

MULTI-SPORT

European Championships to be launched as the solution to combat cluttered calendar

By Robin Jellis

The creation of a multi-sport European Championships from 2018 is part of an attempt to de-clutter a congested sporting schedule, and to help summer sports benefit from each other's popularity.

The new concept will see seven sports host their European Championships simultaneously in Glasgow and Berlin. A second European Championships is planned for 2022. The European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters, has individual deals for the media rights of each federation (see panel, page 3).

The sports included in 2018 are aquatics, athletics, cycling, golf, gymnastics, rowing and triathlon.

At present, most of these sports host

their own European Championships biennially, in even years. Bringing these sports together and bundling their content is part of an attempt to increase spectator interest in their events.

It will have no short-term impact on media-rights revenues because the federations have existing individual deals with the EBU which cover 2018.

Rights to the European Championships in 2022 will likely be sold to the EBU by the individual federations, but for 2026 there is a possibility the organisers could centralise the commercial rights for the event (see box, page 4).

The primary objective behind the federations' involvement in the European

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FOOTBALL

Le Sports and CSM point the way for China

By Richard Welbirg

Behind Le Sports's huge Chinese Super League deal is a partnership that could shift the competitive balance of the Chinese digital market.

Last week, Le Sports, the sports arm of Chinese internet company LeEco, agreed a deal with the China Sports Media agency for exclusive CSL digital rights worth CNY2.7bn (€376m/\$414m) in 2016 and 2017, or CNY1.35bn per year.

Le Sports will stream CSL matches online and to LeEco smart devices for free. The deal includes rights in mainland China, as well as Hong Kong, Macau and

Taiwan; the US and Canada, and selected Southeast Asian territories.


CSM, owned by private equity firm China Media Capital, paid CNY8bn last September for CSL production and global broadcast rights over five years from 2016 to 2020, or CNY1.6bn per year. Its bid valued the rights at CNY2bn in total across 2016 and 2017, or CNY1bn per year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:19).

Le Sports is massively overpaying, but is doing so for strategic reasons. The licensing deal is only 'phase one' of the

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F1 latest to benefit from African competition

Motorsport's Formula One is the latest sports property to take advantage of increased competition in the African sports market, almost doubling its media-rights fee in a renewal with SuperSport.

The renewal with the pay-television broadcaster is for three years, from 2017 to 2019, and is worth between \$10m (€9.1m) and \$12m per year. The deal was agreed with Formula One Management, the series' commercial rights-holder.

The new fee is between 67 and 100 per cent more than Formula One currently earns in the region – SuperSport's existing three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016, is worth just over \$6m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 20:2).

SuperSport is understood to have faced strong competition for the rights from telco Econet Wireless, which will launch its Kwese Sports pay-television channel in August.

Econet wanted the rights in English-speaking territories across sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa – it has no plans to launch in South Africa. SuperSport, however, wanted rights across the whole region.

As well as Econet and SuperSport, there is understood to have been strong interest from one agency. Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Africa enquired about the rights, but its interest came as discussions were already relatively advanced.

The deal is an important renewal for SuperSport. It has retained a prestigious property and protected itself against subscriber churn outside South Africa. Many of SuperSport's subscribers in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa are wealthy expatriates, a key demographic.

South Africa represents SuperSport's core business, but it was important to secure rights across the rest of sub-Saharan Africa as this is where subscriber growth is more likely – the

South African pay-television market is close to saturation.

The failure to acquire the rights is a blow to Econet, which has thus far only acquired rights to Spanish football's Copa del Rey. Econet sought a blue-chip property such as Formula One as a signal of intent to the market.

Econet now faces something of a problem with little premium sport on the market and with all top football rights sold until the end of the 2017-18 season.

French-language Formula One rights across sub-Saharan Africa are held by pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus Afrique: they were included in a deal with Canal Plus covering France. Canal Plus's deal began in 2013 and will run until 2017 – it is worth about €29m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:1). ■

Eurosport renews Superbikes

International sports broadcaster Eurosport maintained exclusive rights in the UK as it renewed its deal for the Superbike World Championship motorcycling series last month.

Eurosport is expected to pay between €1.2m (\$1.3m) and €1.3m per year in a three-year renewal, from 2017 to 2019.

