

OLYMPIC GAMES

Discovery claws back sizeable chunk of €1.3bn Olympics fee with lucrative BBC deal

By Robin Jellis and Frank Dunne

Discovery Communications this week recouped more than 10 per cent of its €1.3bn (\$1.4bn) investment in Olympic Games rights across Europe by striking a sublicensing deal with the BBC.

The deal means the BBC, the UK public-service broadcaster, has the right to show extensive coverage of the 2022 winter Games and the 2024 summer Games – the exact level is yet to be agreed – in return for giving UK pay-television rights for the 2018 winter Games and the 2020 summer Games to Discovery.

In addition to sublicensing these rights the BBC will pay Discovery £115m (€151m/\$164m). The BBC will also have to pay production costs. The total cost to the BBC is likely to be about £150m.

The BBC paid about £60m for the 2014 winter and 2016 summer Games, and just over £70m for the 2018 winter and 2020 summer Games in a direct deal with the International Olympic Committee (*TV Sports Markets* 16:14).

Sublicensing 2022 and 2024 from Discovery is a huge investment for the BBC, which is cutting its annual spending on sport by £35m, and shows how central the Games are to its culture and output.

As one UK television executive put it: “The Olympics interests the whole nation, it’s free sport, it’s everything to the BBC. No amount of Wimbledon could ever make up for that.” Another well-placed source said that for the BBC,

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AGENCIES

Infront facing three-pronged Italian attack

By Frank Dunne

Infront Sports & Media’s Italian football business activities are facing a three-pronged attack which could have major long-term repercussions for the agency’s revenues and undermine its behind-the-scenes influence in the country.

The threats are:

1) a criminal investigation into three of its senior executives by the Milan prosecutor’s office regarding the award of media rights to Serie A and Serie B from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and the ad hoc financing of some Serie A clubs;

2) an antitrust authority investigation

into the same sale of Serie A media rights (see separate story, page 5);

3) a planned redrafting of the Melandri Law, which governs the collective selling of media rights to professional sport and determines the role of media-rights advisers.


In 2014, the Infront Italy subsidiary contributed €241m (\$260m) to Infront Sports & Media’s turnover of about €800m and made a substantial contribution to the company’s profit.

The company does not publish financial

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Fiba move could damage Euroleague/IMG plans

Decisions made by national basketball federations to commit clubs to a new Fiba-run competition could scupper IMG's hopes of refinancing its 10-season, €630m (\$682m) joint venture with the Euroleague, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

The Fiba Champions League, which will commence from the 2016-17 season, is set to replace the Euroleague-run Eurocup as European basketball's second-tier competition.

The national federations of Italy and Turkey have both pledged their highest-ranking non-Euroleague clubs to Fiba's competition. France, which has no Euroleague clubs, will send at least its domestic league champion.

Eleven clubs from seven countries – Greece, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Russia, Spain and Turkey – are guaranteed participants in the Euroleague from 2016-17.

The Euroleague also planned to invite three domestic league champions each season, while inviting 21 other domestic league champions to participate in the Eurocup. These plans now hang in the balance, pending the decisions of the remaining federations and their clubs.

If Fiba's Champions League replaces the Eurocup, reducing the content IMG has to sell, the agency will struggle to refinance the investment it is making in its joint venture with the Euroleague.

While Eurocup clubs currently sell their media rights individually, industry insiders believe IMG planned to create a centralised package of Eurocup rights that could be sold on its own or together with Euroleague rights.

Fiba will sell Champions League rights centrally. It is thought to have projected annual media-rights income of about €20m per season, should it attract all non-Euroleague clubs. In its earlier proposal for a top-tier competition, Fiba projected total income of about €50m per season. ■

IMG nears Romanian deal

The IMG agency is understood to be close to a deal for English Premier League rights in Romania with sports broadcaster Eurosport.

IMG and Eurosport are in advanced stages of negotiations over a three-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, worth about €8m (\$8.7m) per season.

This would represent an increase of about 167 per cent on the value of the rights in Romania in the current cycle, from 2013-14 to 2015-16. Eurosport currently pays the league about €3m per season for the rights.

Eurosport is said to have beaten rival bids from telco RCS-RDS, which operates the Digi Sport pay-television channels, and telco Telekom Romania, which operates the Dolce Sport pay-television channels. Both RCS-RDS and Telekom Romania are thought to have been prepared to spend up to €20m over the three seasons: about €7m per season.

In the current cycle, Eurosport sublicenses two matches per round to Telekom Romania's Dolce Sport. The two parties are likely to strike a similar agreement for the next cycle of rights.

IMG is selling Premier League rights in 27 territories across Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia following a deal agreed with the league last December. The deal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, is worth about \$60m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:23).

This represented an increase of about 80 per cent in the value of the rights across the 27 territories compared to the league's deals in place for the current 2013-16 cycle. IMG's deal with Eurosport will be the first it has agreed for the new cycle and means it will recoup a decent chunk of its fee.

Eurosport was prepared to pay a premium for the rights to help in upcoming carriage negotiations with both RCS-RDS and Telekom Romania. RCS-RDS does not currently carry the Eurosport channels, while Telekom Romania's deal is close to expiry.

In the current cycle, the Premier

League initially awarded rights to Multimedia Sport in a deal worth about €6m per season. The agency handed the rights back after failing to agree a broadcast deal, before Eurosport acquired them in December 2013. ■

DEL secures small increase

Germany's top ice hockey league last week secured a small increase in the value of its media rights following a deal with telco Deutsche Telekom.

The Deutsche Eishockey Liga agreed a four-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, with Deutsche Telekom worth about €3.6m (\$3.9m) per season. The telco will also pay between €2m and €3m per season in production costs on top of its rights fee. There is an option to extend the deal by a further four seasons, from 2020-21 to 2023-24.

The league's current four-season deal with the Sportsman Media Group agency, from 2012-13 to 2015-16, is worth €3.5m per season. This covers both domestic and international rights. Deutsche Telekom's deal is for domestic rights only (*TV Sports Markets* 16:12).

Deutsche Telekom will sublicense some rights to free-to-air broadcasters in the new cycle, although the amount of content is yet to be decided.

In the current cycle, Sportsman sold on domestic rights to Laola, its own online sports broadcast service, and commercial broadcaster Servus TV, owned by energy drink brand Red Bull.

Live coverage of all matches will be available on Deutsche Telekom's Entertain IPTV service, PCs, mobiles and tablets. Entertain is available to all Deutsche Telekom customers at no extra cost. Non-subscribers can pay €10 per month for access to Entertain.

The DEL is the second domestic league for which Deutsche Telekom has acquired rights in recent times, following its June 2014 deal with the Basketball Bundesliga, Germany's top basketball league. That deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, is worth about €1m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:12). ■

OLYMPIC GAMES

Discovery gets off to great start in sale of Olympics rights

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the Olympics was an “absolutely must-have” property.

The BBC paid such a high fee – close to double what it paid for the 2018 and 2020 Games, when pay-television rights and production are included – because it faced a very aggressive bid from commercial broadcaster ITV.

ITV is understood to have offered about £125m for the rights. Several independent UK television executives said ITV would not have been able to refinance this through advertising, even though it is a premium event scheduled when there is little other top live sport.

However, other commercial broadcasters around the world – such as NBCUniversal in the US, Globo in Brazil and Seven in Australia – have shown they can break even or make a profit on the Games with an ad-funded model.

ITV puzzle

Given ITV’s total lack of interest in the Olympics in the past, its sudden aggression was the most surprising aspect of the process for many industry executives. Several suggested there could be some wider strategic play, as yet unknown, in which having the rights would make sense, even at a loss.

Others noted that a useful side effect of its bid is that by pushing up the BBC’s fee, ITV will be in a stronger position in future UK media rights negotiations.

There were three main reasons why Discovery accepted the BBC’s bid, despite it having a lower cash value.

First, being able to secure rights to 2018 and 2020 in a key European market was hugely important to the company, which owns sports broadcaster Eurosport.

It will allow Discovery to build the product into carriage renewals with the three main UK pay-television operators: BT, Sky and Virgin. Each deal expires this year, and will be extended for three years.

