

## TENNIS

### Australian Open savours sales success of first in-house deals, Japan and China next

By Richard Welbirg

Bringing Australian Open media-rights sales in-house was a natural move in response to market demands for tailored coverage, Tennis Australia told *TV Sports Markets* this week.

A long relationship between Tennis Australia, the national governing body which operates the Australian Open grand slam, and the IMG agency officially came to an end at the close of 2015.

Richard Heaselgrave, commercial director at Tennis Australia, said the decision to take on production ahead of the 2015 Open led to a desire for more direct relationships with broadcasters.

"You have 26 courts with different nationals and they have markets that want to follow them. This year we had a

Chinese qualifier: CCTV just wants to follow her on court six," Heaselgrave said.

"You have to know what broadcasters want, but when doing that through a third party it adds a layer of complexity. And doing it through someone else, the relationship is not yours."

Heaselgrave added that IMG, or any other agency, would "struggle" having direct conversations with broadcasters about providing a bespoke service.

Since the change to sell rights in-house, Tennis Australia's commercial team has signed two multi-territory deals.

Last September it agreed a renewal with international sports broadcaster Eurosport covering Europe and

*Continued on page 3* ►

## TV GERMANY

### DFB the biggest winner in swathe of deals

By Robin Jellis

Germany's football federation is set to earn about 35 per cent more from domestic media rights to its knockout cup competition, with deals to be announced in the coming weeks.

The federation, the Deutscher Fußball-Bund, is close to renewals with public-service broadcaster ARD and pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland for rights to its domestic cup competition, the DFB-Pokal. The deals will run for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, and will be worth between €48m (\$54m) and €49m per season.

ARD will pay between €39m and €40m per season for free-to-air rights. Sky will pay about €9m per season for pay-television rights.


The current four-season deals with the same broadcasters, from 2012-13 to 2015-16, are worth a combined €36m per season. ARD pays about €27m per season, while Sky pays about €9m per season.

The DFB agreements come after a host of deals for properties in Germany have been finalised in recent weeks. These include: handball's European

*Continued on page 4* ►

## CONTENTS

- 1 Australian Open revenue up after taking sales in-house; Japan next
- 1 Football federation the biggest winner amid host of recent deals
- 2 Fastrack: CBS and NBC deals show NFL's power; Servus gets MotoGP
- 6 False start for Diamond League contracts over territories in Africa
- 6 Fox adds WTA to tennis portfolio
- 7 Premier League sees fees fall in final three Asia-Pacific territories
- 8 Eleven struggles in Asia but aims to break even in three years' time
- 9 Fiba and Perform aiming to make World Cup 'pinnacle' of basketball
- 12 Sports Clips

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## FASTRACK

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Thursday Night Football again brings gains for NFL

Increasing the value of its Thursday Night Football rights while dividing content once more illustrates the sheer power of the National Football League.

US commercial networks CBS and NBC earlier this month agreed a deal to split a 10-game Thursday Night Football package over the 2016 and 2017 seasons. Each network will pay \$225m (€201m) per season for five exclusive games, or \$45m per game.

On a per-game basis, the NFL will earn 20 per cent more than in the 2015 season, when it sold an eight-game package to CBS for \$300m, or \$37.5m per game (*TV Sports Markets* 19:2).

It has expanded the overall 'Thursday Night' set of games to 18 for two reasons. First, so CBS and NBC each have enough content. Second, so pay-television channel NFL Network can continue to show eight games exclusively, as in the current deal.

Dan Shevchik, vice-president at US agency Sports Media Advisors, told *TV Sports Markets*: "On a straight P&L basis the programming alone likely isn't profitable, but the broader benefits to the networks' other content and initiatives make it worth the investment."

Neal Pilson, former president of CBS Sports, said: "I don't think the broadcasters look at it from the point of view of making money from 8-11pm, but whether having the NFL on Thursday nights makes NBC or CBS a more powerful revenue-generating engine. Both will use it to promote programming and boost their prime time ratings."

As in the previous deal, all games will be simulcast on NFL Network. The commercial broadcasters will split the production cost of the eight games to be shown exclusively on NFL Network.

The NFL will also sell streaming rights to the package for the first time.

A process for US streaming rights, expected to conclude this month,

follows the league's sale of global streaming rights to last October's International Series game between the Buffalo Bills and the Jacksonville Jaguars; these were bought by Yahoo for \$20m (*TV Sports Markets* 19:12).

Apple, Amazon, Google and Verizon have all been reported as being in contention for the rights.

There are advantages for the NFL in beginning relationships with streaming players at a time when many younger viewers in the US are looking to 'cut the cord'. It may also add to the competitive environment when the league next comes to sell its other rights packages.

Pilson said: "I don't expect the new delivery systems will take away a broadcast network in the next series of negotiations. There would be a huge amount on uncertainty and risk if one of the existing TV packages were to switch platform."

A lack of exclusivity is not a big problem for CBS or NBC. In playing teams' local markets, CBS affiliates have out-rated the premium NFL Network many times over. There is also little threat from the streaming package; both CBS and NBC were happy to agree their deals without knowing the exact terms of the streaming agreement.

Few at-home viewers are expected to choose a stream over the linear broadcast, and the winner of the rights will have to carry the commercial broadcasters' ads – potentially exposing them to mobile viewers they would not otherwise have reached. ■

## Servus snares MotoGP in Austria

Servus TV's acquisition of rights to motorcycling series MotoGP last month has come at a high cost as the commercial broadcaster will share coverage in Austria with Eurosport.

Servus TV, owned by Red Bull Media House, agreed a three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018, worth about €500,000 (\$560,000) per year for all MotoGP content. The deal represents a huge increase on the value of MotoGP's

previous deals in the country.

Public-service broadcaster ORF showed MotoGP from 2012 to 2015 in a series of single-year deals. The content available to ORF increased year-on-year, ranging from a weekly highlights package in 2012 to 15 live races in 2015. It is thought the value of these deals ranged between a nominal fee in 2012 and about €80,000 in 2015.

The large increase is mostly due to the reintroduction of the Austrian Grand Prix in 2016, which will be held at the Red Bull Ring in Spielberg. It is the first time the race has appeared on the MotoGP calendar since 1997.

The package also includes races from Moto2 and Moto3 – MotoGP's developmental series.

Dorna, MotoGP's commercial rights holder, is thought to have given more content to Servus as it is unhappy with the level of coverage it receives from sports broadcaster Eurosport in Austria.

Eurosport's deal for MotoGP rights in Germany, from 2015 to 2018, enables it to broadcast in Austria and Switzerland. Eurosport pays about €4m per year for its rights (*TV Sports Markets* 18:19).

Eurosport shows nine races per year on its Eurosport 1 channel, which is available free-to-air in Austria, and nine races on its Eurosport 2 channel, which is available on pay-television only.

*TV Sports Markets* understands Servus faced no competition for the rights. This was for three reasons.

First, Eurosport's presence in Austria prevents any broadcaster from holding exclusive rights. Conversely, Servus has had to encrypt its satellite channel to block its Austrian channel in Germany.

Second, ORF exploited the rights on its free-to-air channel ORF Sport Plus, which mainly shows niche properties. This did not fit with the premium image Dorna wanted to project.

Third, industry insiders believe the return of the Austrian Grand Prix to a Red Bull-sponsored track sent a message to other broadcasters that Servus would be favoured in negotiations. ■

## TENNIS

## Open TV revenue to jump in 2017 thanks to pan-regional deals

Continued from page 1 ►

Francophone Africa. The value of the deal increased by 80 per cent, from €10.5m (\$11.7m) per year from 2012 to 2016, to €19m per year from 2017 to 2021 (*TV Sports Markets* 16:3; 19:17).