The deal covers all of Europe, but Eurosport has no obligation to broadcast live other than in the UK. Its rights are exclusive in the UK only.

It is understood that Eurosport did not want to commit to broadcasting live elsewhere in Europe as it increasingly invests in more premium content.

The value is only a slight increase on Eurosport's current deal. From 2013 to 2015, Eurosport paid about €1m per year in a deal agreed with the Infront Sports & Media agency. That deal granted Eurosport exclusive rights in France, Germany, Ireland and the UK.

Eurosport extended the deal by one year to cover 2016 at the same fee in a deal with Dorna WSBK Organisation, which took over the sale of the rights. Private equity company Bridgepoint, at the time a major shareholder in both

Dorna and Infront, wanted both motorcycling series – MotoGP and World Superbikes – to be sold by the same company.

Eurosport's fee did not increase for 2016 as Dorna sought to carve out internet rights. It wanted the rights in order to create its own online subscription service, SBK VideoPass. The service is available for €14.90 per month, or €69.90 for the entire 2016 season. ■

EPL value plummets in Myanmar

England's Premier League saw its rights in Myanmar tumble in value after renewing with pay-television broadcaster SkyNet.

A deal for the new three-season cycle, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, was agreed directly with SkyNet, which is owned by state broadcaster S Media. It is believed to be worth about \$20m (€18m), or \$6.7m per season.

The fee is 55 per cent down on the \$15m per season SkyNet pays in the current 2013-14 to 2015-16 cycle. It paid the fee to head off the challenge from media company Forever Group (*TV Sports Markets* 16:22).

Football is by far the most popular sport in the country, and the Premier League by far the most popular competition.

The last time the rights were sold in Myanmar, the country provided the league with one of its largest percentage increases. In the 2010-11 to 2012-13 cycle, Myanmar was part of a pan-regional deal with pay-television broadcaster ESPN Star Sports – which also covered Cambodia, Chinese Taipei, Laos, North Korea, and the Philippines – worth about \$425,000 per season.

The league's deal in Myanmar is its last across Asia-Pacific. The only markets in which the league is yet to sell its rights for the new cycle are Albania, Canada, Cyprus, Malta and Russia. The league is also selling a package of free-to-air rights in sub-Saharan Africa (*TV Sports Markets* 20:2). ■

MULTI-SPORT

Combining events key to maintaining spectator interest

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Championships is to protect events which have suffered from decreasing audiences.

The 2018 event in Glasgow – including all sports apart from athletics – will be held from August 1-12, while the athletics will take place in Berlin from August 7-12.

Both will come after the Fifa World Cup and before the European football season begins. As such, the organisers are hopeful of generating a large television audience. The EBU is projecting a cumulative global audience of 1.03bn.

A source close to the union said the total audience will be 20 to 25 per cent more than the combined audience each individual sport would have attracted. Of the seven sports, only golf does not have an existing European championship.

The EBU's commitment to the concept suggests a recognition it must adapt to keep pace with a fast-changing industry. It is contending with the increasing aggression of multi-territory pay-television channels such as beIN Sports and Eurosport.

It is also seen as a response to its loss of sports rights in recent times. In June, Discovery Communications, Eurosport's owner, outbid the EBU for rights to the Olympic Games from 2018 to 2024 across Europe. Discovery will pay €1.3bn; the EBU bid €1.09bn (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13; 19:20).

Bundling events

The concept of a multi-sport event such as the European Championships came about as observers felt that federations' respective European Championships have become less attractive, and because some European federations have struggled to get airtime.

It has been hard for broadcasters to commit to showing single European Championships of smaller sports, but by bundling content together the federations hope to make their content more relevant.

The EBU's individual federation deals

To broadcast the multi-sport European Championships in 2018, the European Broadcasting Union had to agree individual media-rights deals with each of the seven sports.

In March last year, the EBU – the consortium of public-service broadcasters – agreed a four-year deal, from 2016 to 2019, with European Athletics. The deal is worth about CHF34m (€31m/\$34m), or CHF8.5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:7).

In November, the EBU agreed deals with Europe's aquatics and gymnastics federations – the Ligue Européenne de Natation and the Union Européenne de Gymnastique respectively.

The EBU's four-year deal with LEN, from 2017 to 2020, will be worth about €4m, or €1m per year. The EBU's existing LEN deal, from 2013 to 2016, is worth about €3m, or €750,000 per year. The latest deal also includes the option of a four-year extension, from 2021 to 2024, which can be activated in 2017.

