

TVSportsMarkets

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OLYMPIC GAMES

EBU members paying Discovery more for less in 'new game'

By Frank Dunne

The sublicensing deals agreed this week by Discovery Communications with public-service broadcasters in Slovakia and Slovenia for the 2018 and 2020 Olympic Games fit the pattern of others agreed so far in Europe: public-service broadcasters paying higher fees for fewer rights than they had in 2014 and 2016.

The amounts these broadcasters are paying Discovery are also higher than the individual market-by-market valuations they each put on the 2018-20 rights when drawing up the unsuccessful bid by the European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters.

In Slovenia, public-service broadcaster RTV Slovenija will pay about €1.5m (\$1.7m) for 150 hours of coverage from the 2018 and 250 hours at the 2020 Games. This is a small increase on the fee it paid for rights to the 2014 and 2016 Games in a deal with the Sportfive agency.

In Slovakia, state broadcaster RTVS will pay about €2m for the 2018 and 2020 rights, which is thought to represent an increase of about 30 per cent on the 2014-16 rights, also acquired from Sportfive.

In June 2015, Discovery paid €1.3bn to the International Olympic Committee for rights to the 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024 Games in 50 European territories. The EBU bid €1.09bn for the same rights (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13; 19:20).

Since then, EBU members have agreed sublicensing deals with Discovery in 10 territories, paying large increases on the value of the 2014 and 2016 Games in the respective territories despite having far fewer rights, no exclusivity and, in some cases, key sports carved out (see page 5).

One rights expert said that if such increases continued in the remaining markets, Discovery would probably refinance its entire investment from sublicensing deals.

Discovery also agreed a rights-fee plus rights-sharing deal in the UK with public-service broadcaster and EBU member the BBC, but this deal is not strictly comparable to the others – the BBC already held rights to the 2018 and 2020 Games (*TV Sports Markets* 20:2).

New game

RTV's acting director general, Marko Filli, told *TV Sports Markets* this week that EBU members had no option but to rethink their valuations in negotiations with Discovery.

He said: “Once the EBU has lost the rights you are in a new game. It is take it or leave it. You have to decide whether to play the game with the winner or not show the Games at all, which is very hard for a public-service broadcaster.”

Filli declined to confirm the value of the RTV deal, but said that in making their original valuations for the 2018 and 2020 Games EBU members had not expected such an aggressive bid from Discovery.

“If the EBU had come to us and said ‘you need to pay 30 per cent more to keep the rights’, I think we might have gone there. But you bid on the data you have available, which means mostly what you bid before and how you think your own market is developing. You might then add five or 10 per cent to that.”

One source close to an EBU broadcaster said many members’ valuations had been predicated on the main rival to the EBU being an agency, such as Sportfive or Infront Sports & Media, rather than a media group.

“If the rival is an agency, you get another crack,” the source said. “And if you expect an agency to bid against you, you don’t want to push them too high because you then have to buy the rights from them at a higher price. If you put a higher amount down in the auction, you are bidding against yourself. Discovery changes that because they can broadcast it themselves.”

This ability to broadcast the whole Games gives Discovery a far stronger bargaining position with EBU members than Sportfive had enjoyed.

For 2014-16, Sportfive paid the IOC €236m for rights in 40 European territories. The increases on what EBU members paid as part of the consortium deal covering 2010 and 2012 – and what they paid Sportfive in 2014-16 – were very small, and in some cases the values went down. Sportfive is thought to have lost about €18m on its deal (*TV Sports Markets* 15:9).

The head of sport at another EBU member, which has yet to agree a deal with Discovery from 2018 onward, said members would have to change this mindset to remain competitive when bidding for sports rights generally.

He said: “We have to think about what ‘market value’ really means and pay that the first time around. Too many members think of the EBU bid as just the first round in the process. They assume they will have a second chance to get the rights, as they did when Sportfive won. This phenomenon of the second chance is a problem the EBU has to address.”

The executive said the nature of the sublicensing deals being agreed – with limited digital and multi-screen opportunities – was “dangerous” for EBU members.

“If we reduce the scope of our rights, we are dead,” the source said. “If we allow ourselves to be boxed in as a traditional linear free-to-air broadcaster, that is the end.”

“Maybe in the short term these deals are a compromise, but longer term all of the growth is in digital,

not in linear broadcasting. If you look at the viewing figures from Rio and compare linear TV with digital, giving up digital rights is clearly not what we should be doing.”

The strong bid by Discovery should not have taken the EBU by surprise. Up until a few days before the June 15 bidding deadline, the consortium and Discovery had been planning a joint bid.

Refinancing

Discovery is set to recoup most, if not all, of its initial €1.3bn rights fee through sublicensing deals. The final outcome will be heavily dependent on deals in Germany, Spain and Turkey, where negotiations are expected to be difficult.

German media reports have suggested Discovery is seeking €150m for rights to the 2018 and 2020 Games in the country. Public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF are refusing to meet the asking price.

Regardless, Discovery is on course to make a large profit from advertising revenues for its pan-regional basic-tier sports channel Eurosport and its Nordic free-to-air channels, and from improved carriage fees for Eurosport from pay-television platforms across Europe.

One rights expert said the Games themselves were unlikely to enable Discovery to demand a much higher per-subscriber fee from platforms, but would do so as part of a wider move to improve the quality of its rights in each territory. He said Discovery was also likely to bid more aggressively for other Olympic sports in order to offer year-round Olympic sports content.

He pointed out that the Games, and Olympic sports generally, provided good content when trying to secure better carriage deals. “It is not the kind of content that a pay-TV operator would normally bid for, so it is complementary, adds value to the platform and doesn’t make you a threat to them.” ♦

2018-2020: Paying more for less

Hungary: MTVA paid about €5m, more than double the €2.35m it paid for 2014-16.

Switzerland: SRG paid €16m, 60 per cent up on the €10m paid in 2014-16.

Ireland: RTÉ paid €2.2m, 57 per cent up on the €1.4m paid in 2014-16.

Croatia: HRT paid €2m, up 53 per cent on the €1.3m paid in 2014-16.

Czech Republic: Česká Televize paid €4m, 48 per cent up on the €2.7m paid with pay-television platform Nova in a joint deal for 2014-16.

Austria: ORF paid €24m, up about 35 per cent on the €18m paid in 2014-16.

Netherlands: NOS paid €20m, 11 per cent up on the €18m paid in 2014-16, with ice hockey and one other sport (as-yet unconfirmed) carved out in 2018, and two summer sports to be carved out in 2020.

Finland: YLE paid €11m, up 10 per cent on the €10m paid in 2014-16, despite all matches of the Finland ice hockey team and peak-time highlights being carved out in 2018, and two disciplines set to be carved out of 2020.

TV AFRICA

Econet continues to grow sports portfolio in sub-Saharan Africa

By Callum McCarthy

LATEST ECONET RIGHTS DEALS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

- Formula One free-to-air rights, mid-2016 to 2019, about \$2m per year
- Exclusive NFL rights, 2016 to 2020, between \$400,000 and \$500,000 per season
- Brazilian Série A and Campeonato Paulista rights, 2016 to 2018, between \$150,000 and \$200,000 per year

African telco Econet has continued to spend its billion-dollar sports-rights acquisition budget in recent weeks, buying Formula One, National Football League and Brazilian football rights.

As with its previous acquisitions, Econet plans to exploit all three sets of rights on its free-to-air Kwesé Free Sports channel, which has started rolling out across sub-Saharan Africa. However, its pay-television business is thought to be behind schedule.

Kwesé TV, Econet's yet-to-launch pay-television platform, is scheduled for launch in October. But industry insiders have questioned the likelihood of it being operational across all English-speaking territories by then. Most believe Kwesé TV will be fully operational early next year.

Econet is currently focusing on the free-to-air side of its business, especially the distribution of English Premier League rights from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:5).

Kwesé Free Sports has only launched in Kenya thus far, on August 11, but is expected to launch in Ghana and four other territories during September. In territories where distribution of its channel proves difficult, Kwesé is likely to sell branded blocks of content to free-to-air broadcasters.

Sources close to Econet say October is an internal deadline only and there is no pressing need to launch the pay-television platform before it is ready. The telco is still in the process of hiring a chief executive for its Kwesé Sports division.

Econet began its search in May, and is being assisted in the process by global executive search firm Egon Zehnder. It is thought to have interviewed tens of candidates thus far without success.

Formula One

Econet's deal for Formula One rights is for delayed free-to-air rights only, and is valid in all English-speaking territories in sub-Saharan Africa excluding South Africa.

The telco will pay about \$2m (€1.8m) per year in a three-and-a-half-year deal, from August 2016 to the end of 2019. Free-to-air rights have not been carved out since the Ufa Sports agency – recently rebranded as U! Sports – held free-to-air rights outside South Africa in a two-year deal covering 2010 and 2011.

Econet's deal was agreed with Formula One Management, the commercial rights-holder of the Formula One championship.

Rights will be shown with a four- or six-hour delay on Kwešé Free Sports, but the broadcaster will not be able to stream races for free on its website as digital rights are carved out of the deal.

The deal is a consolation for Econet after it missed out on Formula One pay-television rights in March. SuperSport beat the telco to these rights in all English-speaking territories in sub-Saharan Africa, buying them for about \$10m per year in a three-year deal, from 2017 to 2019 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:4).

Formula One's total income from English-speaking territories in the region will be about \$12m per year over the three years. This is roughly double the amount it currently earns from a three-year deal with SuperSport, worth about \$6m per year from 2014 to 2016.

The championship also has coverage in French-speaking African territories with pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus Afrique, from 2013 to 2017. This is part of Canal Plus's deal in France, worth about €29m per year.

Econet's Formula One rights will join Formula E in its motorsport offering. In July, Econet acquired digital rights to the electric car racing series across all English-speaking territories for the 2016-17 season, paying a nominal fee. The telco will pay about \$100,000 for linear rights in 2017-18.

Econet is also thought to be close to acquiring rights to the World Rally Championship, which are currently held by pay-television operator StarTimes. StarTimes is paying about \$400,000 per year for WRC rights in a two-year deal covering 2015 and 2016.