Discovery is expected to strike a similar deal in France. Rights for 2018 and 2020 in the UK and France were not part of Discovery’s four-Games deal across 50 European territories; the IOC had already struck deals with the BBC and French state broadcaster France Télévisions.

Second, the deal means Discovery will be the only broadcaster selling advertising around Olympics coverage. If ITV had secured the rights, it would have been a competitor to Discovery for ad revenue.

Third, it is understood that the deal will herald a new era of co-operation between the BBC and Discovery, which could involve the sharing of rights to other sports events.

Eurosport has long coveted Wimbledon tennis rights, held exclusively in the UK by the BBC in a three-year deal, from 2015 to 2017, worth £42m per year. The deal has since been extended from 2018 to 2020 and will be worth £61m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:18).

High benchmark

The deal with the BBC is Discovery’s first since its acquisition of the rights from the IOC last summer, and sets a high benchmark for future sublicensing deals across Europe.

Discovery is in talks with German state broadcasters ARD and ZDF over a deal which could also be very lucrative for the US media group. IOC president Thomas Bach, a German national, is expected to be involved in the talks.

Michael Payne, the IOC’s former marketing director, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: “What might initially have looked like a bit of a stretch [for Discovery] suddenly starts to look like a very astute strategic investment.”

He said Discovery had done well “in creating competition, or the perception of competition, which is always rule number one” when selling rights.

EBU questions

If the kind of increase paid by the BBC is repeated by other members of the European Broadcasting Union, it will renew scrutiny of how the EBU constructed its initial bid to the IOC, and why its members did not offer more.

In June last year, the EBU bid €1.09bn

for the rights, €210m less than Discovery’s winning offer. The deal was agreed with the IOC, which was advised on the sale of its rights in Europe by the IMG agency.

The Group A territories of the UK, Germany and France offered €600m for the rights from 2018 to 2024 (with the 2018 and 2020 rights already sold in the UK and France). This was no higher than the €300m value of the EBU deal for the 2014 and 2016 Games in the same three territories (*TV Sports Markets* 19:20).

Following the sublicensing agreement it appears that the BBC may have been better off bidding individually for rights in the UK. However, ARD and ZDF did this for rights in Germany and were still beaten by Discovery (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13).

Payne said the traditional EBU funding model, in which the big five markets – Germany, the UK, France, Italy and Spain – paid about 80 per cent of the cost of acquisitions, was “broken”.

He said that while Germany and the UK were strong, Italian state broadcaster Rai’s relationship with the EBU for big events was “dysfunctional”. He added that Spanish state broadcaster TVE massively overpaid for the Games in the last EBU bid and could not match it this time.

“A lot of countries in Eastern Europe, as well as markets like Russia and Turkey, didn’t have the budgets. The collective position of the EBU was just not strong enough to carry the day. They were being dragged down by a majority, in one form or another,” Payne said.

Coverage

The deal with the BBC is for exclusive free-to-air television and non-exclusive radio rights for 2022 and 2024.

Across all four Games, from 2018 to 2024, the BBC will restrict its coverage to one linear channel at any time: this will be BBC One, Two or Four. Coverage will also be restricted to one additional linear stream on any platform other than these three channels.

The BBC will only be able to make content shown on a channel or stream available on-demand. It will only be able to broadcast in standard or high definition, or relevant consumer industry standard at the time of a given event. ■

CRICKET

Star signs long-term Asia Cup deal after 2014 stop-gap

By Richard Welbirg

The Asian Cricket Council earned a big increase in the value of its media rights in a lucrative eight-year deal with pay-television broadcaster Star India.

Star will pay just over \$80m (€74m) over the course of the deal, from 2016 to 2023. The bulk of the value lies in the biennial Asia Cup. The deal also covers the women's Asia Cup, the Emerging Asia Cup and the U-19 Asia Cup.

Star, owned by Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox, had struck a one-off deal for the 2014 Asia Cup tournament after the ACC's deal with the Nimbus Communications agency ended early.

Nimbus's original deal, worth just under \$50m, would have covered all commercial rights to three Asia Cups: in 2010, 2012 and 2014. Star's deal is for media rights only and will include four Asia Cups: in 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2022.

Sponsorship rights to ACC events from 2016 to 2019 have been sold separately, to Indian sports management company Twenty First Century Media. The deal is thought to be worth \$4.5m.

The ACC's deal with Nimbus broke down over the hosting of the 2014 Asia Cup, which was switched to Bangladesh after India pulled out of hosting duties.

The agency sought a discount on its \$20m allocation for the event, but the two parties could not come to an agreement and Nimbus pulled out of the deal. Star stepped in to acquire the rights in a deal worth between \$11m and \$12m.

More matches are included in Star's new deal: Afghanistan's introduction increased the number of participants to five from 2014, and the number of matches rose from seven to 11.

The 2016 tournament will be played in the Twenty20 format for the first time, rather than its traditional one-day format. Thereafter, the Asia Cup will alternate between the two formats.

The change means the Asia Cup will

take the same format as the International Cricket Council competition held in those years. It is intended to allow Asian teams to better prepare for these events.

TV Sports Markets understands Star was the only respondent to the ACC's tender, which closed in December last year.

There was limited interest from other broadcasters because the 2016 Asia Cup in Bangladesh takes place just before the ICC's World Twenty20, hosted in India. Advertising spend will be taken up by the higher-profile ICC tournament.

One Indian broadcast executive also questioned the prospects of the Asia Cup. The ICC is taking a more hands-on role in regional cricket development and the ACC is being reduced to just two employees. ■

AGENCIES

Infront Italy facing threat to business amid investigations

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information, but Italian media sources believe it could be earning €100m per season just from its deal with the top Italian football league, Serie A (see panel).

None of the scenarios are likely to be played out quickly, so the threat is not immediate. But the agency has spent nearly two decades building up a business

that now faces an uncertain future.

The most serious investigation regards a possible '*turbativa d'asta*', or bid rigging, by three managers of the Infront Italy subsidiary in the June 2014 award of Serie A rights in the current cycle. In Italy, the maximum penalty for bid rigging is five years in prison, but first-time offenders for white-collar crime do not go to jail.

A second line of enquiry in the investigation is the possible occult financing of certain Serie A clubs, enabling them to circumvent financial controls. Riccardo Silva, founder of the MP & Silva agency, is also being investigated for this, along with the owners of Bari, Genoa and Lazio.

The three Infront executives – Infront Italy president Marco Bogarelli, and associates Andrea Locatelli and Giuseppe Ciocchetti – have been under investigation since October.

In November, in connection with the investigation, the directors used Italian voluntary disclosure laws to bring a reported €30m from overseas bank accounts into Italy, to be made subject to Italian tax.

A proportion of this was reportedly from payments made by MP & Silva. Silva told Italian media last week he had "normal economic relations" with Infront and that all transactions between the two companies were accountable in invoices.

The case drew fresh media coverage last weekend with the publication of excerpts of conversation from wire-taps involving

Infront Italy's football deals

Infront has deals with the Italian football league, Lega Serie A, the Italian football federation, the Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio, and individual clubs from Serie A and Serie B.

Infront has been Serie A media-rights adviser since July 2008. In May 2014, the agency renewed its deal for six seasons, from 2015-16 to 2020-21, paying a guarantee of €5.94bn.

Infront guarantees €980m per season in the first three seasons, and €1bn per season in the last three seasons.

Serie A media-rights income from deals with broadcasters for 2015-16 to

2017-18 was about €1.2bn per season.

Infront is responsible for television production of all Serie A matches, for which it receives an additional fee.

The agency also acquires the archive media rights (images more than eight days old) to 15 Serie A clubs, which it then sells on to broadcasters. Infront also has marketing rights deals with 14 clubs in Serie A and six in Serie B.

The agency advises the federation on the sale of national team sponsorship rights, paying a minimum guarantee of €57m over four seasons, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, or €14.25m per season.

Bogarelli, Ciocchetti and Silva.

The conversations have been interpreted as proof that Infront favoured Silvio Berlusconi's Mediaset over Rupert Murdoch's Sky Italia in the auction, something the agency vehemently denies.