Last month, it renewed a deal covering Latin America in direct talks with international pay-television broadcaster ESPN. The value of the deal rose from \$2.5m per year from 2012 to 2016 to about \$4m per year from 2017 to 2021 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:2).

The two deals will see Tennis Australia's total media-rights income rise from about \$60m in 2016 to at least \$71m in 2017, of which just under \$43m will come from deals outside Australia. In 2016 it earned just under \$32m from international rights deals (see table).

Heaselgrave said Tennis Australia's rights were increasing in value for two main reasons. First, more games are sold than in the past. Second, the sales process is more flexible than previously.

In the latest deals, Tennis Australia has sold the Open Series – lead-in events to the grand slam – in the same package. The Series consists of the Hopman Cup, the World Tennis Challenge exhibition event and the ATP World Tour 250 series tournaments held in Brisbane and Sydney.

"Before, the events were all organised slightly differently and distributed by different agencies. Now we run them all ourselves," said Heaselgrave.

"What we realised was that broadcast partners really want a month of tennis. And we have most of the top players in the world in Australia for that month."

Despite the media-rights revenue growth the Australian Open has achieved, it still significantly trails Wimbledon.

In 2015, the UK's grand slam earned media-rights revenue of about £110m (€142m/\$159m), and has since agreed a significantly more lucrative domestic deal (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13; 19:18).

Australian Open TV deals in 2016

Territory	Broadcaster	Start Year	End Year	Fee/year (\$m)
Australia	Seven	2015	2019	28.4
Europe	Eurosport	2012	2016	11.7
Pan-Asia	Fox International Channels	2015	2017	4.5
Japan	Wowow + NHK	2015	2016	4
Latin America	ESPN International	2012	2016	2.5
US & Canada	ESPN	2012	2021	2.5
Indian subcontinent	Sony	2015	2019	2
Mena	BeIN Media Group	2015	2019	1.7
China	SMG + CCTV + IQIYI	2015	2017	1.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	SuperSport	2014	2018	0.7
New Zealand	Sky	2015	2018	0.4
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>60</b>

Source: *TV Sports Markets Rights Tracker*

## Slam of Asia-Pacific

In part, the Australian Open lags behind the other grand slams because of its difficult time zone. In the lucrative tennis markets of Europe and the Americas, matches are shown late at night or early in the morning.

This has forced Tennis Australia to look closer to home. "We are driven into China, Singapore and Japan," said Heaselgrave. "It just so happens this is useful given the way the world is going."

"What we are seeing is that the Australian Open is becoming more important globally rather than just being an Australian tennis event. Australia is an interesting market but only has 24m people."

The body is yet to sign off a deal in Asia-Pacific without IMG as an advisor, but is currently in discussions in Japan. Heaselgrave said Tennis Australia's initial focus was to agree deals covering Europe, Latin America and Japan.

"Our existing deals are quite nicely staggered: the next tranche is China, then pan-Asia, North America, Africa, Australia domestic," Heaselgrave said. "I think you'll see our strategy in the deals to be agreed from 2018-19. We weren't involved that much in this part of the world last time around."

Heaselgrave added that Tennis Australia sees Asia-Pacific as potentially

10-15 markets rather than a single market.

Japan was the largest market, in viewership terms, for the 2014 and 2015 events – driven by the success of Kei Nishikori, who reached the fourth round and quarter-final respectively.

His rise persuaded public-service broadcaster NHK to sign a two-year deal covering 2015 and 2016; previous deals had always been just for one year.

NHK shows highlights and selected matches featuring Nishikori. Wowow holds pay-television rights. The deals are worth about \$4m in total.

"Personal relationships and slow status building is more important in Japan than other markets. Having an international team – that isn't just a bunch of Australians flying out of Melbourne – is very important."

As is the presence of a local star. In China, the success of Li Na – who won the Australian Open in 2014 – created a wave of interest. But she retired later that year, and in 2015 ratings for the tournament in China fell 53 per cent, although the tournament suffered from an overlap with football's Asian Cup.

The Open has three deals in place in China: with state broadcaster CCTV, Shanghai Media Group – which distributes the rights among regional sports channels and exploits them on its own – and streaming platform iQiyi.

Tennis Australia's total income from the country is about \$1.6m per year. All three deals expire in 2017.

Since the deals were agreed, China's digital market has grown enormously, with rights fees for similar properties skyrocketing. For example, iQiyi will pay between \$16m and \$17m per year for WTA rights from 2017 to 2026 – up from just over \$500,000 per year in the WTA's existing deal with the China Sports Media agency (*TV Sports Markets* 19:21).

The time zone in which the Australian Open takes place is much better for a Chinese audience than the other three slams. Even with Li's retirement, the 2015 Australian Open out-rated the 2014 Wimbledon and US Open tournaments.

Tennis Australia is preparing for its next deal in the country by setting up an office in Shanghai. The office will open in October, in concert with the Shanghai Masters ATP 1000 event. It has had an office in Hong Kong since 2013.

Heaselgrave said: "We weren't necessarily deeply involved with the current situation, which was constructed with IMG. Setting up the office and creating a Mandarin-speaking team was very important to create relationships before the renewals took place."

Also expiring in 2017 is the pan-Asian deal with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Asia, worth \$4.5m per year.

### European value

For now, Europe remains far and away the Open's most valuable market. Even before Eurosport's new deal, the region is worth about 37 per cent of Tennis Australia's international media-rights income.

Rights outside Asia-Pacific are tied up until at least 2018. Tennis Australia's domestic deal with Seven, worth A\$40m (€25m/\$28m) per year, runs until 2019. That deal was worth almost double the previous contract, worth A\$21m per year, although Seven had previously paid additional production costs (*TV Sports Markets* 17:17).

The deal was a surprise as rival commercial broadcaster Ten was reportedly prepared to pay Tennis Australia A\$45m per year for the rights. ■

[www.foxsports.com.au](#) For the full interview with Richard Heaselgrave, visit our website.

## TV GERMANY

### Football federation nets big increase in DFB-Pokal FTA value

*Continued from page 1 ►*

Championships; domestic skiing events; PGA Tour golf; and US Masters golf.

#### Up for the cup

The DFB-Pokal deals with ARD and Sky were not agreed jointly – both bid independently. There were two rounds of bidding. The federation was advised on the sale of its rights by the Infront Sports & Media agency.

The deals are one season shorter this time as the federation plans to re-align its sales cycle with that of Uefa, European football's governing body. When the DFB next sells its cup rights it is likely to do so for three seasons, from 2019-20 to 2021-22.

There are three main factors which helped the federation increase the value of its free-to-air rights.

First, ARD faced strong competition from commercial broadcaster RTL, while commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1 also bid in the first round.

Second, the free-to-air package includes one additional match each season.

Third, the rights were on the market at a good time – shortly before European Qualifier rights, while Bundesliga rights will be sold before the summer. ARD was keen to renew its DFB-Pokal rights in case it fails to win any rights to the other two properties.

Public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF have faced increased pressure from RTL for sports rights after the latter's €110m acquisition of Germany matches in the European Qualifier package in July 2013 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:13).

Rights to European Qualifiers and the new Nations League competition, from 2018-19 to 2021-22, are currently on the market. The rights were tendered on February 2 with bids due by March 1.

Twelve companies requested a copy of the DFB-Pokal tender. They were: ARD; ZDF; RTL; Sat.1; Sky; sports broadcasters Eurosport and Sport1; telco

Deutsche Telekom; the Perform Group; publishing companies Axel Springer and Bild; and SportA – the sports-rights agency that represents ARD and ZDF.

The value of pay-television rights stayed broadly flat as there was little competition, and as Sky will have less exclusivity. One more match each season will be shown free-to-air than at present.

Sky's deal for the pay-television rights also covers Austria and Switzerland.