The EBU's four-year deal with the UEG, from 2017 to 2020, will be worth about €2.1m, or €525,000 per year. The EBU's existing UEG deal, from 2013 to 2016, is worth about €1.8m, or €450,000 per year. EBU broadcasters also cover production costs of events on top of the rights fee.

The EBU is understood to have extended a deal with the international rowing federation, Fisa – the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron. The EBU's existing four-year deal, from

2013 to 2016, is worth about €1m, or €250,000 per year. Sources believe the EBU's extension is for a further four years, from 2017 to 2020, and that the deal will be worth about €1.2m, or €300,000 per year.

The EBU had existing broadcast deals with each of these four sports. As many EBU deals contained clauses to extend and re-negotiate, the federations had little option than to agree new deals with the EBU which would cover 2018 – and the union is highly likely to secure the rights for 2022.

The three other sports – cycling, golf and triathlon – did not previously have deals with the EBU. Golf does not currently have a European championship, and will be creating an event in order to be part of the 2018 Championships.

The cycling deal was agreed with the Union Européenne de Cyclisme; the golf deal was agreed with both the European Tour and the Ladies European Tour; and the triathlon deal was agreed with the European Triathlon Union.

These three deals are thought to cover just 2018, and will not cover any other events. Each of the sports is expected to be earning a rights fee, although none will be earning a significant amount.

It is understood that these three deals were brokered by European Sports Championships Management, rather than agreed directly with the EBU (see box, page 4).

One EBU member told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "One key element is that the summer Olympic sports are becoming more and more difficult to screen because of weak ratings – it's not easy to show each of these formats.

"Putting them together provides a critical mass and creates a longer broadcast slot with more different sports so you can switch from one to another."

German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF consider dropping any sport content with an audience share of less than 12 per cent. The broadcasters'

coverage of European Athletics events is slightly above this, but other federations' events have been below this threshold. ARD/ZDF's inclusion is vital as it is one of the bigger guarantors of EBU deals.

One former head of sports rights at an EBU member said: "There is a risk that the existing European Championships are becoming less and less relevant. Bundling them together, they are hoping it will become greater than the sum of its parts."

Coverage of European Championships plays an important part in the remit of public-service broadcasters which have a

Centralised sales a possibility, but unlikely before 2026

Although the organisers of the European Championships failed to centralise all commercial rights for 2018, a centralised sales model could be introduced from 2026 to help drive federation revenue.

In order to broadcast the 2018 Championships, the European Broadcasting Union – the consortium of public-service broadcasters – has had to agree individual media-rights deals with each of the participating federations.

In initial talks about establishing the event in 2018, the organisers – European Sports Championships Management – put forward the idea of a centralised marketing model, but the federations rejected it for three reasons.

First, many had existing media-rights deals, and options to extend, with the EBU. Second, most had worked hard to build relationships with sponsors and were unwilling to cede these rights. Third, federations did not want to give up their freedom to select a host city.

In response, ESCM agreed that federations could agree individual media-rights deals with the EBU, at least for 2018.

Federations will also retain most sponsorship rights, but some will be granted to the host city. ESCM will sell sponsorship rights ceded to Glasgow by the federations for 2018.

Federations will continue to decide where their events will be hosted, as long as they take place at the same time as the other federations. Athletics chose to have its event hosted in Berlin, while the others agreed to host their events in Glasgow.

It is understood that most, if not all, of the seven federations participating in 2018 have agreed in principle to be part of another Championships in 2022. There is thought to be a tacit agreement to cover 2022 within the EBU deals, suggesting a centralised model could not be introduced before 2026.

The concept of the Championships was developed by three executives: Paul Bristow, Marc Joerg and Jon Ridgeon. The three are directors of ESCM.

Initial conversations about the event

were held with six federations: aquatics, athletics and gymnastics – all of whom ended up being part of the 2018 European Championships – as well as basketball, handball and volleyball.

Basketball was eventually not included as Fiba and Fiba Europe – the sport's global and European governing bodies – have a huge amount of work to do with the reorganisation of the sport's global calendar.