They also appear to show that Genoa owner Enrico Preziosi offered a three-per-cent stake in his toy company, Giochi Preziosi, to Silva and Ciocchetti in return for a cash injection which enabled the club to enrol in Serie A. The executives did not take up the offer of a stake.

The question for Infront, and its owners Dalian Wanda, is whether they will take action against the executives and, if so, when. The men have not been charged and are continuing to work. If found guilty in the first degree, they would have the right to take their case to the Appeal Court and then to the Supreme Court.

It is common in Italy for high-ranking executives to remain in office until the legal process has been exhausted, which could take many years and even be 'timed out' under the statute of limitations.

Under the terms of its deal with Lega Serie A, Infront is paid a bonus linked to Bogarelli remaining as agency president.

Melandri revisions

The 2008 Melandri Law, which imposed collective selling, is currently under revision by the government. Some of the proposed changes – including limiting the role of a media-rights adviser – would weaken Infront's power base in Italian football if adopted.

An adviser to Serie A would not be able advise the second tier, Serie B, and would not be permitted to advise clubs. It would not be allowed to act as an intermediary in their sale of archive media rights and/or sponsorship rights, nor could it be awarded the contract to produce the league's television coverage.

Infront is, or has been, engaged in all of these activities. In addition to several potential revenue streams being removed from a future adviser's contract, it would have less political clout. Infront's marketing deals with clubs, in which it pays a minimum guarantee, are seen as helpful to it securing the necessary majority of votes when the advisory contract comes up for renewal. ■

REGULATION

Lega, Infront, Sky and Mediaset set for antitrust defeat

By Frank Dunne

Italy's antitrust authority has notified Lega Serie A, Infront Sports & Media, Mediaset and Sky Italia that their behaviour during the auction process for Serie A media rights constituted a breach of European competition law.

The December findings came after a seven-month investigation into the June 2014 sales of the rights for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18. The parties had until January 19 to respond. A final ruling will be made on March 9.

The authority, l'Autorità Garante del Mercato e della Concorrenza, opened the investigation after the league ignored the outcome of its own auction, splitting the main live packages between pay-television broadcasters Mediaset and Sky, even though Sky had outbid Mediaset for both (*TV Sports Markets* 18:11; 19:10).

Both Infront and the league told the clubs there would be antitrust problems if they awarded both packages A and B to

the same broadcaster.

The award was only made once Mediaset had agreed to sublicense a third package of rights to Sky, with the league seeking the approval of the authority for that deal (see table).

When the authority later subpoenaed the contract from the two broadcasters, it discovered that its terms were different to the terms notified in the league's request.

The authority said the actions of the four parties were designed to alter the outcome of a competitive tender process, enabling existing players to avoid competing with each other and creating a barrier of entry to potential new competitors.

It concluded: "The league, which had to oversee the process with the help of its adviser, Infront, and the two principal competitors in the process, agreed an outcome that was different from the actual result of the process. They did so in such a way as to guarantee a division of the market between the two historical operators.

"Thus they avoided the elimination of one of these (Mediaset), and prevented the entry into the market of new players, both in the short term (Eurosport) and in the future, by discouraging other potential bidders."

Offers for Serie A domestic live rights, 2015-16 to 2017-18, in auction of June 5, 2014, €m per season					
Package	Contents	Reserve price	Bidder	Bid	Winner
A	DTH and internet rights to 8 top teams	274	Sky	357	Sky
			Mediaset	350	
			Fox	275	
B	DTT and internet rights to same teams	274	Mediaset ¹	544	
			Sky	422	
			Fox	401	
			Mediaset ¹	280	Mediaset
C	Ancillary rights to packages A & B	67	n/a	n/a	n/a
D	Exclusive rights for all platforms to the other 12 teams	235	Mediaset	306	Mediaset
			Fox	181	
			Sky	150	
			Eurosport	140	
E	Internet rights to 3 Sunday 3pm KO's	109	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: *TV Sports Markets*
 Note: ¹ Mediaset made two bids for package B, each contingent on different outcomes of other packages

The authority added that all of this was done “without securing any of those advantages for consumers (such as a broadening of the coverage available) that were envisaged at the time the exemption for the sublicensing deal was requested”.

Comprehensive defeat

In reaching its findings, the authority rejected the five main arguments advanced by the parties in their defence. These were:

1) The eventual agreement was the only possible solution to avoid potentially damaging legal battles and/or a re-run of the auction with potentially lower offers

2) Eurosport’s offer for one package of rights was irrelevant because it was below the reserve price

3) The prior approval of the antitrust and communications authorities for the sales guidelines covered the conduct of the auction and there were no critical variations from those principles

4) Infront was not party to any anticompetitive agreements as it is only an adviser to the league

5) The league was not party to the sublicensing agreement between Sky and Mediaset.

Drawn-out process

There are several possible outcomes to the case, but the deals for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18, worth a total of €1.2bn (\$1.3bn) per season, are unlikely to be struck down.

If the authority confirms its initial findings from December and rules against the four parties, the most likely punishment would be a fine for each of them. If the fines were derisory – equivalent to a slap on the wrist – the matter would probably end there. If they were substantial, the parties could challenge the authority in the regional administrative court (Tar) of Lazio, where the authority is based.

A Tar can only challenge an antitrust ruling on procedural grounds, not on matters of competition law. There are many precedents for this happening, including a 2010 ruling by the Tar of Lazio which overturned the antitrust authority’s clearance of Serie A media-rights deals for the 2010-11 to 2011-12 cycle.

A defeat for the authority would not, however, overturn the ruling. It would mean the authority would have to conduct its investigation again from scratch, taking into account its procedural errors. A fresh investigation could clear the four parties, or confirm the original ruling, requiring the parties to pay their fines.

The longer-term implications of the case for the sale of Serie A rights are likely to depend on the scale of any fine handed down. The antitrust authority’s analysis does not reflect well on the handling of the auction by Infront or the league, but if the clubs’ finances are not unduly affected by fines, the majority would remain committed to honouring Infront’s advisory deal through to the end of the 2021-22 season.

A far bigger concern for the league, and Infront, is the possibility of a merger between Sky and Mediaset, which is said to be under negotiation again after the failure of talks last summer. ■

TV AFRICA

Econet to take on SuperSport with aggressive strategy

By Callum McCarthy

Start-up pay-television operator Kwese TV is the latest company set to challenge SuperSport in the sub-Saharan market, and its Kwese Sports channel is already battling the dominant sports broadcaster head-on for rights outside South Africa.

Kwese Sports is available online and free of charge in 19 countries, including Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria. In August, it will launch as a pay service on satellite and online. It will be available across all English-speaking territories in sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa.

The channel’s parent company, Kwese TV, is owned by telco Econet Wireless, in turn owned by Zimbabwean billionaire Strive Masiyiwa.

The company has acquired rights to Spain’s Copa del Rey this season, and is now in a head-to-head battle with SuperSport for the rights to Formula One motor racing. It is also in talks with the

top US sports leagues – basketball’s NBA and American football’s NFL.

Kwese’s sports-rights acquisitions are being handled by industry veteran Rik Dovey, formerly a senior executive of UK pay-television broadcaster Sky, pan-Asian broadcaster ESPN Star Sports and Fox Sports Japan.

It is understood that Kwese is prepared to pay large fees to get a foothold in the market. But acquiring the exclusive premium sports content needed to drive subscriptions will not be easy. Top-tier European football rights are tied up until at least the end of the 2017-18 season, while leagues like the NBA and the NFL prefer to distribute their rights non-exclusively in development markets.

Copa del Rey

Kwese is paying between €500,000 (\$540,000) and €700,000 per season in a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, for rights from the round of 32 to the semi-finals. The deal covers 19 territories in sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa, and was agreed with the Mediapro agency after a formal tender process and two rounds of bidding.

Pay-television operator StarTimes, sports broadcaster Fox Sports and the MP & Silva agency were all interested in buying the rights. SuperSport is thought not to have bid.