In the current deal, ARD shows eight matches per season. Sky shows all 63 matches per season, with ARD's eight matches broadcast non-exclusively.

In the new deal, ARD will show nine matches per season, with Sky showing these matches non-exclusively, as well as all other matches on an exclusive basis.

ARD will also continue to show the women's DFB-Pokal final on an exclusive basis over the course of the contract.

The increased number of free-to-air matches was not pre-determined; it was a product of conversations when the rights were sold. The federation was encouraged to make more matches available free-to-air due to the strong competition between ARD and RTL.

Production of DFB-Pokal matches is handled by production company Sportcast. Costs of between €2m and €3m per season are paid by ARD and Sky on top of their rights fees.

The overall increase of about 35 per cent represents a change in fortune for the DFB. In the 2009-10 to 2011-12 cycle the federation earned about €53m per season: €31m per season from ARD/ZDF and €22m per season from Sky.

The overall value fell by 32 per cent when the rights were sold for the current cycle. This was mainly as Sky was regarded to have overpaid for its pay-television rights – these fell in value by about 59 per cent from the 2009-12 to 2012-16 cycles.

The free-to-air fee also fell – although less dramatically – as ZDF dropped out of the deal, leaving ARD to cover the cost alone.

#### Skiing plateau

Late last month, ARD and ZDF renewed rights to domestic World Cup skiing events at no increase in a deal with the German skiing association, the Deutscher

Skiverband (DSV).

The renewal is for four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, but the broadcasters have the option to extend the deal to cover the 2020-21 season. The deal is worth about €9m per season, which covers both the rights fee and production costs. The fee is thought to be split about 2:1 between rights fee and production.

The deal was agreed in direct talks between ARD/ZDF and the DSV – there were no other offers. Talks over a new deal began last May and a contract was finalised in December.

The renewal is the same value as the current deal, also worth €9m per season in rights fee and production costs. That deal was also for four seasons, from 2011-12 to 2014-15, with a similar extension for the 2015-16 season – which was activated by ARD/ZDF.

The rights fee stayed flat because there was little competition for the rights and the fee was already considered to be high. Additionally, the DSV will now retain the right to sell highlights to sponsors and show them on its website, which isn't the case in the existing contract.

The fee was propped up by interest in the performances of alpine skier Felix Neureuther and ski jumper Severin Freund. However, local interest in the sport has been hit by the retirement of alpine skier Maria Riesch in 2014.

The deal covers alpine skiing, ski jumping, cross country, Nordic combined, freestyle, ski cross and snowboarding.

ARD/ZDF have a huge winter sports portfolio; any broadcaster wishing to acquire the rights and "intrude" on the dominance of ARD and ZDF, as one source put it, would have to spend heavily on other rights to break into the sport. ARD/ZDF show about 240 hours per year of winter sport, of which about 90 per cent is DSV content.

Moreover, there would be little point in another broadcaster acquiring the rights as it wouldn't have the right to show events run by the Austrian skiing association, the Österreichischer Skiverband (OSV).

The prestigious Four Hills tournament is split between the DSV and OSV: two events are held in Germany, at Oberstdorf

and Garmisch-Partenkirchen; and two in Austria, at Innsbruck and Bischofshofen.

ARD/ZDF holds rights to OSV events as part of its membership of the European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters. That deal runs for four seasons, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, and is worth just under €8.5m per season.

ARD/ZDF is in advanced talks with Infront over a deal for rights to Fis World Cup events run by all ski associations other than the DSV and OSV. Their current four-season deal, from 2011-12 to 2014-15, was extended to cover 2015-16.

#### Hardball on handball

ARD/ZDF also acquired rights to handball's European Championships in 2016 and 2018 in what looks like a cut-price deal following the triumph of the German national team last month.

The deal will be worth about €2m per championship, but it is contingent on the qualification of the German national team. If Germany fails to qualify, the rights will revert to the European Handball Federation and Infront.

Infront is the federation's exclusive media and marketing partner for EHF Euro events in a deal which runs until 2020. ARD/ZDF agreed the deal in direct talks with Infront.

The fee is the same as ARD/ZDF was due to pay for championships in 2012 and 2014. In 2014, however, Germany failed to qualify. As a result, ARD/ZDF paid no rights fee, the rights reverted to the EHF and Infront, and a deal was agreed with Sport1 worth €200,000.

As part of its deal for 2016 and 2018, ARD/ZDF has the right to sublicense coverage to other broadcasters. For 2016, ARD/ZDF sublicensed all matches excluding those of the German team to online channel Sportdeutschland.tv in a deal worth about €100,000.

German interest in handball is volatile. It peaked after the men's national team won the 2007 World Championship, and resulted in a five-fold increase for the 2009 World Championship rights, bought by RTL for about €5m. The value of handball in Germany is hugely dependent on the success of the national team.

ARD/ZDF looks less likely to acquire rights to the men's World Championship in 2017. BeIN Media Group bought global rights to the 2015 and 2017 World Championships from the International Handball Federation in January 2014 for about CHF100m (€91m/\$101m) (*TV Sports Markets* 18:1).

BeIN refused to agree a deal with ARD/ZDF for the 2015 championship due to the distribution of the channels on the Astra and Hot Bird satellite systems. This means the channels are available in large parts of the Middle East and North Africa – diluting the value of the rights in core territories for BeIN. A deal covering Germany was struck late on with Sky for €250,000 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:1).

BeIN is insistent that ARD/ZDF must encrypt their signal, but the public-service broadcasters are unwilling to do it – they say that 18m German households will be without coverage if they do this.

Other free-to-air broadcasters are also unwilling to be encrypted, meaning BeIN will probably have to sell to a pay-television broadcaster again. BeIN is expected to begin talks for 2017 in the summer.

The 2015 deal value was significantly lower than previous deals in Germany. ARD/ZDF agreed a deal for the 2011 and 2013 championships worth just over €6m if the men's team was to reach the semi-finals at both tournaments.

However, in 2011 the German team came 11th and in 2013 were knocked out in the quarter-finals. As a result, the deal fell in value to just under €4m (*TV Sports Markets* 18:21).

#### PGA Tour up

The US PGA Tour earned a large rights-fee increase in a three-year renewal with Sky agreed just before Christmas.

The deal will run from 2016 to 2018 and is understood to be worth about \$3m per year – an increase of about 50 per cent on the \$2m-per-year fee paid by Sky in its previous three-year deal, from 2013 to 2015 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:8).

The PGA Tour spoke directly to broadcasters. Sky is thought to have faced a very aggressive offer from Perform. The deal covers Austria and Switzerland as well as Germany.

## US Masters flat

The Augusta National Golf Club secured only a small increase in the value of its US Masters rights in Germany and Austria, also in a renewal with Sky.

The new deal is thought to be for three years, from 2016 to 2018, and represents only a small increase on the value of the previous two-year deal, from 2014 to 2015, worth about €300,000 per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:6).

Sky is not thought to have faced any competition for the rights.

This year's tournament will run from Thursday, April 7 to Sunday, April 10. ■

## ATHLETICS

# Diamond League in dispute over territories in Africa

By Callum McCarthy

Contracts for Diamond League rights in sub-Saharan Africa are in the process of being rewritten for the 2016 season, after English-language broadcaster SuperSport complained about sharing broadcast territories with French-language broadcaster Canal Plus.

The IMG agency, which is responsible for the global distribution of Diamond League media rights, has been attempting to rectify the situation for months. It is thought Canal Plus received rights in English-language territories in error.

One source close to the process told *TV Sports Markets* that the dispute centred around exclusivity in English-speaking territories.

Pay-television broadcaster SuperSport holds exclusive English-language rights in sub-Saharan Africa, but is understood to have wanted exclusive rights in all English-speaking territories, restricting Canal Plus to French-speaking territories.