Informed sources believe Econet has offered between \$700,000 and \$800,000 per year for the rights – an increase of between 75 and 100 per cent. Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Africa was also understood to be interested in the rights. StarTimes is not thought to have been interested in renewing its deal at an increased price.

NFL

Econet will pay between \$400,000 and \$500,000 per season for exclusive free-to-air and pay-television rights to the NFL over five seasons, from 2016 to 2020, after months of discussion.

The telco will show five NFL regular-season games per week on its free-to-air and pay-television platforms – three on Sunday, one on Monday and one on Thursday. The deal includes all post-season matches, the Pro Bowl, and ancillary content produced by US pay-television broadcaster ESPN.

Only Fox made a rival bid. Its bid is thought to have been between \$200,000 and \$250,000 per season for the same five-season term.

Econet will also be responsible for marketing American football in sub-Saharan Africa in an attempt to grow interest in the sport across the region.

Econet's rights are valid in all English-speaking territories in sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa. It is thought this carve-out is to accommodate SuperSport should it decide to acquire NFL post-season rights. Informed sources say SuperSport had no interest in continuing its NFL regular-season coverage as it provided low ratings.

The deal represents a significant increase on the NFL's total income of between \$180,000 and \$230,000 in sub-Saharan Africa for the 2015 season. SuperSport and East African pay-television platform Zuku have shared pay-television NFL rights for the last three seasons.

The NFL is split into two conferences: The National Football Conference and the American Football Conference. Each conference has its own playoffs, with the winner of each meeting in the season-ending Super Bowl.

It is thought that Zuku paid about \$80,000 in the 2015 season for two regular-season games each Sunday and the NFC's branch of the NFL playoffs.

SuperSport is thought to have paid between \$100,000 and \$150,000 per season, from 2013 to 2015, for rights to three regular-season games each week – on Monday, Thursday and Sunday nights – as well as the AFC's branch of the NFL post-season.

Rights to the Super Bowl were not included in either deal and had to be acquired separately; SuperSport agreed a deal in 2015, Zuku did not.

All these deals, including Econet's latest deal, have been brokered by ESPN Media Distribution, which earns commission on sales.

ESPN MD has been the gatekeeper of NFL rights in sub-Saharan Africa since ESPN closed its pay-television channels covering Europe, the Middle East and Africa in July 2013.

Brazilian football

Econet's acquisition of free-to-air, pay-television and digital rights to Brazil's top-tier Série A and the Campeonato Paulista – the São Paulo state top-tier – will cost between \$150,000 and \$200,000 per year.

Under the two-and-a-half-year deal, running to the end of 2018, Econet will show Série A and Paulista matches on its free-to-air and pay-television channels. Kwesé Sports is expected to broadcast about 110 Série A matches per year and about 45 Paulista matches per year.

The Campeonato Paulista is the most prestigious of Brazil's state leagues as it includes four of the country's top teams: Corinthians, Palmeiras, Santos and São Paulo.

The deal was agreed with Brazilian pay-television broadcaster Globo, which holds the individual domestic and international rights of all 20 Brazilian Série A clubs until the end of 2018.

Globo did not tender the rights but spoke with several interested parties including Fox and StarTimes. Talks are thought to have taken place at last year's Sportel Monaco trade fair.

Econet's deal is thought to have been completed late last year, but the telco has chosen to wait until Kwesé Free Sports was operational to show Série A matches.

The rights will accompany Econet's other South American football rights acquired in May. Then, the telco bought rights to the Copa Libertadores and Copa Sudamericana club competitions for about \$400,000 per year, covering 2017 and 2018 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:9). ◆

OTT

Perform still aiming for DAZN to be profitable within three years

By Robin Jellis and Richard Welbirg

The Perform Group believes the profitability of its OTT platform, DAZN, is a realistic aim within three years across Germany, Austria and Switzerland, despite a current outlay of more than €45m (\$50.9m) per year on sports rights.

Perform has the same goal for DAZN in Japan, although local sources says its huge investment in top-tier J-League football rights from next year will make this more difficult. Perform's outlay on sports rights in Japan at launch is at least \$30m, which the J-League deal will increase hugely.

The digital media specialists agreed a 10-year deal for J-League rights in July, from 2017 to 2026, worth an average of ¥21bn (€185m/\$209m) per year (*TV Sports Markets* 20:13).

The J-League deal is more than 12 times more valuable than the most expensive deal DAZN has agreed in the German-speaking territories.

DAZN launched in Germany, Austria and Switzerland on August 10, and in Japan on August 23. John Gleasure, chief commercial officer of DAZN, this week told *TV Sports Markets* the planned May launch in Japan had been "very ambitious".

He said: "We wanted thorough user testing of the product to ensure that when we launched it would definitely be successful.

"Compared to other OTT services what we are delivering is something that's never really been done on this scale. In less than a year we went from the start of development and selecting suppliers to delivery – it's an incredibly short term."

DAZN is available for €9.99 per month in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. In Japan, DAZN costs ¥1,750 per month – roughly double the price of a standard Netflix subscription in the country.

Gleasure said these price points were chosen to appeal to existing customers of streaming services like Netflix, but were also reasonable enough that "it's not a significant additional payment on top of a subscription to Sky Deutschland in Germany or Sky PerfectTV in Japan".

In both countries, DAZN is available on a free one-month trial. All subscriptions are rolling monthly contracts.

As exclusively revealed by *TV Sports Markets* last September, Perform chose these territories as the first to launch DAZN for several reasons.

First, pay-television penetration is much lower than in other markets. Second, there is a strong base of sports fans who do not have pay-television subscriptions. Third, connection speeds and broadband infrastructure in these countries is good. Fourth, there has been little competition for sports rights meaning they are more affordable (*TV Sports Markets* 19:17).

Although Gleasure would not say how many subscribers either DAZN operation has, he said Perform was “delighted with the take-up” of the service.

“It's been far ahead of our expectations, especially as we are going to increase our spend on marketing. You will see a lot more activity in both markets in the next few weeks,” he said.

Content

Perform's content strategy is built upon three main pillars: top international football, US sport and locally-relevant rights. It will also seek out niche content to trial on its service.

In the German-speaking territories, Perform has live Premier League (about €13m per season), LaLiga (€9m per season), Serie A (€1.5m per season) and Ligue 1 (€300,000 per season) rights, and will hold Bundesliga highlights clips rights from 2017-18 in a deal worth about €15m per season. It also has NBA (\$3m per season) and NFL (\$1.5m per season) rights, but is yet to buy much locally-relevant content.

In Japan, Perform has live Bundesliga, Serie A and Ligue 1 rights, which it acquired in a package of football rights from the MP & Silva agency, currently worth about \$20m per season.

DAZN Japan also has rights to each of the top four US leagues. It pays just over \$4m per year for non-exclusive digital rights to Major League Baseball, the most popular of the US leagues in the country. However, it will have few rights of local relevance until the J-League deal starts next year.

This week, Perform agreed a content sharing deal with German sports broadcaster Sport1 in which the two have exchanged rights to numerous properties.

Perform will receive rights to Germany's top-tier handball league, some ATP tennis and ice hockey from Sport1.

In return, Sport1 will receive selected live matches from Serie A, Ligue 1, the Scottish Professional Football League and the Belgian Pro League for its pay-television channel Sport1 Plus.

It will also show Premier League highlights on its free-to-air Sport1 channel; Women's Tennis Association coverage on its Sport1 and Sport1 Plus channels from 2017 to 2019; and highlights clips from the Premier League, LaLiga, Serie A and Ligue 1 on its sport1.de website and mobile application.

DAZN content acquisition in Germany, Austria and Switzerland is being led by Kay Dammholz,

managing director of rights and distribution, DACH – Deutschland, Austria and Switzerland. Dammholz took up the role in July after leaving DFL Sports Enterprises, the Bundesliga’s commercial arm.

The Japanese platform is led by Deane Sadler, who has been managing director of Perform Japan since July 2013.

Rights-holders pot

Despite Perform paying guarantees for most of its marquee rights thus far, Gleasure said the company’s ‘rights-holder pot’ mechanism was “still absolutely core to the service”.

Perform pays guarantees for premium sports rights, like other broadcasters. For smaller properties it will seek a revenue-share model rather than paying an upfront fee to rights-holders.

A percentage of DAZN revenue will go into the pot and be shared among rights-holders based on the cumulative minutes each property is watched. Gleasure said about 60 per cent of DAZN revenues in Japan and the German-speaking territories would be paid into the pot.

Demographic

The content Perform has already acquired will appeal mainly to young males. This is expected to remain its predominant target group, although experts expect this to widen over time.

One agency source in Japan said the DAZN portfolio currently lacked strong properties that would widen its appeal to women and families, such as tennis, golf or figure skating, the latter of which is particularly strong in Japan.

“We want to provide a proposition that’s very personalised,” Gleasure said. “We want DAZN to appeal to everyone. If you take Germany, you’ve got superstars like [Angelique] Kerber so it’s great that we have all the WTA events.”

Perform’s 10-year deal for global WTA media rights, worth \$52.5m per year, starts next year and will run until 2026 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:23).

Other territories

Perform is expected to roll out its DAZN service in additional territories in the near future, although targets are not set in stone – the company will react to local market conditions.

Any new market would have to share the characteristics that attracted Perform to the German-speaking territories and Japan: widespread high-speed broadband, affluent sports fans underserved by weak pay-television markets, undervalued sports properties and stable political systems. ♦

For the full interview with John Gleasure, visit our website.

ICE HOCKEY

Infront set to extend Champions Hockey League contract

By Callum McCarthy

INFRONT'S CURRENT CHAMPIONS HOCKEY LEAGUE DEALS

- Finland: MTV3 pays just under €500,000 per season from 2014-15 to 2016-17
- Sweden: SVT pays just over €300,000 per season from 2014-15 to 2016-17
- Germany: Sport1 pays about €150,000 per season in the 2016-17 season
- Switzerland: SRG and Teleclub pay about €100,000 per season from 2014-15 to 2016-17

The Infront Sports & Media agency will pay about double its current outlay for Champions Hockey League media and marketing rights in a bid to have greater control over the competition, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

Infront will pay in the region of €6m (\$6.8m) per season, from 2017-18 to 2022-23, in a renegotiated buyout deal for all media and marketing rights to the competition.

