain over four years, from 2017 to 2020 (page 10).
 - **Horse Racing:** Racecourse Media Group secured a deal to simulcast live coverage of the Dubai World Cup Carnival series across the Americas. RMG agreed the deal, which began at the start of 2016, with Dubai Racing Club, the owner and operator of Meydan Racecourse.
 - **Ice Hockey:** North American sports broadcaster One World Sports agreed a sublicensing deal with the NBC Sports Group division of US media group NBCUniversal for rights to 20 games from the 2016 World Ice Hockey Championships.
 - **Ice Hockey:** One World Sports secured a deal with Harvard University to broadcast coverage of matches featuring the university's teams.
 - **Ice Hockey:** The Infront Sports & Media agency agreed a three-year international rights deal, from 2015 to 2017, with the organiser of the annual Spengler Cup tournament in Switzerland.
 - **Mixed Martial Arts:** Chinese internet operators PPTV and Sina Sports struck deals for digital rights to the UFC promotion in mainland China (page 2).
 - **Mixed Martial Arts:** Modern Times Group acquired UFC rights in Denmark over four years, from 2016 to 2019.
 - **Mixed Martial Arts:** Commercial broadcaster TV5 acquired UFC rights in the Philippines, starting in January 2016. The rights will be exploited on TV5's sports channel, Hyper.
- Segunda División and the Copa del Rey knockout competition, plus matches from the Uefa Champions League and Europa League European club competitions.
- Boxing promoter Golden Boy Promotions, chaired by former fighter Oscar De La Hoya, secured a partnership with streaming service FilmOn TV Networks to launch two new channels. Golden Boy Channel and The Ring will go live at the end of January and be available as part of FilmOn.com's OTT service.
 - North American basketball league the NBA agreed a syndication deal with digital sports news agency SendtoNews, which will deliver daily highlights to its network of online sites for local newspapers and television stations.
 - North American basketball league the NBA struck a digital media deal in the UK with the GiveMeSport platform, which will launch the givemesport.com/nba website.
 - German commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1 agreed a multi-year distribution deal for the IMG agency's action sports and lifestyle channel Edgesport on free-to-air television, pay-television and video-on-demand platforms in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.
 - Polish media and telecommunications group Cyfrowy Polsat, its pay-television channel Polsat Sport and media company Grupa Onet-Ringier Axel Springer Polska entered into an exclusive sports content distribution agreement. Content produced by Polsat and video-on-demand service IPLA will be shown by the Onet and Onet-RASP services.
 - Polsat secured 10-year licences, from 2016 to 2025, for the launch of two new sports channels – Polsat Sport 2 and Polsat Sport 3 – from Poland's National Broadcasting Council, the KRRiT.
 - The English Football League will launch a new highlights programme aimed at young children after entering into a partnership with the UK and Ireland division of US cable and satellite broadcaster Nickelodeon. Nick Kicks, which will feature highlights from the Football League's three divisions, will be shown on the Nicktoons channel on Saturday mornings, starting in February and running until the end of the 2017-18 campaign.
 - Croatian IPTV platform Iskon agreed a deal to carry Fight Channel, the European pay-television channel dedicated to martial arts and combat sports, in its 'extended basic' package.
 - Russian sports media platform Match TV will launch three new television channels, as its parent company Gazprom Media restructures and rebrands its sports output. Match 'Our Sport' will show domestic sport, Match Game will show international team sport, and Match Arena will broadcast non-team sport. The channels will replace Gazprom's Football 1, Football 2 and Football 3 channels, as well as combat sports channel Fighter.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 17 to January 20