Instead, Canal Plus is able to broadcast in all English-speaking territories other than Lesotho, Madagascar and Mauritius, albeit in French.

Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports, which has Diamond League rights in the Middle East and North Africa, also has Arabic-language coverage in Chad,

Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan – territories covered by deals with both SuperSport and Canal Plus. *TV Sports Markets* understands the issue was raised by SuperSport last autumn.

IMG markets Diamond League media rights globally under a five-year deal from 2015 to 2019. The agency pays a guarantee of about \$10m per year for the rights (*TV Sports Markets* 19:9).

SuperSport's deal, which covers 2015 and 2016, is worth about \$400,000 per year. The pay-television broadcaster was able to renew its deal for less than IMG was asking of other broadcasters because of its history of reliability.

Canal Plus pays between \$100,000 and \$150,000 per year, from 2015 to 2017. Its relatively low rights fee is thought to have contributed to SuperSport's displeasure.

### Non-exclusivity

The Diamond League prefers IMG to sell rights in sub-Saharan Africa on a non-exclusive basis to maximise its coverage in the region. This also ensures territories with English- and French-speaking populations receive broadcasts in both languages.

In 2010, at the beginning of the previous Diamond League sales cycle in the region, broadcasters were far happier to accept this situation. SuperSport faced virtually no competition for premium properties, and acquiring exclusive rights for a second-tier property like the Diamond League wasn't a priority.

One local expert told *TV Sports Markets* that a more competitive African marketplace and the depreciation of the South African rand have forced SuperSport to become more protective over its properties and territories.

From 2010 to 2014, each broadcaster in the region was free to buy any package of Diamond League rights they wanted, regardless of what rights were held by other broadcasters.

During this period, pay-television broadcaster Setanta Sports paid an average of about \$150,000 per year for a selection of rights.

Setanta exploited the rights on its own pay-television channels and on East African pay-television operator Zuku. Setanta was responsible for Zuku's sports

output at the time.

SuperSport's deal for all Diamond League rights, from 2010 to 2014, was worth about \$300,000 per year.

Canal Plus's only rights in sub-Saharan Africa during this period were passed on by its French sister broadcaster, which acted as host broadcaster for events held in Paris and Monaco from 2010 to 2012 in a deal worth €300,000 per year (*TV Sports Markets* 13:17). ■

## TENNIS

# Fox considers tennis channel launch after WTA acquisition

By Robin Jellis

Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports has positioned itself as the home of tennis in the Netherlands following deals for ATP and WTA rights in recent weeks.

The ATP deal is a renewal, while Fox has dislodged pay-television rival Ziggo as the holder of WTA rights. Local sources believe Fox may launch a tennis-oriented channel in the country to house rights to the ATP and WTA Tours, as well as the Wimbledon grand slam.

The ATP contract will run for four years, from 2017 to 2020, and will be worth just over €600,000 (\$670,000) per year. This is an increase of about 20 per cent on Fox's current three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016, worth about €500,000 per year.

The deal was agreed in direct talks between Fox and the ATP. The ATP was advised on the deal by the IMG agency.

Ziggo, formerly known as Sport1, held rights from 2011 to 2013, and bid again for the rights in the new cycle. Fox, however, offered more money.

The ATP deal covers all World Tour Masters 1000 and World Tour 500 events as well as the ATP World Tour Finals.

Fox's WTA deal will run for five years, from 2017 to 2021, and is worth about €350,000 per year. This represents an increase of 40 per cent on the value of the current four-year deal with Ziggo, from 2013 to 2016, worth €250,000 per year.

The deal was agreed with WTA Media,

the joint venture between the Women's Tennis Association and the Perform Group to distribute the tour's media rights. Perform holds the tour's global rights in a 10-year deal, from 2017 to 2026, worth \$52.5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:23).

Perform's option of launching an OTT service in the Netherlands on which it could exploit the rights gave it a stronger bargaining position. It will launch such a service in Japan this spring and in Germany, Austria and Switzerland this summer (*TV Sports Markets* 19:17).

The WTA rights were not tendered – the deal was agreed in direct talks with Fox. Ziggo bid unsuccessfully, while Eurosport showed interest. WTA Media switched to Fox for two main reasons.

First, Fox will show significantly more live matches than Ziggo does in its current deal. The current requirement is to show the semi-finals and final of the major events; Fox has committed to show one match per day from 54 events.

## FOOTBALL

# EPL value falls in three markets as Asia sales finished

By Richard Welbirg

Currency depreciation against the dollar has hurt English Premier League revenues in its final three deals in Asian markets over the last fortnight.

In Malaysia, pay-television broadcaster Astro renewed at a 25-per-cent decrease, down from \$80m (€72m) per season in the 2013-14 to 2015-16 cycle to \$60m per season in 2016-17 to 2018-19.

Bidding for the territory initially closed on November 2 last year, but the tender process was suspended by the league after a second round when offers were deemed too low. At the beginning of January, the league entered direct talks before concluding a deal with Astro.

Astro's new fee is close to the \$56.7m per season it paid in the previous cycle, from 2010-11 to 2012-13 (*TV Sports Markets* 16:21). The fee in the current

cycle was driven up by competition from telco Telekom Malaysia, which at the time was bidding aggressively for premium sports content to support its triple-play ambitions.

There are 55 events in total each year – one event is held in the Netherlands. Domestic rights to all WTA events are held by the tour and are excluded from Perform's deal. Second, the WTA is understood to be in advanced negotiations with Fox International Channels over a deal covering Asia. Fox Sports Netherlands is owned by Eredivisie Media & Marketing, in which FIC has a 51-per-cent stake. Although Ziggo bid for both the ATP and WTA, it was not aggressive. It is conscious of its increased spend on sport following its acquisition of English Premier League rights. That deal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, will be worth about €16m per season. Fox currently holds the rights, from 2013-14 to 2015-16, in a deal worth €18m per season.

Ziggo has also been forced into big increases for Spain's LaLiga (116 per cent) and motor racing's Formula One (about 100 per cent) in the past year or so (*TV Sports Markets* 18:19; 19:14).

Astro has a dominant position in the market: its pay-television penetration is close to 60 per cent. As of Q3 2015, Astro had 3.53m pay-television subscribers and 1.16m on its freeview service, Njoi. The next largest, Telekom Malaysia's IPTV service HyppTV, has less than 1m subscribers.

But Astro is close to saturation in terms of subscribers, and has seen content costs grow about 30 per cent due to the depreciation of the Malaysian ringgit against the dollar. It has fallen in value by about 15 per cent over the past year, from \$0.28 to \$0.24.

Astro has in recent months shown it will not continue to pay large fees for sports rights in this environment. It has yet to agree a deal for the domestic top-tier football league, while the football package owned by the MP & Silva agency – which includes Italy's Serie A and the English FA Cup – remains unsold in the country.

Although Fox will save money next season following its loss of the Premier League rights, it is in need of content. The broadcaster's only other top football property is Germany's Bundesliga, for which it holds rights in the Netherlands until the end of the 2016-17 season. The league will tender its media rights across Europe later this month.

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### Wimbledon rights

Fox currently holds Wimbledon rights in a three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016, worth about €500,000 per year.

The rights for the next cycle are expected to be offered to Dutch broadcasters towards the end of March or in early April.

Local sources anticipate that, as well as Fox and Ziggo, there may be interest in the rights from sports broadcaster Eurosport. Eurosport holds rights in the Netherlands to the other three grand slams – the Australian, French and US Opens – as part of pan-regional deals. ■

Astro is thought to have offered the Premier League between \$53m and \$55m per season in the tender's second round, before striking a deal at \$60m per season in direct talks. The pay-television broadcaster faced rival bids from pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports and a smaller offer from Telekom Malaysia.

### Indonesia

The Premier League ran its tender in Indonesia separately from its other Southeast Asian territories.