This is an increase of at least 50 per cent on the agency's current deal for CHL media and marketing rights, worth a minimum of between €3m and €4m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:20).

That deal was set to run for nine seasons, from 2014-15 to 2022-23, but the deal was structured to allow a renegotiation after the 2016-17 season.

Amikam Kranz, director of winter sports at Infront, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "Generally, as a company, we always try to have a certain control over a product – while obviously liaising closely with the rights-holder.

"Having more of a say helps us to develop and structure a platform in the best possible way. And we tried in this new deal to include more of our ideas."

As part of an agreement between Infront and the CHL, the competition format will change from 2017-18. The CHL will move from 48 to 32 teams, with clubs earning qualification solely via performance in their respective domestic leagues.

The CHL currently grants automatic qualification to 26 founding member clubs; six merit-based qualification places to the champions of its six founding leagues; and 16 wildcards to clubs in both founding and non-founding leagues.

Infront is thought to have recouped its guarantee for all three seasons of its current deal, but informed sources believe the agency's margins have been small. One source said CHL clubs received little money above their guarantee.

Kranz hopes that the CHL's new format will provide better financial results for the agency and the clubs. "We believe the changes will make it better, more competitive and a higher-quality tournament," he said. "The expectation certainly is that this will trigger results on the sponsorship and media side as well."

All of the media-rights deals Infront has struck on behalf of the CHL expire at the end of the 2016-17 season.

Production-based deals

The total production cost of a single CHL season in its current format is about €3m. Each of the 157 matches per season costs between €15,000 and €20,000 to produce. Production costs are mainly covered by Infront's broadcast partners.

The agency's biggest deal is in Finland with pay-television broadcaster MTV3, which pays just under €500,000 per season plus production costs from 2014-15 to 2016-17 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:3).

However, deals in other markets with a strong presence in the CHL are much smaller, with broadcasters paying low fees. A deal in Sweden with public-service broadcaster SVT is thought to be worth just over €300,000 per season plus production costs, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. SVT sublicensed a package of these rights to sports broadcaster Eurosport over the same three seasons.

Infront's deal in Switzerland with public-service broadcaster SRG and pay-television broadcaster Teleclub, from 2014-15 to 2016-17, is worth €100,000 per season, plus production costs of €400,000 each season. It is thought Teleclub, which broadcasts the matches of all Swiss teams until the semi-finals, pays the bulk of these fees.

In Germany, sports broadcaster Sport1 will pay about €150,000 plus production for rights in 2016-17. This is thought to be a marginal increase on the broadcaster's previous deal, for 2015-16 only. Sport1 paid about €100,000 plus production in the 2014-15 season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:15).

KHL issues

The CHL originally hoped to include clubs from the Kontinental Hockey League, which operates as a domestic league covering clubs from Russia, Eastern Europe and, from the 2016-17 season, China. However, the KHL has shown little interest in joining the CHL since its inaugural season in 2014-15.

Some industry experts have pointed to this abstention as a reason for the league's slow financial growth but Kranz believes it has had limited impact.

"Generally this has not affected the media or sponsorship income," he said. "We still hope to be able to

integrate KHL teams into the CHL in one form or the other, but we believe interest in hockey is so strong that it can accommodate both.”

Infront currently has no deal for CHL rights in Russia, but industry experts believe the competition would receive limited income from the country with or without clubs from the KHL.

Premier Sports

UK pay-television broadcaster Premier Sports holds CHL rights in a three-season deal, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. CHL rights are locally relevant as one club from the UK’s Elite Ice Hockey League is granted a wildcard each season.

The broadcaster is thought to pay a nominal fee plus production costs of about €40,000. Despite the CHL contracting to 32 teams from 2017-18, one qualification spot will be reserved for the winner of the EIHL.

In addition to its CHL rights, Premier Sports is currently finalising a deal for National Hockey League rights with the IMG agency, thought to be worth an average of just over \$500,000 per season, from 2016-17 to 2020-21.

Premier Sports’s previous five-season deal for NHL rights, with the Advisers Media International agency, was worth an average of just over \$400,000 per season from 2011-12 to 2015-16 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:14).

AMI bought NHL international rights from the league alongside the Medge Consulting Sports agency for \$20m per season over the five seasons from 2011-12 to 2015-16.

Contrary to what was published in the last issue of *TV Sports Markets*, AMI did not default on payments to the NHL. The agency renegotiated its deal before the 2015-16 season as a result of the NHL lockout, taking on a more limited brief for that season. ♦

TV ISRAEL

The Sports Channel extends F1 deal amid host of renewals

By Robin Jellis

NEW DEALS AGREED BY THE SPORTS CHANNEL

- Formula One, 2017 to 2019, worth an average of \$375,000 per year
- Israeli Premier League, 2016-17 to 2019-20, worth about ILS60m per season
- Euroleague basketball, 2016-17 to 2021-22, worth just over \$6m per season
- Israeli Basketball Premier League, 2016-17 to 2018-19, worth ILS15m per season

The Sports Channel has renewed a host of rights in recent weeks as it seeks to solidify its position in the Israeli broadcast market.

The pay-television broadcaster has renewed Formula One rights in a three-year deal, from 2017 to 2019, increasing its fee by about 25 per cent, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

The Sports Channel has also renewed Euroleague and domestic basketball rights, and last month agreed a sublicensing deal with pay-television broadcaster Charlton for some rights to the Israeli Premier League, the top domestic football league.

The deals are seen by local experts as a response to losing out on domestic Premier League rights to Charlton, and Spanish LaLiga rights to basic-tier sports broadcaster One (*TV Sports Markets* 19:23).

The Sports Channel agreed its Formula One deal with Formula One Management, the commercial rights-holder of the motorsport championship.

The agreement is understood to be worth an average of about \$375,000 (€332,000) per year: starting at \$350,000 in the first year and ending at about \$400,000 in the third year. The deal is yet to be signed.

The Sports Channel's current three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016, is worth an average of just over \$300,000 per year. The broadcaster is a long-term partner of Formula One.

The value of the rights in Israel is understood to be limited by the fact that Sunday, Formula One's race day, is a work day in the country (*TV Sports Markets* 15:1).

FOM undertook its usual sales method of speaking with most local broadcasters. It discussed the possibility of a deal with Charlton but is not thought to have held talks with telco Partner, which

aggressively – though unsuccessfully – sought domestic and English Premier League rights in December (*TV Sports Markets* 20:1).

Israeli football

At the end of May, the Sports Channel agreed a sublicensing deal with Charlton for the right to show the top-pick Israeli Premier League match live each round, as well as weekly highlights.

The Sports Channel will also have some live and highlights rights to cup matches, although it is not yet known how many matches it will show each season. The deal will run for four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20.

It is understood Charlton has the option to extend the sublicensing deal with the Sports Channel for one further season should its own deal with the league be extended to cover the 2020-21 season.

Charlton agreed a deal with the league worth ILS126.5m (€29.6m/\$33.5m) per season, but following a local court ruling has to pay a 10-per-cent premium, taking its total spend to ILS139.15m per season.

Under the terms of Charlton's deal, the top-pick match each week must be shown free-to-air. Sports Channel will show coverage on its basic-tier Sport5 channel. Local sources say the deal is worth about ILS60m per season – close to half the value of Charlton's deal.

Euroleague

The Sports Channel has also agreed a six-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2021-22, for Euroleague rights. The deal is thought to be worth just over \$6m per season.

This would represent a big increase in value on previous Euroleague deals in the country. Commercial broadcaster Channel 10 held rights in the 2012-13 season for about €2.5m. It extended the deal to cover the 2013-14 and 2014-15 seasons, in which it paid close to €3m per season.

Channel 10 agreed a one-season deal for 2015-16 which is understood to have been based on the performance of Israeli club Maccabi Tel Aviv. They only played 10 group-stage matches as they failed to qualify for the Top 16, meaning the value of Channel 10's deal was lower than before.

The Sports Channel's owner, RGE media group, also holds a controlling stake in Channel 10.

The new deal was agreed by the IMG agency. In November, IMG and the Euroleague began a 10-season joint venture, from 2016-17 to 2025-26, to market all aspects of the competition. IMG is guaranteeing revenue of €630m across the period (*TV Sports Markets* 19:21).

Both IMG and the Euroleague declined to comment on the new deal. The agency will announce broadcast coverage from 2016-17 onward in the coming weeks.

Domestic basketball

In February, the Sports Channel renewed and expanded its coverage of the Israeli Basketball Premier League. The deal is for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, and is thought to be worth about ILS15m per season.

This is an increase of about 50 per cent in the value of the league's previous deals and means the broadcaster will have all rights. In its previous three-season deals, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, the league earned about ILS10m per season.

It sold: free-to-air rights to the top game each week to the Israeli Broadcasting Authority's Channel 1 for ILS6m per season; rights to the remaining five games each week to the Sports Channel for ILS3.5m per season; and online highlights rights to several buyers for a total of about ILS500,000 per season.

The IBA, Israel's public-service broadcaster, was unable to bid for the rights in a new cycle as it is set to be replaced by a new Israeli broadcasting corporation by the end of April 2017. ◆

TENNIS

Eurosport expands relationship with Wimbledon across Europe

By Robin Jellis

International sports broadcaster Eurosport has taken its spend on Wimbledon media rights across Europe to almost €6m (\$6.8m) per year following a host of new deals agreed in recent weeks.

The broadcaster has coveted Wimbledon rights to complete its set of grand slam tennis coverage across Europe – it has pan-regional rights to each of the Australian, French and US Opens (*TV Sports Markets* 17:19; 19:5; 19:17).

Earlier this month Eurosport announced a three-year deal, from 2017 to 2019, covering 16 territories: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Sweden. The deal is thought to be worth about €4.5m per year.

The value of seven separate deals covering the corresponding 16 territories, all ending in 2016, is about €2.2m per year.