The deal is a large increase on Mediapro’s previous deal with Setanta Sports, from 2012-13 to 2014-15, which was worth just over \$200,000 per season. That deal covered all of sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa. Setanta was acquired by 21st Century Fox and rebranded as Fox Sports in August 2014.

Kwese is live-streaming Copa del Rey matches for free on its website during 2015-16. One insider said this is more to show its legitimacy to rights-holders than to provide a service for potential customers. Kwese Sports’s website has been operational since November 2015.

In the last cycle, Setanta often sublicensed matches between Barcelona and Real Madrid – if they were drawn together – to SuperSport. Setanta also used the Ufa Sports agency – since acquired by the Lagardère Sports and Entertainment agency – to sell these

matches to free-to-air broadcasters.

SuperSport holds pay-television rights to the Copa del Rey final across all of English-speaking sub-Saharan Africa from 2015-16 to 2017-18, via a deal with the B4 Capital agency.

It is understood that Kwese will not sublicense any matches to a pay-television rival, but may sell free-to-air rights should it have no avenue to exploit them itself.

Formula One

Kwese is bidding against SuperSport for Formula One rights in English-speaking territories, excluding South Africa. Formula One Management is expected to award the rights in the coming weeks.

SuperSport is the incumbent rights-holder for all sub-Saharan territories including South Africa in a three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016, worth more than \$6m per season.

For a new three-year cycle, from 2017 to 2019, FOM has split its rights into two packages: one package for South Africa; and one package for all other English-speaking territories. SuperSport is thought to have secured the rights in South Africa, but the other package is still on the market.

Kwese and SuperSport are the only serious contenders for Formula One rights. SuperSport is a long-term partner of Formula One, while Econet owner Masiyiwa has long-standing ties with Formula One owner Bernie Ecclestone.

NBA

The National Basketball Association's current deals for English-language rights across the region end after the 2015-16 season. Kwese has been in talks with the NBA for months with a view to acquiring them on an exclusive basis. It is facing strong competition from SuperSport, which is also seeking exclusivity.

Until now, the NBA has preferred to deal with multiple distributors to secure the maximum possible reach (see panel). The league sees itself as being in an audience-building stage in sub-Saharan Africa, and would prefer to continue its non-exclusive strategy.

If the NBA were to change its mind in order to secure a premium for its rights, Kwese might not be well placed to take

NBA rights in sub-Saharan Africa

SuperSport holds English-language NBA rights across sub-Saharan Africa having taken them over from ESPN after the latter shut its African channel.

Pay-television broadcaster SuperSport pays just over \$1m per season over three seasons, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, for a package of regular-season and playoff games. SuperSport is the only broadcaster in the region to show the NBA Finals live.

The NBA has two other English-language deals. East African pay-television broadcaster Zuku shows 72 regular-season games and a selection of playoff games in 10 East African countries. It pays about \$500,000 per season from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

Pan-regional pay-television operator StarTimes has a carriage deal for the league's NBA TV channel. The channel

shows one live regular-season game per night, although this is never a top fixture. StarTimes pays \$600,000 per season from 2013-14 to 2015-16 for exclusive rights to the channel in English-speaking sub-Saharan Africa.

Pay-television operator Zap carries a Portuguese-language version of the NBA TV channel in Angola and Mozambique in a three-season deal, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, worth just under \$250,000 per season.

Pay-television operator Canal Plus Afrique owns exclusive French-language rights in a deal worth about \$550,000 per season. Canal Plus broadcasts three regular-season games per week, as well as the playoffs and finals. It is thought Canal Plus pays a relatively low rights fee in return for its significant investment in production.

advantage as it has no existing subscriber base. DSTV, the pay-television operator which hosts SuperSport, has over 8m subscribers across sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa.

It is thought the NBA would be more inclined to accept a Kwese bid should it show willingness to invest heavily in production and region-specific programming, as well as sublicensing games to other broadcasters.

A deal is expected to be completed in the next two to three months. The league is speaking to its existing broadcast partners to gauge interest and potential income, while also courting interest from agencies and other broadcasters.

The NBA currently earns just over \$2m per season from its various English-language deals in sub-Saharan Africa. Local experts believe that fee could double due to the competition between SuperSport and Kwese.

NFL

National Football League rights in sub-Saharan Africa are currently owned by SuperSport and East African pay-television broadcaster Zuku, from 2013 to 2015, in sublicensing deals with ESPN. ESPN sold rights to the broadcasters after

closing its African channel in July 2013.

SuperSport pays about \$600,000 per season for rights to games on Thursday and Monday nights across all of sub-Saharan Africa. Zuku's deal for two regular-season games each Sunday covers 10 East African territories, and is worth about \$300,000 per season.

SuperSport and Zuku completed separate deals with ESPN to show the playoffs and the season-ending Super Bowl. Both are thought to pay an additional fee for these rights.

Kwese is very interested in acquiring exclusive NFL rights for its 19 territories from the 2016 season. *TV Sports Markets* understands the broadcaster has met multiple times with the league to discuss such a deal.

However, Kwese would have to share at least some rights in its territories from the 2017 season, as Fox Sports Africa has recently been added to an NFL deal with its sister channels in Greece and Turkey.

The Fox deal will be worth a total of about \$600,000 per season, from 2017 to 2019. The Africa portion of the deal is thought to be worth about half of this amount, or about \$300,000 per season. Fox will be guaranteed two regular-season games each Sunday. ■

FOOTBALL INDIA

Star forces EPL down; Ten signs potentially last I-League deal

By Richard Welbirg

Rupert Murdoch-owned Star India has renewed its English Premier League rights in India at a significant discount.

Pay-television broadcaster Star will pay \$100m (€92m) for Premier League rights between 2016-17 and 2018-19, or \$33.3m per season.

It is a 33-per-cent decrease on the \$50m-per-season fee paid by ESPN Star Sports (ESS), Star's predecessor, over the 2013-14 to 2015-16 cycle. That was a 213-per-cent increase on the \$16m per season ESS had paid in the 2010-11 to 2012-13 cycle (*TV Sports Markets* 16:21).

Sony was Star's only competition in the new tender, which closed on December 9, but neither broadcaster was prepared to increase the existing fee.

The Premier League is the most popular football property in India, and has a cachet with cable operators that buy sports channels wholesale. But its audience is heavily concentrated in India's major cities.

Insulated by their major cricket properties, both Sony and Star could afford to lose the Premier League without taking a drastic hit to their subscriber numbers. Equally, both broadcasters felt the pressure of the tumbling rupee, which is considerably weaker against the dollar than when the previous tender was issued – in late 2012.

I-League

At the other end of the value spectrum, pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports extended its deal for India's I-League.

The deal is for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18. Ten is not expected to pay a fee, but will take on production costs of about \$3m per season. The deal was agreed with rights-holder Football Sports Development Limited.

FSDL was created to operate the franchise-based Indian Super League in late 2013 as a joint venture between the

IMG agency, Indian conglomerate Reliance and Star.

As a result of the agreement to create FSDL, it took control of All India Football Federation commercial rights – including the I-League – from the existing IMG-Reliance joint venture.

At the time, it was expected that Star – given its role in the FSDL – would pick up I-League rights after Ten's existing deal ended. But Star has shown no inclination to increase its domestic portfolio beyond the ISL, to which it holds rights until at least 2024 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:20).

Ten's previous deal, agreed with IMG-Reliance, also ran for three seasons from 2012-13 to 2014-15. Then, Ten is thought to have paid a fee of about \$400,000 per year, while production costs were covered by IMG-Reliance.

The future of the I-League is unclear. It has been running alongside the ISL since the latter began in 2014. I-League chief executive Sunando Dhar said last year that a single league would be established "in three to five years".

The ISL is a franchise-based league which has a wider appeal than the I-League, which is popular in the west and north east of the country. ■

FOOTBALL AFRICA

Premier League looks for increased reach in Africa

By Callum McCarthy

England's Premier League is understood to be prioritising reach and distribution over revenue in the sale of its free-to-air rights in sub-Saharan Africa, after experiencing problems with its previous deal. An invitation to tender for the next three-season cycle, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, was sent out last week.