Unlike most countries in the region, Indonesia's television market is dominated by the free-to-air sector. Pay-television has a very low penetration, with at most 7m legal subscribers in a country of 60m television homes.

Piracy is rampant, and when illegal subscriptions are included there may be as many as 10m to 12m recipients.

The number of licences granted means there are many pay-television operators fighting over a small subscriber base; each has low average revenue per user (arpu). Analysts Media Partners Asia found operators' arpu fell 15 per cent from 2010 to 2014 even as the customer base grew.

And as in Malaysia, depreciation of the Indonesian rupiah weakened bidders' ability to pay.

In the second round of bidding, which closed on February 11, the league added a condition that at least two matches be sublicensed to free-to-air broadcasters.

One source said the league moved to ensure free-to-air coverage once it realised its fee would decline. Premier League clubs have large supporter bases in Indonesia and are known to have been concerned about the league's reach.

BeIN acquired the rights after two rounds of bidding, agreeing a deal with the league worth about \$28.3m per season from 2016-17 to 2018-19. There were also bids from the IMG agency,

media group MNC, and pay-television operators Nexmedia and Orange.

The fee is nine per cent down on the \$31.6m-per-season deal struck with the MP & Silva agency for the current 2013-14 to 2015-16 cycle. MP & Silva exploited the rights via its joint-venture channel business with beIN, and agreed a sublicensing deal for two weekly free-to-air matches (*TV Sports Markets* 19:12).

BeIN announced on September 23 last year it had acquired total ownership of the channels launched in Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.

One expert said beIN was likely to sublicense free-to-air matches to MNC. MNC owns free-to-air channels RCTI, MNC TV and Global TV, and operates a

from a game-changer – Spanish, Italian and French league football is the real driver for Eleven – but Formula One appeals to an attractive demographic, one which is slightly different to that of football fans.

The price of rights to the championship has been falling for several years in the country, since the retirement of Polish driver Robert Kubica in 2011.

In 2014, and again in a one-year renewal for 2015, commercial and pay-television broadcaster Polsat paid about \$1.1m for the rights.

Eleven now has distribution on the country's four largest pay-television platforms: Inea, Multimedia Polska, UPC and Vectra. It is also carried on about 15 local platforms.

The broadcaster has negotiated a mixture of *à la carte* deals (where subscribers pay an additional fee for the channel) and basic-tier pay-television deals (where the channel receives a fee per subscriber to the platform.) The *à la carte* deals carry far greater risk – there is no guaranteed revenue each month – but the potential upside is far greater.

In Belgium, the channel has secured a wide footprint. It is carried by the three largest cable operators: Telenet, Voo and Proximus (formerly known as Belgacom).

The deals are said to be relatively lucrative, particularly that with Proximus, but without huge room for uplift as new rights are acquired. The content is also

number of leading pay-television brands of which the largest is Indovision.

Indovision is the largest pay-television operator in the country, but does not yet carry beIN's channels. BeIN could use the acquisition of Premier League rights as leverage to agree a carriage deal.

### Myanmar

*TV Sports Markets* understands the Premier League has agreed a renewal with pay-television broadcaster SkyNet for its next three-season cycle in Myanmar.

SkyNet agreed the deal directly with the league and was faced with no realistic competition. As a result there is understood to have been a large drop in its current fee of \$15m per season. ■

available via Eleven's OTT platform. In addition to European football, Eleven's National Basketball Association rights are understood to have been important in carriage negotiations.

Hitting break-even in three years would be a considerable achievement and is likely to require improved carriage terms in the next cycle, particularly in Poland.

However, one agency executive with experience of global channel distribution said it was a realistic target. "When you first come into a market, a lot of obstacles are put in your way and existing players will try to make life hard for you. But once you get your brand established, everything starts to get easier."

### Mixed fortunes

Eleven's progress in Asia has thus far been mixed. In Singapore, it has distribution on pay-television platform Singtel, and has launched an OTT service, but badly needs carriage on the country's other major platform, StarHub, if it is to become profitable. The two parties have been in negotiations for months.

One local source claimed Eleven was negotiating a deal to acquire non-exclusive rights to England's Premier League from Singtel covering the three seasons from 2016-17 to 2018-19. If it were to do so, that would probably clear the way for a distribution deal with StarHub.

However, such a deal would represent a very substantial gearing up of the rights

investment strategy. The company's highest investment in a single property is currently the fee of between €10m and €11m per season for rights to Spain's LaLiga, which it acquired in Poland.

In July, Radrizzani ruled out bidding for Premier League rights in Singapore because of their inflated value.

Under the country's cross-carriage rules, Singtel cannot broadcast the Premier League exclusively. Sharing with Eleven would enable it to share the cost of its \$78.3m-per-season investment and enable it to avoid dealing directly with its rival (*TV Sports Markets* 19:21).

Eleven would not comment on the claims this week.

Malaysia was the fourth market which fitted the company's target profile – it has a good pay-television infrastructure, with potential for growth, but no dominant premium sports channel operator.

Eleven acquired many of the same European football properties in Malaysia which it has acquired for its other markets. Additionally, it appeared to be in a strong position to acquire rights to the top domestic league, the M-League, through MP & Silva's 15-year, \$350m deal with the Football Association of Malaysia (*TV Sports Markets* 19:2).

However, Eleven has been unable to secure carriage on the country's main pay-television platform, Astro, and its future in the country is uncertain. The agency is understood to have returned the rights it acquired from MP & Silva to the agency.

Eleven said this week it still had a local management team in place and was continuing to "look at building a feasible business case for the market".

Some Asian rights experts believe Eleven's failure to win the rights for LaLiga in Malaysia and Singapore was a big blow in terms of securing distribution.

The broadcaster was outbid by beIN Media Group in a deal covering Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Indonesia, as well as Malaysia and Singapore. BeIN pays €50m per season across the six territories.

BeIN had no channels in Malaysia and Singapore and has yet to launch any in either territory. The acquisition was seen as a defensive move against Eleven's ambitions in the region.

### Stake sale

Radrizzani's ability to tough out the first few loss-making years of the operation is expected to be made much easier in the coming weeks through the sale of some or all of his 43-per-cent stake in MP & Silva.

Four companies are understood to have bid for equity in the agency – three Chinese investors and private equity house Permira. The sale is expected to value the company at upwards of €1bn. A deal is expected next month. ■

### BASKETBALL

## Perform deal will make Fiba World Cup the 'pinnacle'

By Callum McCarthy

The International Basketball Federation (Fiba) told *TV Sports Markets* this week that its new €500m (\$540m) deal with the Perform Group will help make its World Cup the "pinnacle" of the sport by 2033.

The deal follows Fiba's decision to completely overhaul the sport's international calendar from next year, and comes into force ahead of the new sales cycle (*TV Sports Markets* 19:18).

A new joint venture between Fiba and Perform, Fiba Media, has been created to implement the new production and rights distribution strategy over the next 17 years (see panel, page 10).

The new calendar will create more matches, with greater regularity and in better timeslots. Fiba Media aims to build on this in a number of ways, including:

- providing best-in-class production standards for all matches
- enhancing feeds with advanced statistics and analytics
- using state-of-the-art cloud-based content distribution
- expanding on deals with free-to-air broadcasters in core markets such as China, Greece, Spain, Turkey and the US
- increasing the amount of short-form content available for digital and social media platforms (see box, page 10).

Frank Leenders, Fiba's director general of media and marketing, told *TV Sports Markets* Fiba's aim for 2033 is that "the

new calendar is established, national team basketball is important around the world, and the World Cup is the pinnacle of basketball every four years".

Simon Denyer, chief executive of Perform, said Fiba Media would now focus on "covering the world in six months", as it attempts to secure deals on multiple platforms in each market for basketball's five continental competitions next year.