MEDIA RIGHTS 4

Formula One, World Rally Championship, Paralympic Games and more

- **Motorcycling:** French digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 renewed a rights deal with the Motocross World Championship for 2016. L'Équipe 21 will broadcast live coverage of each race plus the Motocross of Nations and the Supermotocross Riders' and Manufacturers' Cup.
- **Motorsport:** UK commercial broadcaster Channel 4 will replace public-service broadcaster the BBC as the free-to-air rights-holder of the Formula One world championship under a three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018 (page 10).
- **Motorsport:** Channel 5 replaced rival commercial broadcaster ITV as a free-to-air rights-holder for the 2016 World Rally Championship across the UK, while pay-television broadcaster BT Sport and Welsh public-service channel S4C extended deals with WRC Promoter, which operates the series.
- **Motorsport:** Digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 secured a rights deal for the 2016 World Rally Championship in an agreement with WRC Promoter.
- **Motorsport:** Belgian pay-television broadcaster Telenet acquired rights for the World Rally Championship in a deal with WRC Promoter. Telenet will exploit the rights on its Flemish Play Sports network.
- **Motorsport:** Spanish telco Telefónica extended a rights deal with WRC Promoter for the World Rally Championship.
- **Motorsport:** WRC Promoter extended a rights deal with commercial and pay-television broadcaster Nelonen and public-service broadcaster YLE in Finland for the 2016 World Rally Championship.
- **Motorsport:** WRC Promoter renewed a rights deal for the 2016 World Rally Championship with Swedish public-service broadcaster SVT.
- **Motorsport:** Pay-television broadcaster TV2 acquired rights in Norway for the 2016 World Rally Championship.
- **Motorsport:** Chinese internet operator Le Sports acquired rights for the 2016 season of the World Rally Championship in a deal with WRC Promoter.
- **Motorsport:** Japanese pay-television broadcaster J Sports struck a deal with WRC Promoter for the World Rally Championship.
- **Motorsport:** In New Zealand, WRC Promoter extended a rights deal with pay-television broadcaster Sky and sealed new highlights deals with commercial broadcaster TV3 and public-service broadcaster TVNZ for the 2016 World Rally Championship.
- **Paralympics:** Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE agreed a deal for coverage of the 2016 summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. TVE's coverage will include the opening and closing ceremonies as well as the majority of events featuring Spanish athletes. TVE sealed the deal with the Higher Sports Council, the Spanish Paralympic Committee national governing body, and football league operator LaLiga.

The Sport, Sport 1, NTV Plus Sport and Sport Plus channels will close. NTV Plus's Fight Club channel closed at the end of 2015.

- Norwegian clubs are in a dispute over the division of revenues from the new media rights deal for the Tippeligaen, the top division of domestic football. Brann, Rosenborg and Viking called for more money to be available to the clubs that are traditionally the biggest in the country. Stig-Ove Sandnes, managing director of Vålerenga, said the money should be distributed based on performances.
- German Bundesliga football club Bayern Munich sealed a global media partnership with US internet company Yahoo. Bayern will syndicate its original video and editorial content across the Yahoo network, focussing on the US, Latin America and Central Europe.
- North American sports broadcaster One World Sports struck a multi-year deal to carry Juventus TV, the in-house television channel operated by Italian Serie A football club Juventus.
- The Sina Sports division of Chinese internet operator Sina agreed a multi-year strategic partnership with Tennis Australia to create a new digital platform in Mandarin for the Australian Open grand slam tournament.
- Sina Sports sealed a deal with Dakar Rally organiser Amaury Sport Organisation to become an official media partner of the endurance motorsport event over two campaigns, 2016 and 2017.
- Sina Sports agreed a deal to carry MUTV, the in-house television channel of English Premier League football club Manchester United, on its websites and mobile application.
- Pay-television broadcaster Eleven Sports Network launched a new online streaming service in Singapore.
- Sony Pictures Networks India, formerly known as Multi Screen Media, launched its first co-branded television channels – Sony ESPN and Sony ESPN HD – with international sports broadcaster ESPN on January 17. The channels are available across the Indian subcontinent.
- Dutch cable and pay-television operator Ziggo partnered with internet video company QYOU. QYOU will produce 'Q-Sport' shows for the newly-launched Ziggo Sport channel, featuring video clips from surfing, football, BMX and motocross racing, skiing, skateboarding, basketball, parkour and more.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- North American Major League Baseball franchise the San Diego Padres is targeting a Mexican rights deal as it prepares to return to the market by hosting two spring training games in Mexico City this March. Any potential deal rests on successful negotiations between Fox Sports San Diego, which owns the team's local broadcast rights, and Mexican cable-television provider Cablemás.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 17 to January 20**MEDIA RIGHTS 5****Global Poker League, skiing, squash, Australian Open, WTA Tour and more**