The other two sports had long-term deals already in place. The European Handball Federation has a marketing and media rights deal with the Infront Sports & Media agency until 2020, while the Confédération Européenne de Volleyball has a global distribution deal with Infront from 2013 until 2021.

The organisers met more than 200 organisations in the process of selecting which sports should be included. Initial plans for 2018 centred on securing the inclusion of six to eight sports.

It was decided that aquatics and athletics had to be included. Cycling and triathlon were seen as natural extensions from athletics. Rowing was seen as a popular team sport, which had historically been broadcast by the EBU.

Golf is regarded as a slightly odd choice as the sport is usually shown on pay-television. It was chosen because it will be part of the Olympic Games in both 2016 and 2020, and wants to be involved in team events to build on the success of the Ryder Cup.

One negative for golf is that the PGA Championship will almost certainly take place at the same time, meaning the participation of the world's best golfers cannot be guaranteed. It is understood that the EBU has not pledged to broadcast all golf events until it has seen who will be taking part.

The organisers are not expected to expand the number of sports significantly for 2022. One reason is that both aquatics and cycling are each comprised of four disciplines.

For the 2018 Championships there will be 265 hours of programming and more than 170 medal opportunities. ■

duty to show a variety of sports.

The organisers also felt there was a window of opportunity for a European multi-sport event considering equivalents in other regions, such as the Asian Games and the Pan American Games.

European Games

The European Championships in 2018 will not be the first pan-regional multi-sport event – in 2015, the newly-created European Games was hosted in Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan.

But the two are seen as very different events. The European Games is a new event sanctioned by the European Olympic Committee, while the European Championships is a collection of existing events, and has been agreed with each sport's respective federations.

A key difference is the sports included in both. The European Games included 20 of the 28 Olympic Games sports as of 2016, whereas the European Championships is much smaller. However, the European Games did not include aquatics or athletics – the two most popular summer sports included in the European Championships.

One problem for the European Games is that it takes place in years when many World Championships take place. As a result, many athletes take the latter more seriously. Most sports' European Championships currently face a similar problem by occurring in summer Olympic years, but the multi-sport Championships from 2018 will not.

The hosting of the 2015 European Games is reported to have cost about \$1bn, while \$5bn was spent on improving infrastructure in the country. Many experts agree that the European Games model used in 2015 is not sustainable as it was heavily reliant on the host state investing a huge amount of money.

Some observers are concerned that the public won't recognise the difference between the European Championships and the European Games. Several suggested that in the long term the two events could potentially merge as there is little room for both to co-exist. ■

[www.escm.com](#) For more insight from four of the federations which will be part of the Championships in 2018, visit our website.

FOOTBALL

Le Sports and CSM partner to point the way for China

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agreement between Le Sports and CSM. The two companies last week unveiled cross-shareholding proposals and a commitment to jointly exploit CSL rights in the 2018 to 2020 seasons via a subscription model.

The agreement could have a major impact on China's competitive environment. The two will no longer compete head-to-head, and a source close to the deal told *TV Sports Markets* it was likely they would eventually merge.

Their combined portfolio would cover all Chinese domestic football. CSM this week won rights to the Chinese FA and Super Cups. It acquired Chinese Football Association rights last May in a four-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2018-19, worth CNY70m, CNY17.5m per season.

Le Sports will hold Asian Football Confederation rights, including the AFC Champions League and 2019 Asian Cup, from 2017 to 2020 in a deal worth \$27.5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:21).

Their collaboration is the clearest pathway yet for the transition to a pay model in the Chinese digital market. At present, the vast majority of content is streamed at no cost to viewers. But the rampant growth in rights fees over the past year means ad-funded models now appear unsustainable.

The two do not believe the market is currently prepared for a subscription model. Le Sports will test making certain matches available via subscription in 2016 and 2017, while the two will work on improving production and promotion.

The international rights acquired by Le Sports are of little value but provide the company and its parent with useful content for their globalisation plans (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

CSM sales

Under the terms of its CSL acquisition, CSM must sell matches to state

broadcaster CCTV, at least 12 channels local to the 16 CSL clubs, and at least two new media platforms.

Le Sports acquired the Zhangyu TV sports streaming platform in January for CNY300m. It will exploit the rights on Zhangyu as well as on its eponymous platforms, satisfying the new media broadcast conditions while retaining digital exclusivity.