China, Greece, Spain, Turkey and the US will be prioritised. This is because EuroBasket, Fiba's European national team competition, is by far its most popular and lucrative continental competition, and because it views China and the US as its two most important growth markets. The sales process in these markets will begin in March or April.

The sales cycle in major basketball continents – the Americas, Asia and Europe – will run parallel to one another.

Both parties will benefit from the increased media-rights revenues if the new strategy is successful.

Perform will invest an average of €29m per year into Fiba's national competitions. The majority of this is a rights fee, while the remainder will be invested in production, distribution and marketing. Income above this will be shared, weighted heavily in Perform's favour.

The deal represents an increase of about 32 per cent on Fiba's current annual media-rights income. The governing body earned an average of just under €22m per year during the 2013 to 2015 cycle.

It is thought that the majority of the money will be invested in the first two cycles, 2017 to 2020, and 2021 to 2024.

### Why Perform?

For Perform, the Fiba deal is its second long-term partnership with a major sports body, following its December 2014 deal with the Women's Tennis Association (*TV Sports Markets* 18:23). The deal with Fiba was completed after eight months of negotiation between the two parties.

Leenders said selling rights was "important but not the most difficult part" of Fiba's job. "To deliver is the most difficult part, and to provide the technical distribution and content distribution. The network of Perform both skill-wise and geographically is going to be a huge asset."

### PAY-TELEVISION

## Eleven bedding in in Europe but Asia still a big challenge

By Frank Dunne

Acquiring rights to Formula One motor racing in Poland will provide a small boost to Eleven Sports Network's ambitious target of breaking even within three years of launch.

The successful outcome of ongoing carriage talks with pay-television platform StarHub in Singapore would be even more significant, however, with some local sources saying a breakthrough there is imminent.

Multi-territory pay-television broadcaster Eleven was established by Andrea Radrizzani, co-founder of the MP & Silva agency. Last year, it launched in Belgium, Poland, and Singapore. Last month, the channel also launched as an OTT service in Taiwan.

Securing good distribution so far has been more challenging in Asia than in Europe. A planned launch in Malaysia did not come off at all.

Eleven is thought to have paid just over \$1.1m (€1m) per year for the Polish rights to Formula One in a two-year deal with the MP & Silva agency, covering the 2016 and 2017 seasons. The deal is far

Perform's production expertise will elevate Fiba broadcasts to "best-in-class", according to Denyer. Perform will be responsible for ensuring all Fiba games are produced live, stored and distributed from its content cloud. Denyer said this is key to servicing broadcasters in nations where basketball is popular.

Distributing 1,500 games per cycle via satellite would be prohibitive in terms of costs. In the past, only the most relevant and high-profile games have been available for broadcasters. Distributing via the cloud will be far more cost effective.

Perform will also be responsible for introducing new technology to basketball, such as integrated advanced statistics and player tracking, which will be operated by its own statistics company, Opta.

The company's other production tasks will include creating highlights packages that are immediately available after each game, creating and curating Fiba's online archive, and producing all short-form and digital marketing content.

#### Distribution strategy

Fiba Media will make all 5,000-plus games – involving many more nations than under Fiba's previous structure – available to broadcasters around the world over the next 17 years.

It will look to sell games and Fiba content across platforms in each market, and will create bespoke packages to service individual broadcasters' needs.

In particular, it is keen to make sure basketball-focused broadcasters and digital platforms have access to as much Fiba content as possible.

In territories where basketball is already ingrained in popular culture, the two parties have a single goal: to make the World Cup the most important competition in the sport.

This is a huge challenge, as the popularity and regularity of club competitions like the NBA and the Euroleague are well established.

Fiba Media's free-to-air strategy will not change much from Fiba's current one. The governing body currently agrees free-to-air deals in core markets where demand is high, and attempts to secure coverage across pay-television and digital platforms in second- and third-tier markets.

### Short form is Fiba's route to the millennial audience

Perform Group chief executive Simon Denyer said this week that short-form content would be key to increasing the popularity of International Basketball Federation (Fiba) competitions over the course of Perform's 17-year deal.

Denyer said Fiba Media, the body established by Fiba and Perform, would look to engage 15 to 25-year-olds by ensuring content is easily accessible.

"The main thing is to make sure our content is optimised for the younger generations where basketball rates very, very well," Denyer said. "If we can get that younger demographic more content then those people will flow through that system over the next 17 years."

The 2019 World Cup will be held in China. Fiba Media intends to work with

a number of local new media companies and social platforms to increase interest and engagement in the competition.

Perform already has relationships with major global internet and social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo and YouTube. "We're one of the main content providers for those platforms, and we'll be talking with them about how they can improve their basketball coverage, especially around the World Cup," he said.

Clips and highlights packages will be created for every Fiba national team game, to be exploited online or sold to linear broadcasters. Fiba Media will also ensure basketball-specific and youth-centric digital platforms have news access to games. ■

#### Breakdown of the deal between Fiba and Perform

The International Basketball Federation (Fiba) and Perform will combine to create Fiba Media, a subsidiary responsible for the production and distribution of Fiba's content.

The deal is worth about €500m to Fiba and will run for 17 years, from 2017 to 2033. It will span four cycles of international basketball, including four World Cups in 2019, 2023, 2027 and 2031; five editions of each continental competition in 2017, 2021, 2025, 2029 and 2033; plus qualifying matches for each tournament.

Perform will handle production of all matches and will take the lead in the technical distribution of content. This will amount to over 5,000 games between 2017 to 2033, as well as all highlights, magazine programming and short-form content.

Fiba's Paul Stimpson and Stephanie Mignot will continue to lead the sale of the governing body's media rights, although staff from Perform will also be involved. The sales team will report to a steering committee made up of representatives from both parties.

Leenders said the new calendar would give basketball much more relevance in second- and third-tier markets. He pointed out that the Netherlands played in the EuroBasket last year for the first time in 25 years.

Without historic participation in such competitions, national team basketball isn't relevant in the country and there is not enough attractive content for broadcasters.

With the Netherlands now playing 12 qualifiers for each global and continental competition – six home and six away – Fiba Media "can build a story for basketball in these countries".

#### No sweet deals

Perform is set to launch its own OTT service in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Japan. Both Denyer and Leenders said it would not be able to secure rights at below market rates in any sales process.

Leenders said: "All deals are signed by Fiba, and on top of that, many mechanisms are in place to give us control over strategy and contracts. If Perform's OTT service can be of added value to our competitions on a standalone basis, objectively, then why not? If such a deal is not beneficial for the product, then it will not happen." ■

[www.sportbusiness.com](#) For the full interview with Simon Denyer, visit our website.

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**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from February 4 to February 17**MEDIA RIGHTS 1****Football: Premier League, LaLiga, S.League, Primera División and more**

- **Football:** Malaysian pay-television broadcaster Astro extended its deal for the English Premier League for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Astro will show all 380 games per season live on Astro TV and via the Astro on the Go mobile service (page 7).
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Digi Sport agreed a three-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, to its deal for English Premier League in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.
- **Football:** Digi Sport acquired rights for Spain's LaLiga in a deal that will run for the remainder of the 2015-16 season and the whole of the 2016-17 and 2017-18 campaigns.
- **Football:** The English Football League, which operates the three divisions below the Premier League as well as the League Cup and Football League Trophy knockout competitions, sealed a five-season extension, from 2017-18 to 2021-22, to its international rights distribution deal with the Pitch International agency. The deal was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 19:23.
- **Football:** Malaysian media group Media Prima acquired free-to-air rights for the country's top division and cup competitions for three seasons, from 2016 to 2018, in an agreement with the Football Malaysia Limited Liability Partnership. Up to three matches per week will be offered on television and simulcast on its online platform, Tonton.
- **Football:** Singaporean pay-television broadcaster StarHub acquired domestic rights for the S.League, the country's top division. StarHub will show live coverage and a 30-minute highlights programme each week.
- **Football:** US pay-television broadcaster GoTV acquired exclusive rights for the Primera División, the top division in Venezuela. Under the multi-season agreement, GoTV will show the top Primera División match each week plus a weekly highlights programme.
- **Football:** International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network secured rights in Poland and Belgium to Conmebol qualifying matches for the 2018 Fifa World Cup national team tournament.
- **Football:** Major League Soccer club New York Red Bulls signed a multi-year extension to its deal with MSG Networks, the pay-television channel owned by Madison Square Garden Company. MSG Networks will broadcast at least 17 Red Bulls matches live in the 2016 season.