PREVIOUS WIMBLEDON DEALS COVERING THE 16 TERRITORIES

- **Albania and Kosovo: Supersport, 2015 and 2016, worth about €100,000 per year**
- **Balkans: Sportklub, from 2014 to 2016, worth about €200,000 per year**
- **Bulgaria: BTV and Bulsatcom, from 2014 to 2016, worth about €150,000 per year**
- **Finland, Norway and Sweden: C More, from 2014 to 2016, worth €700,000 per year**
- **Hungary and Romania: Digi Sport, from 2014 to 2016, worth about €500,000 per year**
- **Iceland: 365 Media, 2016, worth about €50,000**
- **Netherlands: Fox, from 2014 to 2016, worth €500,000 per year**

The IMG agency advises the All England Lawn Tennis Club, the tournament organiser and commercial rights-holder, on the global sale of its media rights. It is understood to have issued a tender for the rights across a swathe of European territories on June 2, with bids due on June 23.

One tennis rights expert said Eurosport had to pay a premium to acquire the rights in these 16 markets in order to encourage the AELTC and IMG to agree a multi-territory deal.

Eurosport's coverage will be exclusive in eight of the 16 territories: Albania, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Romania and Sweden.

The remainder of the broadcaster's €6m per year spend comes from territories in which it already holds rights, and markets in which it is likely to acquire rights in the near future.

Eurosport has existing deals in several markets: a three-year deal in Belgium from 2015 to 2017; a three-year deal in Russia from 2016 to 2018; a five-year highlights deal in the UK from 2016 to 2020; and separate three-year deals, from 2016 to 2018, covering Armenia, the Baltics – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania – Moldova and Ukraine (*TV Sports Markets* 19:11; 20:8; 20:10).

The broadcaster is also thought to be discussing a three-year deal for rights in Turkey and Eurasia, from 2017 to 2019, with the Saran Media agency.

Nordics

The most valuable territories for the rights in the Eurosport package are Finland, Norway and Sweden, where rights were previously held by pay-television broadcaster C More.

The broadcaster's three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016, was worth about €700,000 per year – a small increase on C More's three-year deal covering the same territories from 2011 to 2013, worth about €600,000 per year.

Rights in Denmark were not included in C More's deal – these were acquired by Modern Times Group. Interest in the rights is greater in Denmark due to the presence of local star Caroline Wozniacki.

C More sublicensed rights to the final of the men's and women's tournaments in Norway and Sweden to NRK and SVT respectively. Both deals were for three years, from 2014 to 2016, and were of limited value.

C More was less interested in the rights across the three territories this time as it has ceased to operate on a pan-regional basis and is now focused on Sweden.

Balkans

Wimbledon rights were sold slightly differently in the Balkans: the AELTC sold pay-television rights to Sportklub but reserved the right to sell free-to-air rights in each market.

Sportklub's three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016, was worth just under €200,000 per year. It covered Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.

Separate free-to-air deals were agreed with public-service broadcasters RTRS, HRT, RTCG and RTS in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia respectively. The total value of these deals is about €300,000 per year, with RTS's the most valuable – at about €150,000 per year – because men's number one Novak Djokovic hails from Serbia. All four deals ran for three years, from 2014 to 2016.

Hungary and Romania

Rights in Hungary and Romania were previously held by pay-television broadcaster Digi Sport, run by telco RCS-RDS. The three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016, was worth about €500,000 per year; down from the €800,000 per year the broadcaster paid from 2011 to 2013.

It is understood the broadcaster was not willing to increase its rights fee in any deal from 2017 onward. One local expert said Digi is making only very low offers for most properties it bids for. It is understood to have balked at IMG's asking price of about \$6m per season for English Premier League rights in Hungary.

Other deals

The AELTC is understood to be close to finalising additional deals in Europe, with announcements expected before or during the Sportel Monaco trade fair in October.

An agreement covering Turkey and Eurasia with Saran is likely to be announced, as are deals with pay-television broadcasters Nova in Cyprus, the Sports Channel in Israel, Go in Malta and Polsat in Poland. It is also close to a deal in Greece. ◆

DARTS

BDO strikes biggest-ever deal in switch from BBC to Channel 4

By Richard Welbirg

Channel 4's deal last month for British Darts Organisation media rights is the governing body's largest ever.

The commercial broadcaster will pay about £300,000 (€348,000/\$394,000) per year plus production costs for rights to the BDO's World Darts Championship in a two-year deal, covering 2017 and 2018.

Channel 4 won the rights in a tender which closed on February 1. The deal's announcement was delayed while the broadcaster negotiated a sublicensing deal, over the same term, with pay-television broadcaster BT Sport.

Following the sublicensing agreement with BT, Channel 4 will retain exclusive rights to afternoon sessions plus one of the semi-finals and the women's final. BT will have exclusive rights to the evening sessions and the other semi-final. The broadcasters will simulcast the men's final.

This is the same content BT sublicensed from the BBC in a two-year deal covering the 2015 and 2016 World Championships.

The public-service broadcaster has been the BDO's long-term broadcast partner in the UK. It paid about £100,000 per year plus production for World Championship rights over three years from 2014 to 2016.

As part of its sublicensing agreement, BT paid just under £50,000 per year to the BBC and covered about half the total production costs of about £70,000 per day. The event runs for nine days.

First tender

The latest deal marks the first time the BDO had tendered its rights. It did so because it believed the audience for darts was growing and becoming more attractive to broadcasters, and that the competition environment was strong.

BDO chairperson Sue Williams told *TV Sports Markets* this week that, given the competitive market situation, it was better to tender the rights than renew directly with the BBC as it had in the past.

Channel 4 had expressed interest and the BBC indicated it wished to renew, while digital-terrestrial channel Dave had shown an appetite for sport having acquired rights to boxer David Haye's comeback fight in January (*TV Sports Markets* 20:11).

On the pay-television side, BT was keen to retain some coverage, while sports broadcaster Eurosport has shown several smaller BDO events.

The BDO received two bids: one from Channel 4 and a joint bid from the BBC and BT. But on January 29, when the BDO board was meeting to discuss the offers, the BBC withdrew its bid.

The public-service broadcaster is thought to have pulled out because it received a more appealing proposition from sports promotion company Matchroom Sport, which sells rights of the rival Professional Darts Corporation.

On February 9, the BBC announced a two-year deal with Matchroom covering the new Champions League of Darts event in 2016 and 2017. The public-service broadcaster is paying a nominal fee, thought to be between £50,000 and £100,000 per year, for the two-day event. It will show the entire event live (*TV Sports Markets* 20:11).

However, regardless of the BBC pulling out, Channel 4's bid exceeded the BBC/BT offer. The broadcaster has money to spend on sports rights as its deals for horse racing rights ends in 2016 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:1).

In acquiring darts rights for the first time the broadcaster hopes to reach a younger audience.

Other rights

Channel 4's deal does not include international rights or rights to the World Trophy, the BDO's newest event, established in 2014.

The World Trophy was shown by Eurosport in 2014 and 2015 – both were one-off deals at a price of just under £20,000 plus production. Dave paid close to £30,000 for the 2016 event, one of its first sports-rights acquisitions. The BDO is planning to package the World Trophy with some smaller events in future.

International rights to the World Darts Championship have previously been sold by the BDO to the Pitch International agency. The BDO will again use an agency for the 2017-18 period, but no deal has yet been agreed by the organisation. ◆

FOOTBALL

LaLiga deals for Segunda and highlights rights close cycle

By Richard Welbirg

Spain's LaLiga finalised the sale of its rights for 2016-17 to 2018-19 last month, taking its total domestic income over the cycle to at least €1,031.2m (\$1,166.3m) per season.

Following two tenders – in December 2015 and June this year – LaLiga was left with two unsold packages of rights: pay-television rights for up to 10 live second-tier Segunda matches, and 90-second highlights of all matches in LaLiga competitions for online exploitation.

LaLiga chose to exploit the Segunda rights itself in the form of a channel which it could distribute to pay-television platforms on a non-exclusive basis.

Five platforms have taken the channel: telcos Deion, Orange, Telecable and Vodafone España, as well as the beIN Sports Connect OTT platform. The channel is branded as LaLiga 1|2|3 following LaLiga's sponsorship deal with Santander bank.

Each of the platforms will pay €2.17 per subscriber; the telcos will pay an additional €0.30 per broadband subscriber. Subscriber numbers will be assessed at the beginning of each season. The league will earn about €20m in 2016-17.

The package of 90-second online clips was also made available on a non-exclusive basis. As *TV Sports Markets* went to press, the digital arms of newspapers *AS*, *Marca*, and *Sport* had all acquired the rights. A fourth buyer is expected soon.

The media companies are each paying €8.25 per 100 unique domestic users across all devices, as measured by analysts ComScore in June. The minimum fee is €150,000 per season. LaLiga expects to earn about €3m from these rights in 2016-17.

Previous deals

Earnings from these latest deals will be added to agreements already in place for the 2016-17 to 2018-19 cycle.

In December's tender, the league agreed deals worth €883m per season for pay-television rights in deals with telco Telefónica and broadcaster beIN Sports (*TV Sports Markets* 19:23).

It also sold rights in public places to telcos Vodafone and Orange for between €100m and €110m.

In June this year, the Mediapro agency agreed deals worth €25.2m per season for five packages covering free-to-air and video-on-demand rights (*TV Sports Markets* 20:11; 20:12).

Highlights sublicensing

Mediapro is in the process of sublicensing its extended highlights rights to free-to-air channels on a non-exclusive basis.

Public-service broadcaster TVE agreed a deal for highlights of up to 10 minutes per match over the 2016-17 to 2018-19 cycle. It is thought to be worth between €2m and €2.5m per season.

Commercial broadcaster Mediaset has struck a deal over the same term for highlights of up to five minutes per match. One source close to the league said the deal was worth about €3m per season, but one local expert said the deal was worth between €1.5m and €2m per season.

Deals are close to being finalised with commercial broadcaster Atresmedia and Forta, the association of regional broadcasters. Catalan broadcaster TV3, an important member of Forta, is specifically interested in highlights of Barcelona, Espanyol and Real Madrid. ◆

TV RUSSIA

Football TV hopes to grow despite tough local conditions

By Callum McCarthy

Sports broadcasting in Russia is a difficult business. Russian media law on foreign content, ownership and investment continues to be strict, the country's advertising market has been consolidated and heavily regulated after a dreadful 2015, and the Gazprom Media group's Match TV channels dominate the market.