In the current three-season cycle, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, the Optima Sports Management International agency paid \$12m (€11.1m) per season for rights across sub-Saharan Africa. It was forced to hand the rights back to the league after just one season, having defaulted on payments. The agency did not come close

to refinancing its investment (*TV Sports Markets* 18:17).

Pay-television broadcaster SuperSport took over the rights at the beginning of the 2014-15 season. Coverage was shown in about 10 countries on the digital-terrestrial GoTV service operated by Multichoice, the parent company of SuperSport. There was little coverage outside those markets.

In the new cycle, the league is offering non-exclusive rights to one live match per week and a weekly highlights show. The same live match will also be shown on pay-television. A deadline for bids has been set for February 14.

Instead of selling the rights as a single block, the league is making them available in three separate packages: 1) for South Africa; 2) for Nigeria; and 3) for the rest of English-speaking sub-Saharan Africa.

The rights can only be bought by terrestrial broadcasters available on all platforms, or an agency who would distribute to these broadcasters.

Local experts say there will be competition for the rights in Nigeria and South Africa, but expect the overall value to fall well below the fee Osmi was prepared to pay. One expert predicted the total value could fall as low as \$5m per season.

SuperSport is not expected to bid. Another potential buyer said it was discouraged from bidding due to the league's reputation for increasing its asking price from cycle to cycle.

Even if the league were to fail to match the current value, it would not be overly concerned. It has already secured \$180m per season from SuperSport for its pay-television rights in the region – a 60-per-cent increase on the value of its previous deal (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

A tender for the free-to-air rights was originally scheduled to be sent out in October. However, the process was delayed after the league received an unsolicited bid from pay-television broadcaster StarTimes for free-to-air rights in all of sub-Saharan Africa.

The league rejected the offer, local sources say, over concerns about the reach and penetration being offered by StarTimes's free-to-air channels and its desired free-to-air partners. ■

FOOTBALL FRANCE

Fifa makes gains, both big and small, in key French market

By Robin Jellis

Fifa secured an eight-per-cent increase in the value of the men's World Cup in France last month, up from €250m (\$271m) for the 2010 and 2014 tournaments to €270m for 2018 and 2022.

But the value of the women's World Cup increased more than 10-fold in the territory, mainly due to the fact France will host the next tournament.

The deals for the men's and women's World Cups were agreed directly by the in-house sales team of football's global governing body.

The 2018 and 2022 men's World Cups were awarded to commercial broadcaster TF1 and pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports. For 2018, Fifa will earn about €130m. TF1 will pay about €85m of this; beIN will pay the remaining €45m. For 2022, Fifa will earn about €140m – about €90m from TF1 and €50m from beIN.

beIN and TF1 bid separately after initially discussing a joint bid. Public-service broadcaster France Télévisions is thought to have been the only other bidder. French broadcasters were not willing to pay a premium for the rights – the tournament schedule for 2022, to be held in Qatar, is still to be finalised.

beIN will show all matches from both World Cups, with 36 of the 64 matches at each tournament being shown on an exclusive basis. TF1 will show the remaining 28 matches at both tournaments non-exclusively.

Fifa sold the 2010 and 2014 World Cups to TF1 in a deal worth €250m: €120m for 2010 and €130m for 2014.

TF1 sublicensed rights to all matches at the 2014 World Cup, of which 36 were exclusive, to beIN for €30m. beIN was keen on the 2018 and 2022 rights after its success in 2014, when it added about 860,000 subscribers as a result of its coverage (*TV Sports Markets* 19:12).

There was much more competition for the women's World Cup, with France set

to host the 2019 tournament. There are thought to have been six parties bidding: commercial broadcaster M6, TF1, France Télévisions, beIN, Canal Plus and sports broadcaster Eurosport.

The rights were awarded to TF1 in a deal worth about €10m – more than 11 times the value of the 2015 tournament, which was hosted in Canada.

That tournament was bought by M6 in a deal worth €850,000: M6 showed coverage on its digital-terrestrial channel W9. The deal was made possible after Eurosport's pan-European deal for the rights was renegotiated, with Fifa carving out free-to-air rights to sell in France. ■

BUNDESLIGA

Bundesliga aiming for huge growth in value across Europe

By Robin Jellis

Germany's Bundesliga is targeting enormous growth in the value of its media rights across Europe having this week asked media companies to register their interest.

The league this Wednesday issued registration forms to media companies across the continent ahead of issuing the tender to interested parties. The tender is expected later this month.

Bundesliga rights in Europe, excluding Germany, are currently worth just under €60m (\$65m) per season. *TV Sports Markets* understands the league is aiming to at least double this, while its top-end projections are to almost quadruple the existing value.

All existing deals covering Europe are for two seasons, 2015-16 and 2016-17. Rights in a new cycle will be sold for four seasons, from 2017-18 to 2020-21.

The league's commercial arm, DFL Sports Enterprises, currently sells rights on a market-by-market basis. Rights may continue to be sold by the body, but the league will seriously consider offers from agencies and pan-regional broadcasters.

The IMG, Infront Sports & Media and MP & Silva agencies and pan-regional broadcasters beIN Sports, Eurosport and

Fox International Channels are likely to bid. Individual broadcasters are also expected to bid for rights in their respective territories.

Growth in value is expected in territories across Central and Eastern Europe and in the Nordics. Some smaller markets have also become much more competitive in recent months: rights fees in Israel and Portugal – albeit from a low base – are expected to soar following the entrance of new players.

The European rights tender will run concurrent to the tender for domestic rights. The league is understood to want to conclude both processes before this summer's European Championship.

The league's domestic rights are currently worth a total of €624.7m per season over the four seasons from 2013-14 to 2016-17. German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland has all live rights in a deal worth an average of €485.7m per season.

The German competition authority, the Bundeskartellamt, has insisted on a no single buyer rule, precluding any buyer from securing all live rights. ■

TENNIS

ESPN pays decent increase to renew Australian Open

By Richard Welbirg

Tennis Australia has renewed its deal with ESPN for Australian Open rights in Latin America and the Caribbean without putting the rights on the market.

International sports broadcaster ESPN last month agreed a five-year deal, from 2017 to 2021, worth between \$3.5m (€3.2m) and \$4m per year.

ESPN's previous Australian Open deal in Latin America, which ran from 2012 to 2016, was agreed in concert with its 10-year agreement, from 2012 to 2021, for rights in the US. Both deals were worth \$2.5m per season.

The deals were struck with the IMG agency in 2010. ESPN opted for a shorter term in Latin America as it was uncertain how the market would develop. ■

FASTRACK 2

NEWS IN BRIEF

OTE renews Greek Cup rights in federation deal

Greek pay-television broadcaster OTE renewed its domestic media rights to the Greek Cup football competition.

The three-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, will be worth about €3m (\$3.25m) per season. The deal is also understood to give OTE visibility on in-stadium board advertising and logos on media backdrops.

The rights were sold by the Greek football federation following a tender process. Bids were due by December 16. OTE was the only bidder.

The value represents a 25-per-cent increase on the amount the federation earns in its current deal at a time when the national economy is struggling.

For the three seasons from 2013-14 to 2015-16 the federation sold the rights to Cyprus-based agency Media Goal for €7.1m, or just under €2.4m per season. Media Goal sold the rights on to OTE for just over €2.6m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:5).

Rival pay-television broadcaster Nova contested the award of the rights to Media Goal in the current cycle. Nova argued that according to its own statutes the federation was prohibited from selling rights to an intermediary, and that it should have sold the rights directly to a broadcaster.

Nova is thought to have sought damages, rather than the re-selling of the rights. One local source said that as a result of the last sale, Nova chose not to bid for the rights in a new cycle. Its owner, telco Forthnet, is also in debt and is looking to sell the broadcaster.

The federation also struck a deal for international rights, outside Greece, with Cypriot company KG Telestare for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19.

International rights are far less valuable than the domestic rights: one source estimated the deal to be worth about €330,000 per season. Of this, between €150,000 and €200,000 per season would come from Cyprus. ■

PAOK goes it alone outside Greece

PAOK's new deal for its international rights could result in the Greek football club remaining excluded from the centralised domestic Superleague deal.