**SINCE LAST TIME**

- Le Sports, which is operated by Chinese internet company LeEco, raised \$1bn (€900m) through a series B financing round. The funding will be used to drive Le Sports' rights acquisition strategy, according to the Global Times news website.
- Spanish agency Mediapro filed a legal complaint against Barcelona and Sandro Rosell, the former president of the Spanish Liga football club. The complaint relates to allegations that Rosell and Barcelona were involved in the disclosure of the agency's confidential business operations, including Mediapro's media-rights strategies and negotiations. According to Mediapro, Robert Cama, the agency's former IT manager, sent emails and other private information from founder Jaume Roures directly to Rosell. Mediapro said the activity occurred when Rosell was a director of the club, before he became president. Cama now works as an IT manager at Barcelona, which said it was "oblivious to the events that have led to this lawsuit".
- France's competition authority, l'Autorité de la Concurrence, will scrutinise a proposed collaboration between media company Vivendi and pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports France. Vivendi is in advanced talks with beIN Sports France over an exclusive carriage deal that could include the acquisition of a stake in the broadcaster. The regulator is reportedly ready to launch a 'market test' to survey stakeholders about the proposed deal. Representatives of the two parties in the potential deal have already met the authority. Vivendi chairman Vincent Bolloré has held a meeting with top French football executives in an effort to

reassure them that such a collaboration would not result in lower rights income for them.

- The Autoridade da Concorrência, Portugal's competition regulator, denied reports it has decided to block a series of football rights deals featuring the Altice and Nos telcos. The deals were covered in detail in *TV Sports Markets* 20:1. The regulator is still collecting information and will make a decision on whether to intervene "in due course".

**MEDIA INTERNATIONAL**

- Mexican mobile entertainment provider Binbit struck a multi-year deal with North American basketball league the NBA to distribute mobile phone video, pictures and audio content. Countries covered by the partnership include: Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Singapore, Thailand, Uruguay and Venezuela.
- North American stock car-racing series Nascar expanded a partnership with Snapchat to enable the social media platform to provide video coverage of races throughout the 2016 season.
- North American basketball league the NBA agreed a multi-year extension to a digital content partnership in Germany with spox.com, the online streaming website owned by the Perform Group. Spox.com will work with the league to provide video content to the NBA's German-facing nba.de website.

**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from February 4 to February 17**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****AFL, NBA basketball, Asia Cup cricket, Champions League of Darts and more**

- **Australian Rules:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven struck a five-year deal for rights to the Australian Football League's annual Legends Game, from 2016 to 2020.
- **Basketball:** Fiba, the sport's global governing body, struck a strategic partnership with digital sports media company Perform (page 9).
- **Basketball:** The NBA agreed a digital rights partnership with Turkish sports news network Sporx. The two parties launched a new nba.com/turkiye website, which features video highlights.
- **Cricket:** OTT provider YuppTV acquired exclusive digital streaming rights for the 2016 Asia Cup national team tournament. YuppTV will stream live coverage in Australia, Canada, Europe, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, the UK and the US.
- **Cricket:** Cricketgateway.com, a new website jointly operated by sports investment vehicle Global Sports Commerce and its affiliate, technology services company Techfront, acquired digital rights for the 2016 Pakistan Super League Twenty20 competition.
- **Darts:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights for the inaugural Champions League of Darts in a deal with the event's operator, the Professional Darts Corporation.
- **Darts:** Sports and betting-related services company Sportradar expanded a partnership with the Professional Darts Corporation to include live streaming coverage of its 2016 World Series of Darts and European Darts Tour events to betting industry clients.
- **Golf:** The IMG agency agreed a five-year extension to its agreement with the PGA of America to distribute international broadcast rights for the PGA Championship and Senior PGA Championship. The deal, which excludes North America, will run from 2017 to 2021.
- **Golf:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland retained exclusive rights in Germany and Austria for the 2016 US Masters (page 1).
- **Kickboxing:** French digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 agreed a deal for events operated by the Glory World Series in 2016.
- **Motorcycling:** International sports broadcaster Eurosport sealed a three-year extension, from 2017 to 2019, to its deal for the Superbike World Championship. Eurosport will remain the exclusive UK rights-holder. The agreement was struck with the series' commercial rights-holder Dorna WSBK.
- **Motorcycling:** Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE agreed a three-year extension with Dorna WSBK, from 2016 to 2018, for rights to the Superbike World Championship.
- **Motorcycling:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand agreed a three-year extension, from 2016 to 2018, to its deal with Dorna WSBK for rights to the Superbike World Championship.
- North American broadcaster One World Sports agreed a deal with Spanish-language US broadcaster Univision Deportes for carriage of Barça TV, the in-house television channel of Spanish football club Barcelona. One World Sports will become the exclusive English-language US television home of Barça TV, while Univision Deportes will act as its Spanish-language platform.
- Servus TV, the commercial broadcaster owned by energy drink brand Red Bull, will encrypt its channel for Austrian viewers on the Astra pay-television service from the start of March. The decision was made following the broadcaster's acquisition of rights in Austria for the MotoGP motorcycling series. The channel was previously available free-to-air in Austria. The Servus channel for German viewers will remain unencrypted on Astra (page 2).
- Media company CSI Sports, the owner of pay-television channel Fight Sports, agreed a carriage deal with French pay-television operator Bouygues Telecom.
- Portuguese Primeira Liga football club Porto agreed a carriage deal for its in-house television channel with French telco SFR. Porto Canal will be distributed to SFR subscribers under its Portuguese package Grand Lusophone.
- International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network signed a clips deal with media company Grupa WP. Eleven will provide Grupa with clips from the English Football League, League Cup and FA Cup plus the top football divisions in Belgium, France, Italy, Scotland and Spain.
- Eleven and Polish telco UPC Polska signed a distribution agreement to offer the Eleven and Eleven Sports channels to subscribers via the Select and Max packages.
- Polish production company ATM System was appointed as host broadcaster of the 2017 World Games in Wrocław.
- Norwegian pay-television distributor RiksTV agreed a carriage deal with the Discovery Networks Norway division of US media company Discovery Communications. RiksTV will distribute via television and mobile devices all channels Discovery plans to utilise for coverage of the Tippeligaen, the top division of football in the country.
- Production company NEP Australia was named host broadcaster of the 2018 Games in Gold Coast, Australia. NEP will be assisted by the event's Australian rights-holder, commercial broadcaster Seven, and UK production company Sunset+Vine.
- Le Sports, which is operated by Chinese internet company LeEco, sealed a partnership with Italian Serie A football club AC Milan for two-and-a-half years, starting immediately and running until the end of the 2017-18 campaign. Content from the club's

**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from February 4 to February 17**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****Formula One, IndyCar, Formula E, World Games, Six Nations and more**