Despite these challenges, independent pay-television broadcaster Football TV has ridden out the country's tough media market since the rouble crashed in late 2014, and believes it could be in a position to thrive over the next three years.

"The situation will be reliant on content," Vyacheslav Gritsfeldt, chief executive of Football TV, told *TV Sports Markets* this week. "We have the name, we have the platform. But when we have the content? Pay-television operators will come to us."

Football TV's current portfolio is modest but serves a clear purpose. Local experts say the broadcaster is reluctant to spend more than €100,000 per season on a single property, and that sustainability has been the channel's primary goal in tough economic conditions.

Illustrating this, Football TV has renewed a one-season deal for the Dutch Eredivisie, for 2016-17 only, in a deal with the IMG agency worth €65,000. The broadcaster's deal for 2015-16 is thought to have been worth marginally less.

Football TV works with IMG in a loose partnership, often acquiring rights from the agency. It also receives club channel content from Bayern Munich, Chelsea and Real Madrid in a rolling season-by-season deal with IMG.

The broadcaster has also renewed a deal for Portuguese Primeira Liga rights in a one-season deal, covering 2016-17, worth about €50,000. The deal was agreed with Portuguese pay-television broadcaster Sport TV, which sells international rights for the home matches of all top-flight Portuguese clubs apart from Benfica, Porto and Sporting Lisbon.

Football TV can show two matches per week under the deal – it usually shows the away matches of one of Portugal's big three clubs.

The broadcaster is thought to have enquired to the Pitch International agency about acquiring Argentinian Primera División rights for the 2016-17 season, but was deterred by the asking price and

restrictions on broadcasting in certain territories.

“As we are not a huge company we have to choose interesting content and not with a high price,” Gritsfeldt said. “Portuguese league? Interesting. Dutch league? Interesting. Of course we’d like to get Ligue 1, Serie A, or of course the English Premier League, but it costs lots of money.”

Navigating a minefield

Football TV is carried by most Russian pay-television operators, as well as being available in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Despite not being carried by Russia’s two largest pay-television platforms – Gazprom Media’s NTV Plus and Tricolor TV – Football TV has between 2m and 3m subscribers.

The broadcaster has thus far abstained from these operators as NTV Plus and Tricolor charge upfront fees to be carried on the service. It is thought both operators charge in the region of \$100,000 per year to be available as a standalone channel outside a wider package of sports channels.

Football TV strongly prefers to be carried as a premium channel as it would receive much less revenue per subscriber should the channel be packaged with other channels, such as the Match TV channels.

Gritsfeldt says negotiations with these operators are progressing very slowly, and that Football TV’s modest portfolio is an obstacle in this process. But he is open to the idea of foreign investment in Football TV to open up Russia’s sports-rights market and improve the channel’s offering of live sport, despite Russia’s strict media ownership and content laws.

Russian law dictates that media companies must be 80-per-cent Russian-owned to broadcast in the country, and that a broadcaster’s quota of foreign content must be less than 50 per cent in order to show advertising.

While Football TV is a wholly Russian company, all its content is sourced from outside Russia. It is only allowed to show advertising as it broadcasts foreign content with Russian translation and commentary.

“Foreign investment would be very interesting. Maybe not in terms of money, but definitely content. Content is the best currency for us,” Gritsfeldt said. “If our channel had better content, three years into the future we are sure we’ll be watched by a third of the pay-television market.” ♦

FOOTBALL

English FA international rights tender due in coming weeks

By Robin Jellis

The English Football Association is set to tender its international rights in the coming weeks with rights available to bidders on a global basis, TV Sports Markets understands.

The association had initially been expected to begin market-by-market sales in the US and work from west to east, finishing in Asia. It has now changed its strategy following feedback from interested bidders.

Bids will be due one month after the tender has been issued. Bidders will be able to make offers on a global, pan-regional or territorial basis. The rights will be available for either three or six seasons from 2018-19.

The FA's current international deals run for six seasons, from 2012-13 to 2017-18. From nine separate agreements the association earns about \$425.5m over the six seasons, or close to \$71m per season.

CURRENT FA INTERNATIONAL DEALS, FROM 2012-13 TO 2017-18

- Sub-Saharan Africa: SuperSport, \$75m
- Asia (excluding Thailand): MP & Silva, \$120m
- Thailand: BBTv, \$28m
- Eastern Europe: Advisers Media International, \$16.5m
- Western Europe: Pitch International, \$87m
- Latin America: Pitch International, just over \$10m
- Middle East and North Africa: BeIN Sports, \$51m
- North America: Fox Sports, \$32m
- Oceania: Pitch International, just under \$6m

The association is understood to be confident of increasing revenues from new deals despite the fact less content will be available to agencies and broadcasters.

In the current deals, England national team qualifier matches were included in 2012-13 and 2013-14, while England national team friendly matches are included across the six seasons.

These rights will not be included in any new FA cycle following Uefa's centralisation of national team

qualifier matches from 2014-15 and national team friendly matches from 2018-19. It is understood that rights to FA Cup matches were the most valuable component of most of the FA's deals.

Bidders will be able to acquire rights to the FA Cup, the Community Shield and the FA Youth Cup. The association will sell youth and women's international matches separately – it is more focused on securing wide exposure than large rights fees for these matches. ◆

FOOTBALL

AFC doubles rights fee in four-year Thai renewal with BBTV

By Richard Welbirg

The value of Asian Football Confederation rights doubled in Thailand after a renewed deal with commercial broadcaster BBTV.

BBTV acquired Thai-language rights to AFC competitions in a four-year deal, from 2017 to 2020, worth \$15m (€13.3m), or \$3.75m per year. BBTV operates free-to-air channel CH7.

The deal is double the \$1.875m per year BBTV pays for free-to-air rights in the current four-year cycle, from 2013 to 2016.

The deal was agreed with the Lagardère Sports agency, the AFC's global media and marketing rights partner. Lagardère's deal is based on a minimum guarantee of \$600m, or \$75m per year, over the eight years from 2013 to 2020 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:7).

BBTV's deal covers 12 AFC properties. The key properties are the Champions League, the 2019 Asian Cup national team tournament, and the third round of Asian qualifying for the 2018 Fifa World Cup.

English-language pay-television rights in the country are currently held by Fox Sports as part of its pan-regional AFC deal for the 2013 to 2016 cycle.

Lagardère tendered rights for the new cycle in December amid strong interest from Thai broadcasters. The deal was signed off last month. Broadcasters were able to bid for free-to-air rights, pay-television rights, or both.

The agency received at least four first-round bids, including offers of \$14m from digital-terrestrial broadcaster Thairath TV, \$11m from pay-television broadcaster TrueVisions and \$8m from media group BEC World – operator of free-to-air Channel 3. Media group GMM Grammy is thought to have bid between \$6m and \$8m. No pay-television rights deal has yet been agreed.

One local expert claimed the confederation could have earned more for its rights had Lagardère asked broadcasters to submit further offers.

But BBTV's offer is thought to have been viewed as a clear winner when taking into account both its reach and that its offer was almost double that of the closest broadcaster with comparable reach. BBTV will also increase its broadcast commitments compared to its existing deal. ♦

TENNIS

Eurosport recoups chunk of US Open fee in LeSports HK deal

By Richard Welbirg

International sports broadcaster Eurosport recovered a third of its spend on the 2016 US Open in Asia from a deal with LeSports in Hong Kong.

LeSports HK last month paid about \$500,000 (€442,000) for rights to this year's edition of the grand slam tournament, which runs from August 29 to September 11.

LeSports formally launched its OTT platform in Hong Kong on August 2. The acquisition is thought to have been driven in part by the company's desire to mark the launch with a new deal.

Eurosport holds pan-Asian rights over four years, from 2013 to 2016, in a deal worth about \$1.5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:5).

LeSports has launched three channels in Hong Kong: a 24-hour sports news channel, a sports variety channel and a Chinese Super League channel. These are available online and via smart TVs, tablets and mobile phones. Access to all its sports content is priced at CNY2,490 (€331/\$374) for 12 months, though access to the US Open will be available à la carte for CNY49.

LeSports is also selling access to the Premier League, its marquee property, for CNY1,690 over 12 months. It pays just under \$130m per season for Premier League rights over three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:17).

Fox switch

From 2017, US Open rights in Asia will be held by international channel syndicator Fox Networks Group.

In May, Fox agreed to pay \$6.5m per year in a five-year deal, from 2017 to 2021, for exclusive rights in 17 territories: Brunei, Cambodia, Chinese Taipei, East Timor, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam (*TV Sports Markets* 20:9).

The acquisition means Fox holds rights to all four grand slams across the region. ◆

FOOTBALL

Canal Plus pays big for French-language Premier League rights

By Callum McCarthy

Canal Plus Afrique's French-language deal for English Premier League rights is a landmark moment for the league, as its rights are now more expensive than the more locally-relevant French Ligue 1.

Pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus Afrique will pay about \$14m (€12.4m) per season for French-language rights to the Premier League.

The deal is for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, and was agreed with pay-television broadcaster SuperSport. This represents an increase of about 75 per cent on Canal Plus's previous deal with SuperSport, worth about \$8m per season from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

The Premier League is now thought to be the most expensive property in Canal Plus's portfolio. The broadcaster pays about €10m per season for its Ligue 1 rights, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, in a deal with the MP & Silva agency (*TV Sports Markets* 19:16).

Informed sources believe SuperSport wanted Canal Plus to at least match the 60-per-cent increase it paid when buying Premier League rights last August.

Then, SuperSport agreed to pay about \$180m per season for pay-television rights in English, French and Portuguese, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. In its previous three-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, SuperSport paid \$113m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

As for most pay-television rights in French-speaking African territories, Canal Plus faced no competition for the rights.

While Canal Plus's pay-television business in France is struggling, French-speaking Africa is providing the company with huge subscriber growth. Canal Plus Afrique reported it had added 615,000 subscribers in the year to June 2016. This takes its total number of African subscribers to 2.2m.