PAOK this week agreed a one-and-a-half year consultancy deal with the Davnis Sports agency for its home matches. The deal covers the rest of the 2015-16 season and all of 2016-17.

International rights to all Superleague clubs' matches were sold by the league to Greek pay-television broadcaster Nova for 2015-16. The deal was worth about €800,000 (\$865,000), but was scaled down in value to about €675,000 when PAOK opted out of the deal.

PAOK's rights are worth between €80,000 and €100,000 per season. The total Nova fee fell by about €125,000 because of the devaluation of the package due to the exclusion of PAOK.

The deal with Davnis Sports excludes Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Greece. Cyprus and Greece are excluded as they are covered by the domestic deal – also with Nova. Albania is excluded due to overspill from Cyprus and Greece.

In Bulgaria, PAOK already has a one-season deal covering 2015-16 in place with commercial broadcaster Nova, owned by multi-territory broadcaster Modern Times Group. The deal, brokered by the Sportsman Media Group agency, is worth about €30,000. The deal was driven by PAOK's signing of Bulgarian striker Dimitar Berbatov.

Davnis Sports will target deals in countries where there is a sizeable Greek population – notably Australia, the Balkan territories, Russia and the US. It will also assess whether there is interest from agencies in bundling PAOK content in output deals with broadcasters. Davnis Sports will be paid commission contingent on its success.

The international deal with PAOK could lead to collaboration with Davnis Sports on domestic rights. PAOK has so far opted out of the latest domestic deal, agreed with Nova in May last year.

PAOK could still be included in the

deal, and remains in dialogue with Nova. Fellow club Panathinaikos, which initially opposed the Nova renewal, has since opted into the deal. ■

MLB gets first fee from China

Major League Baseball's three-year deal with Chinese internet operator Le Sports guarantees the league extensive coverage in China for the first time.

The exclusive digital rights deal will run from 2016 to 2018 and covers mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau. It is the first time the MLB will earn a rights fee – between \$1m (€925,000) and \$2m per year – from the Chinese market.

Le Sports will have streaming and video-on-demand rights to 125 league games per year, a huge increase on the coverage the league currently receives.

MLB generally seeks international rights deals between three and five years in duration; it opted for the shorter term in China because of the pace of change of the market.

Le Sports will also invest over \$10m in marketing the league in China across the duration of the contract. This will include managing the league's online presence and selling MLB merchandise.

Production costs – including the training of Chinese Mandarin commentators – will be shared between the two parties.

Until now, MLB has agreed annual deals for an identical package with seven regional broadcasters and online players, including Le Sports. This package covers the *This Week in Baseball* highlights programme and key games including the World Series, All Star game and season-opening games.

This package – and the option to take a handful of further games – will remain available to terrestrial broadcasters, alongside the Le Sports deal.

Conversations over an expanded partnership with Le Sports began almost three years ago, when Le Sports was involved in organising the MLB's Road Show fan experience event. ■

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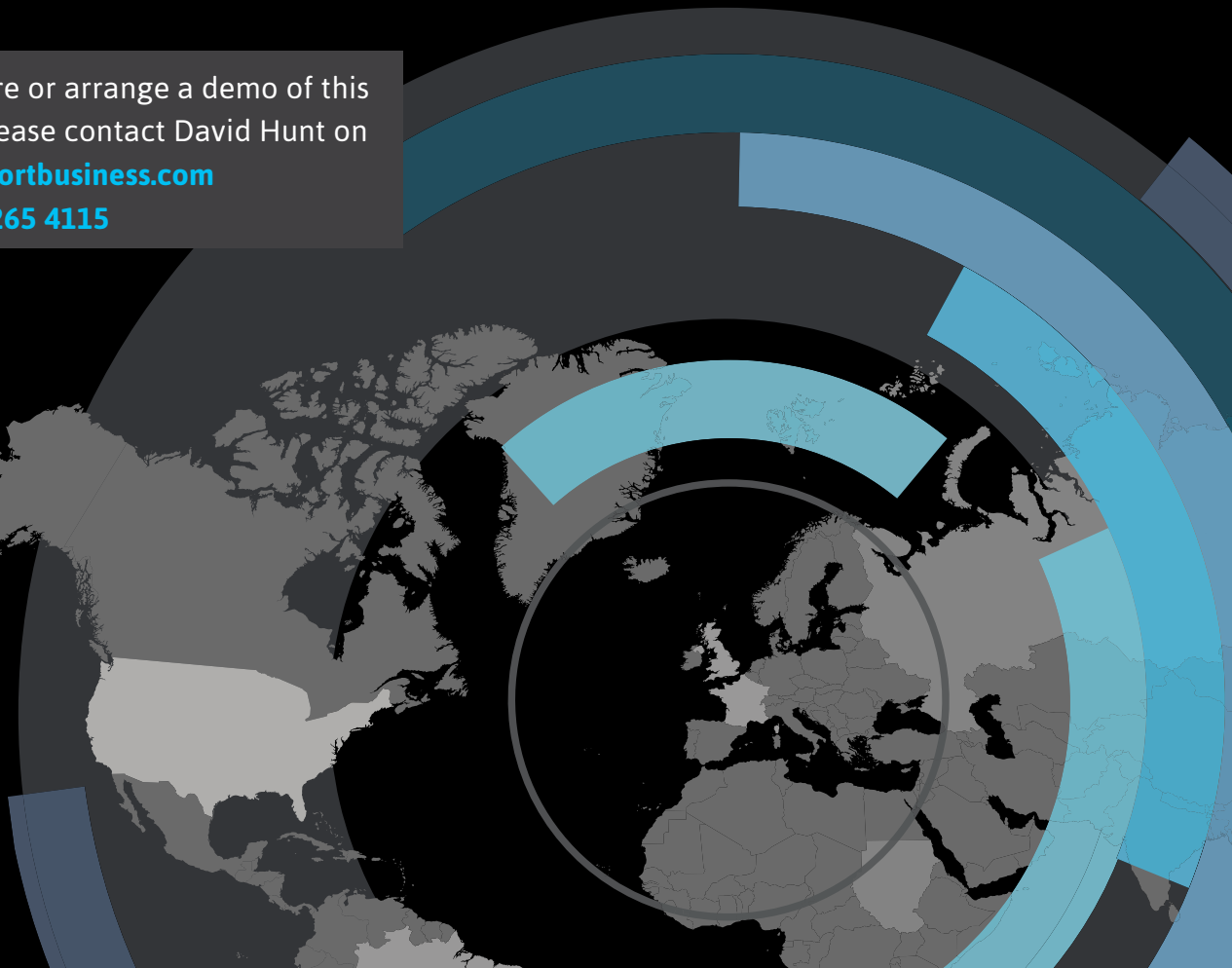
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 21 to February 3

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: English Premier League, Copa América Centenario and more

- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Star India extended a deal for English Premier League rights by three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 8).
- **Football:** The Fox Sports division of US network Fox acquired rights for the 2016 Copa América Centenario national team tournament. The deal was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 19:23.
- **Football:** Argentinian media conglomerate Grupo Clarín and telco Telefónica were awarded rights to show domestic league matches featuring the country's top clubs in the 2016 season. Grupo Clarín-owned Arter (Channel 13) and Telefónica-owned Telefe will show exclusive coverage of games featuring Boca Juniors, Independiente, Racing, River Plate and San Lorenzo. The rights will be worth a total of about ARS180m (€12.2m/\$13.3m).
- **Football:** Fox Sports acquired English-language rights to Mexico national team friendlies and qualifiers for the 2018 Fifa World Cup, in a sublicensing deal with Spanish-language US broadcaster Univision Deportes. The three-year deal will run from 2016 to 2018.
- **Football:** Italian pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia acquired a package of rights previously held by digital-terrestrial channel Gazzetta TV. The package includes the second-tier English Championship and the League Cup club competition, along with Conmebol qualifiers for the 2018 World Cup.
- **Football:** Gazzetta TV ceased broadcasting on January 5 due to financial difficulties.
- **Football:** Israeli agency Davnis Sports will market international rights to Greek Superleague club PAOK's home games in the top domestic division until the end of the 2016-17 season. The rights are available worldwide, excluding Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Greece (page 10).
- **Football:** Football Federation Australia agreed a rights deal for commercial broadcaster Seven to show coverage of the country's national women's team on free-to-air television for the first time. Seven will broadcast the team's qualifiers for the 2016 summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