- **Poker:** Las Vegas-based pay-television broadcaster Poker Central acquired rights for the 2016 Global Poker League. Poker Central will broadcast live and pre-recorded matches twice per week, starting in April.
- **Sailing:** The Bloomberg Television division of international business news service Bloomberg acquired rights for the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race, through to the conclusion of the current event in July 2016.
- **Skiing:** French basic-tier sports broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport struck a deal for live coverage of International Ski Federation World Cup events held in Austria for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- **Squash:** The Professional Squash Association sealed a deal with international sports broadcaster Eurosport for five years, from 2016 to 2020. Eurosport will become the home of the PSA's SquashTV digital service in Europe through the broadcaster's Eurosport Player, which will show live coverage of all SquashTV events. Highlights from selected tournaments will be broadcast on Eurosport's linear channels.
- **Taekwondo:** The European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters renewed its exclusive rights deal with the European Taekwondo Union ahead of the governing body's 2016 Senior European Taekwondo Championship. The EBU will also serve as the exclusive worldwide distribution partner for the event, which is held in Switzerland.
- **Tennis:** Pay-television broadcaster ESPN International renewed its deal in Latin America and the Caribbean for the Australian Open, covering five years from 2017 to 2021. The agreement was reached with Tennis Australia, which operates the event.
- **Tennis:** French-language Canadian pay-television network TVA Sports agreed a rights deal covering all Women's Tennis Association Tour events for three years, from 2017 to 2019 (page 11).
- **US College Sport:** The Learfield Sports agency sealed multi-year multimedia rights deals with Texas A&M University, Dartmouth College and Lehigh University, starting with the 2016-17 academic year.
- US sports broadcaster ESPN will not bid for the NFL American football league's Thursday Night Football package as it is satisfied with the current Thursday night primetime line-up on sister network ABC, according to reports. In December, the NFL asked broadcasters to submit offers for an eight-game package starting from the 2016-17 season, as well as an alternative arrangement under which two successful bidders would share matches.
- The NFL is planning to stream live coverage of all three International Series games scheduled to take place in London next season, with technology companies Apple and Google in contention for the rights, according to the Reuters news agency.
- The German Handball Association will stage meetings with various broadcasters and stakeholders in the sport this spring, in an effort to ensure that the 2017 Women's World Championship in Germany receives free-to-air domestic exposure.
- The Vietnam Pay Television Association will place a limit of a 20-per-cent increase on the price of acquiring rights in the country to football's English Premier League over three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. The association will negotiate the deal on behalf of its members with the MP & Silva agency.
- The Tennis Australia national governing body held talks with domestic commercial broadcasters Seven and Nine over the potential staging of a new 'Fast 4' team tournament in Sydney. The tournament would run every other year and could launch in 2017.
- New Zealand-based digital sports broadcaster Coliseum Sports Media is open to negotiating sublicensing deals with other broadcasters for some of its golf rights, which include all PGA Tour events, the European Tour, Ryder Cup, USPGA Championship, Asian Tour and Ladies PGA Tour.
- Brazilian sports broadcaster Esporte Interativo tabled a substantial offer to secure the pay-television rights to Campeonato Brasileiro Série A, the top division of Brazilian football, over a six-year term, from 2019 to 2024.
- Canal del Fútbol, the broadcaster that has exclusive rights to domestic football in Chile, is evaluating its options after a tender process for highlights rights to the top-tier Campeonato Nacional failed to attract suitable offers. General-entertainment channel Mega was the only broadcaster to respond to the tender, but its offer was substantially below the reserve price for the rights over three years, from 2016 to 2018.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- The NFL American football league expanded a partnership with Snapchat by signing on as the first sports partner for the social media platform's Story Explorer service. The agreement will allow the two parties to co-produce a weekly Live Story featuring unique highlights of a game, including fan-shot footage and video produced by the league specifically for Snapchat.
- The NBC Sports Group division of US media group NBCUniversal extended and expanded its partnership with internet company Yahoo. The new deal will bring more video content to Yahoo and NBC Sports viewers, including English Premier League football highlights, NBC Sports Regional Network team reports, and content from pay-television platform Golf Channel.
- Italian media group RCS is likely to move its digital-terrestrial sports television channel Gazzetta TV to an online-only model after accumulating losses of €10m (\$11m) in its first year.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from December 17 to January 20