The broadcaster now has more subscribers to its pay-television channels and platforms outside France. The company has 5.455m subscribers in France, but 5.727m subscribers in other territories in which it is available such as West Africa, Vietnam and Poland. ◆

MEDIA RIGHTS DEALS

AUGUST 4 TO 31

FOOTBALL

- ◆ US sports broadcaster ESPN acquired exclusive English-language Uefa rights in the US, including the Euro 2020 national team tournament, European qualifying matches for Euro 2020 and the 2022 Fifa World Cup, and two editions of the Nations League. The deal was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 19:20.
- ◆ Austrian public-service broadcaster ORF acquired rights to national team properties marketed by Uefa, including Euro 2020, the 2018-19 and 2020-21 Nations League competitions, and all qualification matches featuring the Austria national team for the Euro 2020 and the 2022 World Cup.
- ◆ DAZN, the new OTT platform launched by the Perform Group, acquired German Bundesliga rights in an agreement with German media company Axel Springer. DAZN will offer goals from every Bundesliga and second-tier 2. Bundesliga match up to the end of the 2020-21 season. Axel Springer's multimedia brand *Bild* will partner with DAZN as part of the deal.
- ◆ The China Sports Media agency signed a deal to sublicense highlights of the top-tier Chinese Super League to the Reuters news agency.
- ◆ China Sports Media signed a sublicensing deal with sports and video news agency SNTV for Chinese Super League highlights.
- ◆ French telco SFR-Numericable acquired exclusive rights in the country for Portugal's top-tier club competition, the Primeira Liga.
- ◆ US OTT service fuboTV acquired rights for the Primeira Liga.
- ◆ The BBC Sport Northern Ireland division of UK public-service broadcaster the BBC signed a four-season extension, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, to its deal with the Irish Football Association. The deal covers television and online rights to the top-tier Irish Premiership.
- ◆ Terrestrial broadcaster Viasat1 acquired exclusive free-to-air rights in Ghana for coverage of the top-tier English Premier League. Viasat1 agreed a sublicensing deal with telco Econet for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19.
- ◆ Telco Econet, which operates in sub-Saharan Africa, acquired rights for Brazil's Série A and Campeonato Paulista. The deal covers: Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe (page 6).
- ◆ The Asian Football Confederation agreed a four-year extension to its rights deal with Thai commercial broadcaster BBT (page 30).
- ◆ Indian pay-television broadcaster Star Sports acquired live rights for the international friendly match between India and Puerto Rico on September 3. Star Sports agreed the deal with the All India Football Federation.
- ◆ International sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired rights in Russia to Italy's Coppa Italia. Coverage will reportedly be shown via the Eurosport Player digital service.

MEDIA RIGHTS DEALS

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◆ French telco SFR-Numericable will show live coverage of the Premier League fixture between Chelsea and Liverpool on September 16 via its free-to-air channel, Numéro 23.

◆ Belgian commercial broadcaster RTL acquired rights to Italy's top-tier Serie A through a partnership with international sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network. From September 11, one live Serie A match per week will be shown on the Club RTL channel. Club RTL will also show the *Eleven United* weekly review programme, which features highlights from Serie A, the Spanish LaLiga, French Ligue 1 and the English FA Cup. Content will be accessible in Belgium and Luxembourg.

◆ The AFC signed an exclusive four-year rights deal with South Korean pay-television broadcaster JTBC. The deal runs from 2017 to 2020 and is for rights to 12 AFC competitions, including the AFC Champions League club tournament and the men's and women's Asian Cup national team events. Also included in the deal are all remaining qualifiers for the 2018 Fifa World Cup and various youth and futsal events. JTBC will serve as the host broadcaster for all South Korea home matches.

◆ Portuguese public-service broadcaster RTP acquired rights to the Taça da Liga, Portugal's league cup competition. The two-season deal with the Liga Portuguesa de Futebol Profissional covers 2016-17 and 2017-18. RTP will show eight matches each season.

◆ German sports broadcaster Sport1 agreed a two-season rights deal for the Women's Bundesliga, for 2016-17 and 2017-18. The deal

covers non-exclusive platform-neutral rights. Up to 22 live matches per season will be shown via free-to-air channels Sport1 and Sport1 Plus, and streamed at sport1.de.

◆ Portuguese commercial broadcaster TVI acquired a package of rights to the country's national team. TVI will reportedly cover two senior national team friendly matches and six U-21 matches in 2016.

OTHER SPORTS

◆ **Action Sports:** Endurance events company Tough Mudder agreed a multi-year rights deal with the CBS Sports division of US network CBS.

◆ **American Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Latin America extended a rights deal for the NFL for four seasons, from 2016 to 2019. Fox will show more than 100 live games over the course of the deal. The deal includes Thursday Night Football matches and the Super Bowl.

◆ **Basketball:** Streaming platform Fanseat signed a rights deal with the British Basketball governing body, through which it will provide free live streaming of Great Britain's home qualifying games for the 2017 EuroBasket competition. Fanseat will stream the games against Macedonia on September 3, Luxembourg on September 7 and Hungary on September 10 via fanseat.com. Highlights will be available via British Basketball's digital and social media channels.

◆ **Basketball:** Swedish commercial broadcaster TV4 and pay-television broadcaster C More jointly acquired rights to the national basketball team's qualification campaign for the 2017

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EuroBasket competition. All four games will be broadcast across the TV4 Sport and TV12 channels, and streamed by CMore.se and on the C More app.

◆ **Boxing:** German pay-television channel RTL Nitro acquired rights for the middleweight world-title fight between Gennady Golovkin and Kell Brook on September 10.

◆ **Cricket:** Pay-television broadcaster Star India acquired rights in the country for the Twenty20 matches taking place in the US between India and the West Indies on August 27 and 28 for a reported fee of Rs320m (€4.2m/\$4.8m).

◆ **Cricket:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand acquired rights to the national team's two-match Test series in South Africa.

◆ **Cricket:** YuppTV, an OTT service specialising in providing South Asian content to North America and the Caribbean, acquired exclusive rights to the two Twenty20 matches between India and the West Indies on August 27 and 28.

◆ **Darts:** UK commercial broadcaster Channel 4 agreed a two-year deal with the British Darts Organisation for domestic rights to the World Darts Championship. The deal covers the 2017 and 2018 tournaments (page 22).

◆ **Golf:** The PGA Tour organisation agreed a rights partnership in Japan with the Perform Group for its PGA Tour Live service. Perform will stream PGA Tour Live coverage on DAZN, its OTT sports subscription service. DAZN Japan will distribute live coverage from over 30 events each year to the end of 2018.

◆ **Horse Racing:** The UK's Bookmakers Technology Consortium signed a rights deal with the Racing Partnership, which represents 22 racecourses across the country. The BTC brokered the deal on behalf of over 450 UK-based licensed betting offices.

◆ **Horse Racing:** UK pay-television channel At The Races secured rights for Irish events until 2019 after extending an agreement with rights-holder SIS. At The Races retained exclusive direct-to-home broadcast rights to meetings from each of Ireland's 26 racecourses and will continue to provide gambling operations worldwide with live online streams.

◆ **Ice Hockey:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 acquired rights for the 2016 World Cup of Hockey national team event. Sport1 secured platform-neutral rights to all games on an exclusive basis in Germany, and non-exclusively in Austria and Switzerland. The deal includes pre-tournament games played from September 8 to 14 in North America and Europe.

◆ **Ice Hockey:** Sport1 extended a pay-television rights deal for the Champions Hockey League pan-European competition to cover the 2016-17 season (page 12).

◆ **Ice Hockey:** Online platform Laola1.tv extended a rights deal for the Champions Hockey League to cover the 2016-17 season.

◆ **Ice Hockey:** Pay-television broadcaster Arena Sport acquired Champions Hockey League rights in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia.

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- ◆ **Ice Hockey:** French digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe acquired rights in the country for the Champions Hockey League. The deal also covers French overseas territories.
- ◆ **Ice Hockey:** Swiss pay-television broadcaster Teleclub acquired rights to North America's NHL. The deal will start with the 2016-17 season. Teleclub will broadcast up to four live games per week, plus playoff matches (page 12).
- ◆ **Ice Hockey:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus renewed a rights agreement for the NHL. The three-year deal covers the 2016-17 to 2018-19 seasons.
- ◆ **Ice Hockey:** Sport streaming service Fanseat agreed a three-year deal with the French Ice Hockey Federation (FFHG) for rights to the top-tier Ligue Magnus competition. The agreement with the FFHG and Ligue Magnus clubs covers the 2016-17 to 2018-19 seasons and includes all league games, and the Coupe de France tournament from the round of 16.
- ◆ **Mixed Martial Arts:** The Bellator promotion signed rights deals with: Australian pay-television broadcaster Spike; Bulgarian commercial and pay-television broadcaster BTV; Chinese internet company LeSports; Japanese internet television channel AbemaTV; Russian sports media platform Match TV, and South Korean broadcaster KBSN.
- ◆ **Mixed Martial Arts:** German commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1 acquired rights to the Ultimate Fighting Championship Fight Night in Hamburg on September 3. The event will be shown on free-to-air ProSieben Maxx channel.
- ◆ **Motorcycling:** Hungarian broadcaster TV2 acquired rights to the MotoGP championship from 2017. The rights will be shown on TV2's newly-launched Spíler TV pay-television channel. Spíler TV will show live coverage of each race and qualifying session. Free-to-air channel TV2 will broadcast highlights following each race.
- ◆ **Motor Racing:** Telco Econet acquired free-to-air English-language rights in sub-Saharan Africa for the Formula One championship (page 6).
- ◆ **Netball:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky acquired rights to the inaugural Netball Quad Series national team event, which features England, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, and runs from August 27 to September 4. Sky will broadcast all six games, with four to feature on the new Sky Sports Mix channel.
- ◆ **Olympic Games:** Singaporean media company MediaCorp acquired live rights for the 2016 Games. The deal with the Dentsu agency was reportedly worth \$3.2m (€2.9m).
- ◆ **Olympic Games:** BeIN Media Group formally signed a rights deal with the International Olympic Committee for exclusive rights in the Middle East and North Africa to the next four Games. The deal was agreed in July 2015.
- ◆ **Olympic Games:** Slovakian public-service broadcaster RTVS acquired free-to-air rights for the 2018 and 2020 Olympic Games through a sublicensing deal with US media company Discovery Communications (page 3).
- ◆ **Olympic Games:** Slovenian public-service broadcaster RTV acquired free-to-air rights for

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the 2018 and 2020 Olympic Games through a sublicensing deal with Discovery (page 3).