CSM has agreed sufficient deals with regional channels, covering one or two matches per round. But as *TV Sports Markets* went to press, there was no agreement with CCTV. The regular season kicks off this weekend.

Latest acquisition

CSM's four-year deal for production and media rights to the FA and Super Cups is thought to be worth CNY10m per year, from 2016 to 2019. It beat competition from streaming service PPTV Sports.

Competition was muted compared to the CSL tender last year. One expert said the relatively small package was of limited value to companies which did not already hold some domestic football rights. ■

PAY-TV ITALY

Sky Euro 2016 and Copa deals not a change of strategy

By Frank Dunne

Sky Italia's €30.6m (\$33.7m) investment last week in this summer's two major football tournaments – Euro 2016 and the Copa América Centenario – came as a surprise as the broadcaster had said it has abandoned its strategy of acquiring rights to major events. It does not, however, represent a U-turn – the deals were last-minute, opportunistic acquisitions.

Pay-television broadcaster Sky paid €30m for the live rights to all 51 matches at Euro 2016, 24 of which are exclusive. State broadcaster Rai will show the top 27 matches live in a deal worth €70m. Both deals were agreed with the CAA Eleven agency, Uefa's sales agent for its national team competitions.

Sky paid just under €600,000 for the rights to the Copa América. Both tournaments will take place in June.

Sky did not bid for Euro 2016 rights when they were first put out to tender in April 2015, and in initial informal talks with CAA Eleven its interest was said to have been lukewarm.

Sky considered its strategy of investing in major events, such as the Fifa World Cup and the Olympic Games, to have been a failure – it incurred huge costs but added few subscribers.

Sky came back to the table in early January with a strong offer. There are several reasons why it changed its mind.

First, 2015 financial results for both Sky and its pay-television rival Mediaset Premium suggested Sky had not been as badly affected as feared having lost Uefa Champions League rights to Mediaset from this season.

Sky's subscriber base dropped by just 21,000 in the final quarter, from 4.746m to 4.725m, but remains around the 4.7m mark where it has been for two years.

Further, Sky made substantial savings through not having Champions League rights. Mediaset is paying just over €230m per season for Champions League rights for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:3).

Second, Sky has recognised it has hit a ceiling for subscriber growth for its pay-television services, according to some media analysts. Priorities have shifted to managing churn, which stands at 9.9 per cent, and increasing average revenue per user (arpu), which has been at €43 per month for over a year.

The broadcaster has not yet announced how the two tournaments will be shown. One analyst said Sky could make them available on a special ad hoc channel, which would require subscribers to pay an additional fee, boosting arpu. However, sources close to the broadcaster say they are more likely to be spread across the existing sport and football packages.

Sky's view is that having the best national team football from Europe and the Americas in the same month is close

to having a Fifa World Cup – but at a fraction of the cost. It will allow Sky to position itself during the summer as the home of football in the pay-television market, at a time when Mediaset will be promoting its exclusive Champions League coverage for the 2016-17 season.

Informed sources say, however, that despite these deals, Sky is unlikely to make an aggressive offer for the rights to the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

Copa retrieval

On a standalone basis, the Copa would not boost Sky's audiences, particularly given the time difference with the US, where the event will be staged.

But acquiring it meant Mediaset could not pick up a low-cost football tournament which it could market at the same time Sky was promoting Euro 2016.

Sky bid €500,000 for the Copa last May, but was outbid by Italian publisher RCS, which paid €600,000 to acquire the rights for its free-to-air sports channel, *Gazzetta TV* (*TV Sports Markets* 19:11).

The rights came back on the market in January following RCS's decision to take the channel off the air, leaving *Gazzetta* as an online offering only, having amassed losses of €10m in its first year.

Sky also took over RCS's contracts for English football's second tier Championship for the remainder of 2015-16, and South American qualifiers for the 2018 Fifa World Cup for a total of about €500,000.

Euro turnaround

The €100m Uefa will earn for Euro 2016 in Italy represents a small drop on the €106m Rai paid for Euro 2012, and is well below the €130m Uefa had originally hoped to secure from the market. Uefa expected an increase in value given the expansion of the tournament from 16 to 24 teams, increasing the number of matches from 31 to 51.

However, Uefa is likely to be pleased with the eventual outcome, given Rai's hardball tactics over the last year and the apparent lack of alternatives.