SINCE LAST TIME

- US media company Sinclair Broadcast Group agreed a \$350m (€323m) deal to acquire pay-television broadcaster Tennis Channel. Sinclair estimated the deal will reduce future tax payments by about \$65m as it carries forward more than \$200m of Tennis Channel's net operating losses. The deal was struck with Tennis Channel's major shareholders: private-equity companies Apollo Partners, Bain Capital Ventures, Battery Ventures, CCMF Capital and Columbia Capital, as well as satellite-television providers DirecTV and Dish Network.
- Vincent Bolloré, chief executive of media company Vivendi, held talks about agreeing a carriage deal with, and acquiring a minority stake in, pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports France. Negotiations began in mid-January, with the deal being proposed by Bolloré in an attempt to safeguard Vivendi's French pay-television channel Canal Plus. A source close to beIN told *TV Sports Markets* the focus of discussions was an exclusive distribution deal to make the beIN Sports channels available on CanalSat, Canal Plus's satellite platform. Under the proposed deal, it is understood that Vivendi would have the option to take a minority, non-controlling stake in beIN Sports France.
- BeIN Media Group secured full control of its beIN Sports channels in Indonesia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Thailand after completing a buyout of the MP & Silva agency from its 50:50 joint venture. The deal was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 19:12.
- Conmebol, the South American football confederation, unveiled a new media-rights income revenue-sharing agreement for the Copa Libertadores, staving off the threat of a boycott from the South American League of Clubs, which comprises clubs from Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Clubs will now receive \$600,000 (€555,000) for every match played at home during the group phase of the Copa Libertadores, up from \$450,000 offered by Conmebol late last year.
- Vodafone asked the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia, Spain's competition regulator, to suspend a carriage deal between rival telco Telefónica and the Mediapro agency for the beIN Sports LaLiga pay-television channel. Telefónica agreed to pay Mediapro €2.4bn (\$2.6bn) to carry beIN Sports LaLiga on an exclusive basis for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Vodafone said an exclusive deal contravenes a condition imposed by the CNMC when the regulator approved Telefónica's takeover of Spanish pay-television operator Canal Plus last year.
- Portugal's competition authority, the Autoridade da Concorrência, is investigating whether long-term football rights deals signed by telcos Nos and Altice may restrict competition in the market. Nos and Altice, which owns Portugal Telecom and its pay-television operator Meo, have signed deals over the past two months with several top-tier Primeira Liga clubs, some of which run as far as the 2027-28 season.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- International sports broadcaster ESPN agreed a content partnership with Chinese internet company Tencent. Chinese-language ESPN content will feature on Tencent platforms. Tencent will also take from ESPN exclusive live digital rights in mainland China to the NCAA US men's college basketball championship, along with more than 100 regular-season college basketball games and the X Games action sports event.
- North American sports broadcaster One World Sports signed carriage deals with New Jersey cable-television business Service

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 21 to February 3

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

NFL, badminton, Masters Champions League, European Tour and more

- **American Football:** The NFL awarded Thursday Night Football rights to the CBS and NBC networks for two seasons, 2016 and 2017. Each will broadcast five games, simulcast on the league's pay-television channel NFL Network. CBS and NBC will pay \$225m (€208m) each for the rights. CBS and NFL Network will show the first half of the season's Thursday Night Football schedule, with NBC and NFL Network broadcasting the second half. The NFL is in "active discussions" with prospective digital partners for Thursday Night Football streaming rights.
- **Badminton:** International pay-television broadcaster Eleven Sports Network acquired exclusive rights in Singapore for the 2016 Badminton Asia Team Championships. Eleven will provide coverage from the quarter-final stage onwards on its channels and the elevensports.sg website.
- **Basketball:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus acquired exclusive rights for qualifying tournaments ahead of the 2016 summer Olympic Games, to be hosted in Rio de Janeiro. Canal Plus struck the deal with
- Fiba, the sport's global governing body.
- **Bowling:** US pay-television broadcaster CBS Sports Network agreed a two-year rights deal, for 2016 and 2017, with the United States Bowling Congress. The deal comprises 23 major championships and 13 events on the Professional Women's Bowling Association Tour. CBS Sports Network will also broadcast the USA Bowling Championships, Junior Gold Championships and Intercollegiate Championships youth events.
- **Cricket:** International pay-television sports broadcaster ESPN acquired digital rights in the UK and Ireland for International Cricket Council events. The deal runs for four years, from 2016 to 2019.
- **Cricket:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights for highlights of International Cricket Council events on its website for the next four years, from 2016 to 2019.
- **Cricket:** Pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports acquired rights in the Middle East for the 2016 Masters Champions League Twenty20 tournament in a deal
- with the Sporty Solutionz agency.
- **Cricket:** Pay-television broadcaster SuperSport acquired rights in sub-Saharan Africa for the 2016 Masters Champions League in a deal with Sporty Solutionz.
- **Cricket:** Sporty Solutionz awarded rights for the 2016 Masters Champions League to Caribbean pay-television broadcaster SportsMax.
- **Cricket:** Pakistani public-service broadcaster PTV acquired rights for the 2016 Masters Champions League in a deal with Sporty Solutionz.
- **Golf:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand acquired rights over five years, from 2016 to 2020, for the European Tour and Asian Tour after they were relinquished by online television service Lightbox Sport, the 50:50 joint venture between digital sports broadcaster Coliseum Sports Media and telco Spark.
- **Gymnastics:** The BBC agreed a deal to show live coverage of the final day of the 2016 British Gymnastics Championships on April 10.

Electric Broadband Cable, telco Hotwire Communications in Pennsylvania, and Alaska-based telco GCI.

- Media company CSI Sports struck a deal for its pay-television channel Fight Sports to be carried by US telco Verizon's free, mobile-first, social entertainment platform Go90.
- UK sports production company Sunset+Vine was awarded the contract to produce non-live programming for International Cricket Council events for four years, from 2016 to 2019.
- UK-based production company Input Media signed a two-year extension, from 2016 to 2017, with the French tennis federation, covering production of the French Open grand slam tournament.
- English Premier League club Arsenal agreed a content partnership with the CCTV Sports state-owned channel in China. Arsenal interviews and footage will be used in the channel's *Total Soccer* weekly programme.
- Dutch magazine *Voetbal International* sealed a media partnership with the Eredivisie Media & Marketing division of the country's top tier of domestic football, under which it will gain access to exclusive content supplied by pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Netherlands, which has rights for the Eredivisie until the end of the 2024-25 season.
- Chinese internet company Le Sports agreed a carriage deal for the pay-television channel operated by Italian Serie A football club Inter Milan. Le Sports will be the exclusive carriage partner of the Inter Channel across mainland China for two years, from 2016 to 2017, and will make the channel available across its television, website and mobile platforms.
- Turkish Süper Lig football club Galatasaray agreed a three-and-a-half year content partnership, starting immediately and running until the end of the 2018-19 season, with digital sports media company Perform Group. The Perform-owned goal.com website will be provided with behind-the-scenes content from Galatasaray, and Perform-owned data company Opta will provide data feeds for use across Galatasaray's digital platforms.
- International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network secured carriage deals with cable-television operators Multimedia Polska and INEA in Poland.
- The Sporty Solutionz agency was appointed as host broadcaster for the 2016 India Hockey League.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 21 to February 3**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****Deutsche Eishockey Liga, MotoGP, Olympic Games, rallycross and more**