- **Motorsport:** International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network secured exclusive rights in Poland for the Formula One world championship in a multi-year deal, beginning in 2016 (page 8).
- **Motorsport:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus agreed a one-year extension, covering 2016, to its rights deal for the US IndyCar series.
- **Motorsport:** Public-service broadcaster TVE acquired rights in Spain for the remainder of the 2015-16 Formula E electric car-racing series.
- **Motorsport:** Russian sports media platform Match TV acquired rights to the remaining races of the 2015-16 Formula E season. Match TV's Match Arena television channel will show race highlights and broadcast the Russian ePrix in Moscow live on June 4.
- **Motorsport:** Sports media company Greenlight International agreed a multi-year deal to distribute global rights of the North American National Hot Rod Association's Mello Yellow Drag Racing Series. The deal excludes the US.
- **Multi-sport:** The Ufa Sports agency was appointed as the international rights distribution partner for the 2017 World Games in Wroclaw, Poland.
- **Multi-sport:** Polish commercial and pay-television broadcaster Polsat struck a deal for the 2017 World Games.
- **Rugby Union:** Spox.com, which is operated by digital sports media company Perform, secured rights in Germany for the 2016 Six Nations national team tournament. Spox will show highlights of every game.
- **US College Sport:** The Fox Sports division of US network Fox agreed a long-term deal with the athletics division of Villanova University. Villanova Sports Properties, a new entity created within the Fox Sports College Properties division, will manage the rights.
- **Wrestling:** German commercial broadcaster Tele 5 extended a rights deal with the WWE organisation for one year, until 2017. Tele 5 will continue to show the 'Monday Night Raw' series on Thursdays at 10.15pm as well as four live WWE events in Germany over the course of the deal.

in-house Milan Channel will be streamed across mainland China on Le Sports's digital platforms.

- The Canal Digital pay-television platform in the Nordic region agreed a deal to renew carriage of Discovery Networks' Eurosport Norge and TV Norge channels, ending a 10-day blackout.
- Pay-television broadcaster Star India was awarded licences to launch up to 10 new regional sports channels in the country by the country's Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

**MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS**

- The German football league, the Deutsche Fußball Liga, is set to launch a tender process for its next cycle of media rights in more than 50 European territories. The rights will run for four seasons, from 2017-18 to 2020-21. The league is selling rights to the top-tier Bundesliga, second-tier 2. Bundesliga, the Supercup annual match and the relegation play-offs. Interested parties admitted to the tender process were to receive documents from February 12. All of the league's current deals covering Europe run until the end of the 2016-17 season. The sales process is being handled by DFL Sports Enterprises, the league's commercial arm. Rights will be offered both pan-regionally and market-by-market.
- World Rugby, the global governing body of rugby union, launched a tender process in the UK and Ireland for rights to the 2019 Rugby World Cup, which will be hosted in Japan. The deadline for bids was Friday, February 19. World Rugby will also consider bids that include the 2023 tournament. According to UK newspaper *The Times*, ITV, which broadcast the 2015 tournament, will be challenged by rival commercial broadcasters Channel 4 and Channel 5, public-service broadcaster the BBC, as well as pay-television broadcasters Sky, BT Sport and beIN Sports – despite beIN not having a broadcast presence in the UK. The Rugby World Cup final is reserved for free-to-air television under UK law, but World Rugby can consider offers from pay-television broadcasters for the wider tournament.
- Football Federation Australia hired London-based advisers Oliver & Ohlbaum to assist in marketing the next cycle of domestic free-to-air rights, starting in 2017-18, for the top-tier A-League, Australia national team matches and the Asian Football Confederation's Asian Cup tournament.
- The CAA Eleven agency, acting on behalf of European football's governing body Uefa, launched tenders in Germany and Poland for rights to the European Qualifiers for the Euro 2020 and 2022 Fifa World Cup national team tournaments, the 2018-19 and 2020-21 Nations League competitions and other international matches. The deadline for bids in Poland was February 16, and on March 1 in Germany.
- CAA Eleven launched two tenders in each of four Nordic markets for rights to properties controlled by Uefa. One tender covers European qualifiers for Euro 2020 and the 2022 World Cup, the 2018-19 and 2020-21 Nations League campaigns and other international matches. The other is for the Euro 2020 tournament. Bids in each of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden must be submitted by midday CET on March 13.
- Cricket Australia rejected suggestions it will initiate early talks over its next five-year cycle of domestic rights, starting in 2018, in a bid to capitalise on the growing interest in domestic Twenty20 tournament the Big Bash League. Cricket Australia's general manager of media rights and broadcasting, Stephanie Beltrame,

**SPORTS CLIPS:** News from TVSM Daily from February 4 to February 17

told the *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper that a formal timetable for discussions had not been set.

- The Formula One motor-racing world championship is set to be without free-to-air coverage in Spain for the first time in 19 years after the existing rights-holders, commercial broadcaster Atresmedia and Catalan public-service broadcaster TV3, declined to extend deals, according to the *Mundo Deportivo* newspaper. F1 will only be available on Movistar Plus pay-television platform of Spanish telco Telefonica.
- Brazilian sports broadcaster Esporte Interativo made a substantial offer to secure the pay-television rights to clubs in the Campeonato Brasileiro Série A, the top division of football in the country. Esporte Interativo pledged to broadcast coverage of every Serie A club, regardless of their status, and introduce a new revenue distribution system model.

**ALSO SINCE LAST TIME**

- The CBS network's ratings for its coverage of Super Bowl 50 fell compared to the previous two editions of the NFL's championship game, but still registered as the third most-watched event in US television history. According to audience measurement company Nielsen, the average audience for the February 7 game, a 24-10 victory for the Denver Broncos over the Carolina Panthers, was 111.9m. Last year's Super Bowl drew 114.4m viewers, up from 112.2m the year before.
- UK mobile phone operator Vodafone and media company Liberty Global agreed to combine their operations in the Netherlands. Vodafone will invest €1bn (\$1.1bn) in the joint venture. Liberty-owned Ziggo is a major broadcaster of sport in the Netherlands.
- A report compiled by 16 German top-tier Bundesliga football clubs called for change in the distribution of collective media rights income plus a restructuring of the German football federation, the Deutscher Fußball-Bund, and its flagship cup competition, the DFB-Pokal. The report called for a reduction in the share of rights income distributed to 2. Bundesliga second-tier clubs from 20 per cent to less than 15 per cent in the next cycle.

- UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport defended its viewing figures for the Uefa Champions League European club football tournament this season. The *Daily Telegraph* newspaper said the BT Showcase channel had attracted an average peak audience of less than 200,000 during its coverage of the 2015-16 Champions League play-offs and group stages.
- UK pay-television broadcaster Sky invested £300,000 (€387,000/\$433,000) in UK-based mobile fan engagement and sports marketing company InCrowd.
- English Championship football club Leeds United denied reports it will attempt to leave the Football League's collective rights deal with Sky and negotiate its own rights. The *Mail on Sunday* newspaper claimed Leeds had initiated legal action to dismantle the collective deal.
- The Glory World Series kickboxing series entered into a partnership with Fight Pass, the online viewing subscription service operated by mixed martial arts' Ultimate Fighting Championship. Glory Superfight Series cards will be streamed live on the UFC Fight Pass platform.
- Golf's PGA Tour agreed a strategic partnership with internet company Yahoo to deliver free video content from its tournaments to a worldwide audience.
- Rugby Europe launched a new digital streaming platform, RugbyEurope.tv, to show coverage of all tournaments organised by rugby union's continental governing body. Rugby Europe plans to cover 70 international games and 16 tournaments each year.
- The International Pentathlon Union (UIPM) launched UIPMTV.org, a new live and on-demand digital platform that will show coverage of its events. The service, which will be available worldwide, will be operated by digital media company Digotel and supported by production company Sunset+Vine.
- On February 12, South Korean electronics company Samsung carried the 2016 winter Youth Olympic Games opening ceremony in Lillehammer, Norway, in virtual reality through the Samsung Galaxy smartphone and Samsung Gear VR technology.

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