◆ **Poker:** The Fox Sports division of US network Fox signed a five-year rights deal with the World Poker Tour, from 2016 to 2020. The tour will produce 13 additional hours of original programming for Fox each season.

◆ **Rugby Union:** Pay-television broadcaster ESPN Latin America acquired exclusive platform-neutral rights in the region for the top-tier English Premiership under a five-season deal running from 2016-17 to 2020-21.

◆ **Rugby Union:** Canadian telco Rogers acquired rights for the English Premiership for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. All matches and a weekly highlights programme will be shown, primarily via the Sportsnet World channel.

◆ **Rugby Union:** Caribbean pay-television channel Flow Sports acquired exclusive English-language English Premiership rights in the region for five seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. It will also broadcast the Premiership Rugby 7s Series.

◆ **Squash:** International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network acquired rights in Chinese Taipei and Singapore to the Professional Squash Association's World Series tournaments through a multi-year agreement. Eleven Sports Network will broadcast all World Series semi-final and final matches, as well as extended highlights of the PSA World Tour.

◆ **Swimming:** Eleven Sports Network acquired exclusive rights in Singapore to the Fina

Swimming World Cup. The two-year deal covers the 2016 and 2017 editions of the series.

◆ **Tennis:** Sports broadcaster ESPN International struck a deal with MexTennis for rights in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean to two events: the Abierto Mifel, from 2016 to 2025, and the Abierto Mexicano, from 2017 to 2025.

◆ **US College Sport:** Australian pay-television operator Foxtel acquired rights for the 2016 College Football Sydney Cup, which served as the season-opener of this year's National Collegiate Athletic Association College Football Championships. The game took place at Sydney's ANZ Stadium on August 27.

◆ **US College Sport:** The Pac-12 conference agreed a multi-year rights deal with Australian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports. The agreement includes the rights to televise 13 Pac-12 American football and 21 basketball games in Australia each year. Fox Sports Australia will also broadcast all episodes of Pac-12 Networks' *The Drive* programme.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

◆ German Handball Association president Andreas Michelmann denied comments attributed to him that talks with German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF over a deal for the 2017 men's World Championship had failed.

◆ The *New York Times* newspaper reported social media company Twitter was in talks with technology giant Apple to allow its sports content to be accessed via digital media player Apple TV.

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◆ US pay-television broadcaster HBO passed up the opportunity to show Manny Pacquiao's November 5 bout with Jessie Vargas, despite having a multi-fight contract with the Filipino boxer. Pacquiao's promoter, Bob Arum, told the Forbes business news service that HBO had voided the contract.

◆ Swiss pay-television broadcaster Teleclub said it would not continue to show Spain's LaLiga despite "long and intense" negotiations. It will, however, continue to broadcast the Copa del Rey and Supercopa de España.

◆ The Board of Control for Cricket in India informed Sony Pictures Networks India, the current rights-holder of the Indian Premier League, that it must compete with other parties in a bidding process for the next set of rights to the Twenty20 competition, according to the Press Trust of India news agency. The BCCI is said to have introduced the change to demonstrate transparency in its dealings.

◆ Cricket Australia is in talks with Qantas over a deal that would result in the airline live streaming Test, one-day international and Twenty20 matches on its flights.

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- ◆ US sports broadcaster ESPN will launch a new multi-sport subscription streaming service after its owner, the Walt Disney media company, confirmed an investment in video technology business BAMTech. BAMTech is a subsidiary of MLB Advanced Media, the interactive media arm of Major League Baseball. Walt Disney agreed to pay \$1bn (€900m) for a 33-per-cent stake in BAMTech, with the option of acquiring majority ownership in the coming years. The new streaming service will feature BAMTech and ESPN-provided content, including live regional, national and international sporting events. Current content on ESPN's linear networks will not appear on the service.
- ◆ UK media watchdog Ofcom dropped a two-year investigation into the rights-sales model for the Premier League. Ofcom had acted on a complaint by pay-television operator Virgin Media centred on allegations that the league's collective selling arrangements were in breach of competition rules. The complaint also raised concerns about the number of matches made available for live coverage. Ofcom noted the league would increase the number of matches available for live broadcast in the UK by 22 to at least 190 from the 2019-20 season.
- ◆ The European Commission approved the proposed merger between Ziggo, the Dutch cable-television operator owned by media company Liberty Global, and mobile phone operator Vodafone. The latter is set to invest €1bn (\$1.1bn) in the new venture, which was agreed in February.
- ◆ Italian broadcaster Mediaset asked a Milanese court to enforce the sale of its pay-television division, Mediaset Premium, to French media company Vivendi. Vivendi had been set to acquire 100 per cent of Mediaset Premium and exchange 3.5-per-cent stakes with Mediaset. In July, Vivendi attempted to renegotiate the terms for the takeover.
- ◆ UK newspaper the *Telegraph* reported the Perform Group had rejected a series of investment offers from US technology and media companies. Perform reportedly held discussions with its advisers at Morgan Stanley after e-commerce giant Amazon, social media website Facebook and video-sharing platform YouTube were linked with potential equity investments.
- ◆ The Spanish High Court quashed fines imposed on the Mediapro agency and four football clubs in December 2013. Spain's competition authority, the Comisión Nacional de la Competencia, imposed fines totalling around €15m (\$20m) on Mediapro, Barcelona, Racing Santander, Real Madrid and Sevilla for signing media-rights deals longer than three seasons. Mediapro, which agreed the deals with the clubs, was fined €6.7m. Real Madrid and Barcelona had been fined €3.9m and €3.6m respectively. Sevilla was fined €900,000 and Racing Santander €30,000.
- ◆ BeIN Media Group confirmed its purchase of DP Acquisitions, the holding company of Turkish pay-television broadcaster Digiturk. The deal was first reported in late 2014. The Bloomberg news agency reported the deal could be worth up to \$1.5bn (€1.3bn).
- ◆ Media group Sony Pictures Networks India

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entered into a definitive agreement to acquire the Ten Sports arm of pay-television operator Zee Entertainment Enterprises for \$385m (€340.4m). The deal is subject to regulatory approval and will result in Ten Sports's channels being added to SPN's existing portfolio.

◆ The National Football League's NFL Network cable-television channel and NFL RedZone game-day service returned to the schedules of US pay-television provider Dish Network after the two parties agreed a fresh carriage deal. NFL Network and NFL RedZone will also be available through OTT internet-television service Sling TV.

◆ Internet company Yahoo extended a digital content partnership with US media company NBCUniversal for the 2016 summer Olympic Games. Yahoo agreed to provide links to NBCOlympics.com's exclusive live streams and highlights to its US audience.

◆ NBCUniversal confirmed it had sold a total of \$1.2bn (€1.1bn) in advertising for Rio 2016 by the start of the Games on August 5.

◆ NBCUniversal agreed a multi-year content and advertising deal with Snapchat. NBCU will produce original sports, news and entertainment shows for Snapchat, and will also develop and sell advertising packages incorporating Snapchat's advertising products across its various platforms.

◆ NBCUniversal's primetime broadcast viewership for the 2016 summer Olympic Games in Rio was down about 17 per cent on the 2012 summer Games in London, according to news agency Bloomberg.

◆ BAMTech, the video technology business of MLB Advanced Media, the interactive media arm of Major League Baseball, agreed a rights, technology and investment partnership with US digital sports media company Silver Chalice Ventures. BAMTech also acquired an equity position in SCV.

◆ The Fox Sports division of US network Fox signed a multi-year digital partnership with magazine publisher Sports Illustrated. The two parties will exchange content, with Fox able to syndicate video highlights to Sports Illustrated's properties. Sports Illustrated and Fox Sports will sell advertising jointly and share revenue.

◆ The NBC Sports Group division of NBCUniversal launched 'Goal Rush' on August 27, a game-day digital service for its coverage of football's English Premier League. The service features live look-ins on action at matches, as well as updates and half-time round-ups, and will be accessible via the NBC Sports mobile application and on NBCSports.com.

◆ UK public-service broadcaster the BBC launched a new 360-degree video service ahead of Rio 2016. BBC Sport 360 launched for the Games' opening ceremony on August 5 and was made available through a dedicated trial app on Android, iOS and Samsung Gear VR devices, providing about 100 hours of 360-video footage plus a daily highlights package.

◆ UK pay-television broadcaster Sky launched its Sky Sports Mix channel on August 24, which is available for free to non-sport subscribers. England's one-day international cricket match against Pakistan was the first live broadcast.

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- ◆ The *Daily Telegraph* newspaper reported that UK pay-television operator Virgin Media had demanded that mobile operator EE's deal with pay-television broadcaster BT for access to the BT Sport channels be suspended. Virgin claimed the deal for EE's monthly subscribers to be given six months of free access to BT Sport channels via mobile applications represented a breach of its own carriage agreement for the channels.
- ◆ The BBC's digital coverage of Rio 2016 reached a record 102.3m unique global browsers, of which 68.3m were from the UK. The most-streamed event was Andy Murray's gold medal tennis match on August 14, which generated 1.9m streams.
- ◆ International sports broadcaster Eurosport confirmed it would offer exclusive live coverage of the US Open grand slam tennis tournament in the UK. All action will be shown live and exclusively on Eurosport 1 and Eurosport 2, and on-demand digital service Eurosport Player.
- ◆ Brazilian media company Globo partnered with social media platform Snapchat for the Rio 2016 Olympics, with clips presented on Snapchat from free-to-air channel Globo and pay-television broadcaster SporTV.
- ◆ Vodafone España launched Vodafone One Restauración, a new service for bars and restaurants that provides coverage of Spanish football and other pay-television channels from the Vodafone TV suite.
- ◆ Telco Portugal Telecom agreed to acquire a stake in domestic pay-television broadcaster Sport TV. The deal is subject to due diligence.
- ◆ The Perform Group launched its OTT service, DAZN, in Germany, Switzerland and Austria on August 10. DAZN's Japanese service launched on August 23 (page 10).
- ◆ German telco Deutsche Telekom will launch a new platform dedicated to coverage of the Deutsche Eishockey Liga, the top division of ice hockey in the country, on September 1. The platform will offer live and highlights coverage of the league, as well as support programming.
- ◆ German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland agreed a partnership with Liverpool and the Premier League club's German manager, Jürgen Klopp. Sky will show coverage of competitive Liverpool games, including delayed coverage of domestic cup games, as well as magazine programmes, documentaries, press conferences and behind-the-scenes footage from Klopp. The deal covers Germany and Austria.
- ◆ Sky Deutschland confirmed it would broadcast matches from the country's top-tier Bundesliga and the Uefa Champions League in ultra-high-definition during the 2016-17 season. The Sky Sport Bundesliga UHD channel will show one Bundesliga game per match day in ultra-high-definition, with Sky Sport UHD offering selected Champions League games in the format.
- ◆ French telco SFR-Numericable agreed a deal with beIN Media Group to offer bundles that include its own sports channels and the beIN Sports channels. The bundles are available as part of SFR's Box Power package for €29.99 (\$33.98) per month for the first 12 months.
- ◆ Dutch cable-television provider KPN extended a

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carriage deal with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Netherlands. KPN will continue to offer Fox Sports channels as premium channels. KPN reduced the monthly subscription fee for three Fox Sports Eredivisie pay-television channels from €17.50 (\$19.81) to €7.50. Subscription to all six Fox Sports channels will drop from €25 to €15 per month. Fox Sports International will stay at €12.50 per month.