- **Hockey:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired live rights for the semi-finals and finals of England Hockey's 2016 Super 6s men's and women's competitions.
- **Ice Hockey:** German telco Deutsche Telekom acquired rights for the Deutsche Eishockey Liga, the sport's top division in the country. The rights will cover four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, with the option of extending the deal by a further four, from 2020-21 to 2023-24 (page 2).
- **Ice Hockey:** UK pay-television broadcaster Premier Sports acquired rights for a February 2016 pre-qualifying tournament for the 2018 winter Olympic Games featuring the Great Britain men's team.
- **Motorcycling:** German commercial broadcaster Servus TV acquired rights in Austria for the MotoGP world championship. Servus TV will show every race and qualifying session as well as the Moto2 and Moto3 classes across its platforms. The deal with Dorna Sports, the championship's promoter, begins this year.
- **Motorsport:** German public-service broadcaster ARD sealed a two-year extension, from 2016 to 2017, to its rights deal for the DTM German touring-car series. The agreement was reached with series promoter ITR.
- **Motorsport:** UK digital-terrestrial-television channel Quest secured rights for the 2016 World Rallycross Championship in a deal with IMG. Quest will show live coverage of all 12 championship rounds on Sunday afternoons.
- **Motorsport:** UK commercial broadcaster ITV acquired highlights rights for the 2016 World Rallycross Championship in a deal with IMG. The ITV4 free-to-air digital channel will show highlights on Tuesday evenings after each round.
- **Motorsport:** German commercial broadcaster RTL acquired rights for the ADAC 24-hour Nürburgring race. RTL's pay-television sister channel RTL Nitro will show live coverage on May 28-29 and RTL will broadcast highlights on its main channel.
- **Olympic Games:** The BBC agreed a sublicensing deal with US media company Discovery Communications under which the UK public-service broadcaster gave up exclusive rights to the 2018 and 2020 Games in return for free-to-air rights to the 2022 and 2024 Olympics (page 1).
- **Skiing:** The German ski federation renewed a rights deal with SportA, the sports-rights agency that represents German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF, for four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20. Both broadcasters will continue to show all of the federation's alpine skiing, ski jumping, cross-country skiing, Nordic combined, freestyle, ski cross and snowboarding events.
- **Skiing:** Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports acquired rights in the US and Canada for Europe's Ski Classics long-distance cross-country series. The deal will run until at least the end of the 2015-16 campaign.
- **Skiing:** International pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights in Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, Malta and Turkey for the Ski Classics.
- **Skiing:** The Sina Sports division of Chinese internet operator Sina acquired rights for the Ski Classics in a deal with the W Sportsmedia agency.
- **Speedway:** International pay-television broadcaster Eleven Sports Network acquired rights in Poland for the British Speedway Elite League. The multi-year agreement, beginning this year, was struck with the Pitch International agency.

- Russian media group Gazprom Media Holding formed a strategic partnership with China's state-owned Shanghai Media Group. The partnership will initially focus on producing and distributing movies, television and digital content, but the two companies will also look at co-operating on sports coverage, according to Gazprom Media chief executive Dmitry Chernyshenko.
- Australia's National Rugby League will allow its clubs to live-stream coverage of their pre-season games, after obtaining the consent of commercial broadcaster Nine, which holds exclusive rights.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- German football's top-tier Bundesliga is set to award its next four-season cycle of rights, from 2017-18 to 2020-21, before the start of the Uefa Euro 2016 national team tournament on June 10.
- Paraic Duffy, director general of the Gaelic Athletic Association in Ireland, stated his desire to continue selling rights to pay-television broadcasters, despite calls for games to return to

free-to-air channels. The GAA's deal with UK pay-television broadcaster Sky is due to expire at the end of the 2017 season. A motion, passed in December at the Dublin GAA Convention, called for new rules regarding rights whereby "all televised inter-country championship games shall be available on free-to-air television". The motion requires support from at least two-thirds of delegates at the February 26-27 Congress.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- Football fans are putting their devices and personal privacy in jeopardy through accessing illegal online streams of games, according to researchers from Belgian university KU Leuven and New York-based Stony Brook University. The most popular free live-streaming platforms are attracting upwards of 8m visits per month with a reliance on malicious advertising to make a profit.
- Golf's PGA Tour agreed global partnerships with action camera manufacturer GoPro and internet video network SkratchTV.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from January 21 to February 3

MEDIA RIGHTS 4

International Table Tennis Federation World Tour, ATP Tour and more

- **Table Tennis:** Eleven Sports Network acquired rights in Chinese Taipei for the International Table Tennis Federation's World Tour events in a multi-year deal. The rights will be exploited on a new OTT platform launched by the broadcaster in Chinese Taipei in January.
- **Tennis:** Fox Sports Netherlands acquired rights for events operated by the Women's Tennis Association Tour for five years, from 2017 to 2021.
- **Tennis:** Media company Sony Pictures Television Networks struck a deal with WTA Media for exclusive rights to WTA Tour tournaments in Latin America. The deal will run from 2017 to 2019.
- **Tennis:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Netherlands extended a deal for events operated by the men's Association of Tennis Professionals World Tour. The deal, with the ATP Media division of the ATP World Tour, will cover all Masters 1000 and 500 tournaments for five years, from 2016 to 2020.
- **Tennis:** French public-service broadcaster France Télévisions acquired rights for the men's Davis Cup and women's Fed Cup national team tournaments for four years, from 2016 to 2019. The sublicensing deal with pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports was approved by the International Tennis Federation. BeIN, which holds the rights until 2021, was obliged by French listed-events legislation to find a free-to-air partner for the Davis Cup final and semi-final. France Télévisions will show matches on Saturdays and Sundays. Talks are taking place to expand the partnership to Friday matches.
- PGA Tour Live, the digital OTT subscription service operated by golf's PGA Tour, will expand its service worldwide. It launched in July 2015 in Australia, Canada, Ireland, the UK and the US.
- The Fox Sports division of US network Fox struck a partnership with virtual reality technology company NextVR to broadcast live coverage of North American boxing contests.
- Digital sports media company Perform Group launched a new retail betting media service. The service incorporates videos, visualisations, pre-match footage and data.
- The NHL ice hockey league and the NHL Players' Association extended a video content deal with GoPro, which will produce *NHL After Dark*, an 11-part series that will offer fans behind-the-scenes insight into the league's after-hours training sessions.
- Pay-television broadcaster Star India will seek to renegotiate its rights deal with the Board of Control for Cricket in India if recommendations to limit advertising during match coverage in the country are adopted. Advertising during domestic cricket coverage should be restricted to lunch and tea breaks and not allowed between overs, a committee appointed by the country's Supreme Court said in January.
- Media group the Enthusiast Network sealed a multi-year strategic partnership with the Dew Tour. The agreement will see the NBC Sports division of US media group NBCUniversal scaling back its involvement in the action sports series. The Dew Tour has been run by NBC Sports, in partnership with beverage brand Mountain Dew, for the past 11 years. NBC Sports will remain the tour's broadcast partner.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Ma Guoli will step down as chairman of the Infront Sports & Media agency's Chinese division at the end of March, while David Yang will become executive chairman. Yang was recently appointed as chief executive of the Dalian Wanda conglomerate's Wanda Sports China division, which is a sister company of Infront. Managing director Anne Zhao will continue to look after Infront China's day-to-day operations. • James Murdoch is set to return as chairman of pan-European pay-television broadcaster Sky, replacing Nicholas Ferguson in the role. Ferguson will step down at the end of April after 12 years on the board.

EDITORIAL

Editor	Robin Jellis
Chief Sports Writer	Frank Dunne
Senior Reporter	Richard Welbirg
Reporter	Callum McCarthy
Telephone	+44 (0) 20 7265 4139
Email	tvsm@tvsportsmarkets.com

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Designer	Scott Mackie
----------	--------------

SALES & COMMERCIAL

Telephone	+44 (0) 20 7265 4183
Email	sales@tvsportsmarkets.com
Paul Santos	Head of Sales & Commercial paul.santos@sportbusiness.com
David Hunt	Senior Account Manager

david.hunt@sportbusiness.com
TV Sports Markets

Registered Office:

2nd Floor, 5 Thomas More Square, London E1W 1YW

© TV Sports Markets Ltd 2016.

Printed by Rapidity, Citybridge House,
235-245 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7JD



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