- International sports broadcaster Eurosport launched a bundle subscription package featuring digital service Eurosport Player and the NBA League Pass basketball service. The bundle is available on mobile, tablet or computer platforms across Europe, excluding Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.
- Sports streaming platform Laola1.tv relaunched its website following a successful beta-testing period. The website, which is operated by the Sportsman Media Group agency, offers a new design and enhanced player features.
- Canadian communications and media company Rogers will broadcast 20 NHL North American ice hockey games in ultra-high definition 4K in 2016 via its pay-television broadcaster Sportsnet. Rogers also delivered the first ever 4K public broadcast of an NBA basketball game on January 14 – the NBA Global Games fixture between Orlando Magic and Toronto Raptors in London, UK.
- The 2016 NBA Global Games on January 14 was shown live in 31 UK cinemas after the Odeon group agreed a deal with the NBA.
- UK public-service broadcaster the BBC and commercial broadcaster ITV announced their split of matches for the upcoming 2016 Six Nations Championship. The BBC will show live coverage of eight matches on an exclusive basis, including the opening matches on February 6. ITV will show seven games. The BBC and ITV are sharing the tournament's rights for six years, from 2016 to 2021.
- The BBC is likely to cut more sports coverage in order to save costs, according to BBC Trust chair Rona Fairhead. In November, the BBC announced it would cut its sports-rights budget by £35m (€48m/\$51m) in 2016-17 as part of wider savings of £150m.
- Australian commercial broadcaster Ten switched its coverage of the latter stages of the 2016 Women's Big Bash League Twenty20 cricket tournament to its main channel following impressive viewing figures.
- Modern Times Group, the multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster, switched coverage of Norway national team games in the 2016 men's European Handball Championships to TV3, its main commercial channel in Norway.
- Morten Micalsen, the head of MTG TV in Norway, said Viasat4 would remain the broadcaster's main sports channel in the future.
- Indian pay-television broadcaster Neo Sports is planning to launch a new OTT platform in mid-2016.
- The Argentinian government increased the annual budget of its 'Football for All' scheme, which ensures domestic football coverage is available on free-to-air television. The budget was increased by ARS120m (€8m/\$8.6m) to a total of ARS1.898bn.
- The 2015 edition of football's Fifa Women's World Cup in Canada attracted an all-time record television audience for the national team tournament. A total of 555.6m viewers watched at least three minutes of coverage, up 36 per cent on the 2011 tournament.
- Virtual reality broadcast technology company NextVR agreed a partnership with Relevent Sports, a division of US sports and entertainment firm RSE Ventures, to broadcast matches from the 2016 edition of pre-season club football series the International Champions Cup live in virtual reality.
- The International Ski Federation suspended the use of drones at its events after a machine carrying a camera nearly hit skier Marcel Hirscher during a World Cup event in Italy. The drone was filming coverage for the Infront Sports & Media agency, the federation's exclusive rights partner.
- The European Hockey Federation pledged to provide live streaming coverage from as many EuroHockey Indoor Championships events as possible in 2016.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Hernan Lopez will step down as president and chief executive of Fox International Channels as the broadcast subsidiary of media company 21st Century Fox undergoes a reorganisation. Jan Koeppen will become president of Fox Networks Group Europe, while Carlos Martinez and Zubin Gandevia retain the same positions in Latin America and Asia, respectively. • Eleven Sports Network appointed Joyee Biswas, former director of sports content and programming at Singaporean telco Singtel, as the international media group's managing director for Asia.

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