◆ Dutch telco Tele2 said it would cease carriage of Fox Sports Netherlands after September 13, after the two parties failed to agree terms on a new deal. Tele2 said it refused to agree to Fox's demand of a fee per-Tele2 subscriber, regardless of whether they subscribe to the Fox channels.

◆ International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network agreed a multi-year carriage deal with Polish cable operator Toya. The operator will carry the Eleven and Eleven Sports channels.

◆ Polish public-service broadcaster TVP will launch a second sports channel and make its TVP Sport platform available via digital-terrestrial television, according to president Jacek Kurski. He told the Business Insider Polska website that TVP Sport would be made available for free via DTT, with the change likely to happen in February. The new channel will be called TVP Sport Max or TVP Sport Premium.

◆ Domestic coverage of the top men's and women's Swedish handball leagues will move from commercial broadcaster TV4 to pay-television broadcaster C More from mid-September. C More will show every game from the men's league and 25 matches from the women's league throughout the 2016-17 season.

◆ Mixed martial arts promotion the Ultimate Fighting Championship signed a content partnership with Japanese commercial broadcaster Fuji TV, to show *UFC Time*, a monthly hour-long news and highlights show.

◆ DouyuTV, an online entertainment company that shows esports events in China, said it had raised more than CNY2bn (€265.4m/\$300.6m) in funding this year following a Series C financing round. The latest investment of \$226m in the startup was led by Phoenix Capital Asset Management and Tencent Holdings. The investment also involved Capital Group and National SME Development Fund.

◆ Eleven Sports Network signed carriage deals in Singapore with pay-television operator StarHub and telco M1.

◆ Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand confirmed a carriage deal with beIN Media Group to broadcast the Premier League in the country. On August 9, Sky launched a football-dedicated channel pack comprising two permanent and up to three pop-up beIN Sports channels.

◆ A judge dismissed Sky New Zealand's application for an injunction on media company's Fairfax Media's online video coverage of Rio 2016. Sky had sought an injunction requiring Fairfax to stick to the limits specified in news access rules imposed by the International Olympic Committee, with Sky reportedly having argued that Fairfax's use of Olympic footage competed with its own broadcasts.

◆ New Zealand-based telco Spark claimed in a submission to the country's Commerce

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Commission that the proposed merger between fellow telco Vodafone NZ and Sky New Zealand would not be in the interests of sports viewers. Public-service broadcaster TVNZ suggested Sky should be forced to sell free-to-air channel Prime if the merger is allowed to go ahead. The Telecommunications Users Association also raised “serious concerns” with the commission about the possible impact of the merger on the broadband market.

◆ The Australian National Basketball League club competition extended and expanded its partnership with telco Telstra. As part of the deal, the telco’s Telstra TV streaming service will provide live coverage of every NBL game during the 2016-17 season.

◆ Premier League club Manchester City partnered with Indian digital media company Veqta. Subscribers to Veqta’s new OTT sports platform will receive access to exclusive content such as training sessions, player and manager interviews, and the club’s Inside City and Global City Fans video series.

◆ Telco Telekom Romania extended a carriage deal with the Discovery Romania division of Discovery Communications. Telekom Romania and NextGen customers will continue to receive access to Discovery’s Eurosport channels.

◆ The Sport 24 in-flight and in-ship channel signed a carriage deal with Mexican airline Aeroméxico. The channel will be available on the airline’s Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft through in-built televisions and on passengers’ personal devices.

◆ The English Football League and its domestic live rights partner, pay-television broadcaster Sky, pledged to give clubs at least five weeks’ notice ahead of any changes in kick-off times for television coverage. The league will also announce fixture changes within three working days.

◆ English Women’s Super League football club Manchester City streamed live coverage of its game against Doncaster Rovers Belles on August 7 via its official account on Facebook.

◆ Scottish Pro12 rugby union club Glasgow Warriors streamed live coverage of its pre-season game against English Premiership club Harlequins on August 20 via its official channel on video-sharing platform YouTube. The contest was also available live worldwide via the Warriors TV online service and on-demand following the full-time whistle.

◆ This year’s World Orienteering Championships in Sweden will be broadcast in 67 countries and territories – a record for the event. The full live package will be transmitted in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Switzerland. Daily highlights programmes will also be shown via Fox Sports in Europe and Eurosport Asia Pacific through agreements with the Broadreach Media agency and international sports broadcaster Eurosport, respectively.

◆ The World Touring Car Championship took down the paywall for its WTCC Premium TV service for the remainder of the 2016 season. The service was launched in April with a price tag of €14.95 (\$17) for one weekend or €99.95 for the season.

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- ◆ The Professional Squash Association's SquashTV digital platform will show a record number of 450 live matches from 20 tournaments during the 2016-17 season. New tournaments include the Open International de Nantes, the Al-Ahram International and the Wadi Degla Women's Open.
- ◆ Virtual reality broadcast technology company NextVR raised \$80m (€72m) in Series B funding from a host of backers including Chinese investment groups CITIC Guoan and Founder H Fund; Chinese internet technology and online gaming company NetEase; Chinese media and entertainment company CMC Holdings; Japanese telco SoftBank; Hong Kong-based VMS Investments Group; the China Assets Limited investment fund and California-based early-stage fund Spectrum 28.
- ◆ ESPN Player, the digital service operated by the international sports broadcaster, launched a new channel, ESPN Select. The channel will initially offer coverage of niche sports such as drone racing, the Little League World Series and the X-Games action sports event to viewers across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.
- ◆ Olympic Broadcasting Services chief executive Yiannis Exarchos confirmed that the IOC's new Olympic Channel would feature sports that are not part of the Games' programme of events.
- ◆ Mixed martial arts promotion the Ultimate Fighting Championship agreed a global partnership with Canadian series TKO MMA. Coverage of the series will be available via UFC's digital subscription service, UFC Fight Pass.
- ◆ Sports streaming specialist FloSports generated \$21.2m (€18.8m) in new funding from investors, including US media company Discovery Communications and wrestling entertainment promotion WWE.
- ◆ Japanese tyre company Bridgestone was named as the first founding partner of the IOC's Olympic Channel. The four-year deal runs until the 2020 summer Games in Tokyo, Japan. Bridgestone will serve as a presenting partner of the channel's new eight-part documentary, *Against All Odds*.
- ◆ LaLiga, the organising body of Spanish club football, said matches from the country's top two leagues would be broadcast in over 170 countries during the 2016-17 season.
- ◆ NextVR provided live virtual-reality coverage of the German Bundesliga match between Bayern Munich and Werder Bremen on August 26 through its association with the Fox Sports division of US network Fox. The game was available in the US, Canada, the Caribbean, Asia and selected European countries.
- ◆ Golf's PGA Tour revealed plans to stream more than 14 hours of PGA Tour Live coverage via Twitter and Facebook Live during the opening rounds of The Barclays and the Deutsche Bank Championship. The Tour will hold a Twitter vote to determine which groups PGA Tour Live will follow during certain rounds.
- ◆ The International Paralympic Committee partnered with video-sharing platform Dailymotion to deliver live streaming of the 2016 summer Paralympic Games in Rio. Dailymotion

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will stream about 680 hours of coverage from 13 sports on 15 high-definition channels on Paralympic.org. The English-commentary live stream will feature the opening and closing ceremonies, athletics, track cycling, five-a-side football, seven-a-side football, judo, powerlifting, sitting volleyball, swimming, table tennis, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair fencing, wheelchair rugby and wheelchair tennis.

◆ The PGA Tour announced plans to run a trial that allows players to stream live video and post photos during practice rounds and pro-am days on their PGA Tour-approved social platforms.

◆ North American stock car-racing series Nascar enhanced its partnership with Snapchat by agreeing to use the social media platform's Live Stories feature to cover the 2016 Chase for the Sprint Cup events at Charlotte Motor Speedway and Homestead-Miami Speedway. Snapchat will curate fan-submitted Snaps into a video stream, which will be shared globally during the Bank of America 500 event on October 8 and the Ford EcoBoost 400 event on November 20.

◆ UK sports production company Sunset+Vine produced the two Twenty20 cricket matches between India and the West Indies hosted in the US city of Fort Lauderdale on August 27 and 28.

◆ The IOC's Olympic Channel will show live coverage of 37 events across 10 different sports before the end of 2016. The coverage begins on September 1 with the final men's ice hockey qualifying tournament for the 2018 winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang. The last scheduled event this year is the Montreal Fencing Grand Prix from December 16 to 18.

◆ The Yahoo Esports division of internet company Yahoo agreed a two-year partnership with esports organisation ESL. The agreement will run until 2018. ESL competitions including the ESL One and the IEM global series will be live-streamed in high-definition around the world across Yahoo's properties. The two parties will also work on organising new tournaments.