Rai originally offered €54m for the top 23 matches and refused to budge on the price. Uefa offered modest improvements in the level of exclusivity, but refused to

drop to Rai's level.

The additional four matches, exclusivity concessions, and the logistical problems of leaving a deal late persuaded the Rai board to increase its bid.

Rai's deal covers extensive highlights as well as live rights. No other free-to-air broadcaster can show extended coverage of its 27 matches for seven days after matches are played. Rai can show extended highlights of the other 24 matches 30 minutes after they end. ■

DIGITAL RIGHTS

ESPN grows in Asia with partnerships in China and India

By Richard Welbirg

ESPN's partnership with Chinese internet company Tencent last month is the latest stage in the broadcaster's evolution into a global digital player, following the closure of much of its international broadcasting operation – and follows a similar tie-up with Sony in India in October.

Russell Wolff, executive vice-president at ESPN International, said the company saw value in the way digital could provide additional content around a live event.

In an exclusive interview with *TV Sports Markets* this week he said: "There's a lot of value added to be had between when a play takes place and when a fan sees it. We are doing that all the time. And we're leveraging that globally."

ESPN had largely pulled out of the linear broadcast market outside of Australia and the Americas by 2013. It sold its 50-per-cent stake in pan-Asian broadcaster ESPN Star Sports (ESS) to co-owner 21st Century Fox in June 2012, sold its UK broadcasting arm to telco BT in March 2013, and shuttered pan-European pay-television channel ESPN America later that year.

The Disney-owned company decided to reposition itself as a digital-only player outside Australia and the Americas. ESPN claims to be the largest digital sports company in the world, with 868m monthly visits to its digital products. The two new deals will reinforce that position.

In April last year, the company rebuilt its web platform, implementing a unified global content management system able to handle multiple languages. Wolff said the new platform has made localising content much easier, and enabled deals like these.

"Our ability to move our content around the world to our wholly-owned offices is very good," he said. "Our platform was built initially for the US but built to be global and allow local programming from a content perspective.

"If we write a story about college basketball in the US and we want it to be available in India, that's a click of a button. And vice versa. It's a capability you don't see around the world from others."

ESPN would not confirm the term of the deals in India and China, but sources indicate that the Sony and Tencent deals are for between five and seven years. Both are built on three pillars – live rights licensing, brand licensing and ancillary content – but are different in the details.

China

In China, ESPN is licensing Tencent college basketball rights, including the 'March Madness' tournament, and the action sports X Games.

Content will be available via an ESPN-branded section of Tencent's online sports portal QQ Sports. Ancillary content provided by ESPN will include Mandarin-language reporting on-site from National Basketball Association games, and ESPN editorial content translated into Mandarin.

Wolff said: "We met lots of the platforms, but with Tencent we had a natural connection. We spent time with them a year ago at the NBA All-Star game. And there is a natural fit between each other's basketball content. Not a lot of time was spent negotiating."

In January last year, Tencent acquired NBA digital rights in China in a five-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2019-20, worth at least \$100m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:3).

Under the partnership with ESPN, Tencent will retain all advertising income sold around ESPN content, although the two will collaborate in courting international advertisers.

India

In October, ESPN returned to the Indian broadcast market through its partnership with pay-television broadcaster Sony. It was prevented from entering the market until now as a result of ESS's dissolution.

ESS's legacy is a very strong ESPN brand in the country, one local expert said, and Sony is taking advantage of this. The Sony Kix channel was rebranded as Sony ESPN in January.

ESPN is licensing live content to Sony including US college American football and basketball, the Premier Boxing Champions series and the X Games.

Sony is paying for the use of the ESPN brand but remains owner and operator of the channels. ESPN's primary focus is the launch of the co-branded Indian website, which it will operate.

Sources close to the deal say ESPN has not ruled out acquiring rights jointly with

Sony in future.

This could help Sony, which faces a looming battle with Star to acquire rights to the Indian Premier League Twenty20 cricket competition. Sony currently holds the rights in a 10-year deal from 2008 to 2017 worth about \$775m (*TV Sports Markets* 12:2). The rights are expected to be tendered in May. ■

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

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

UFC bolsters Fight Pass with rights and exclusivity

By Callum McCarthy

The Ultimate Fighting Championship, the world's leading mixed martial arts promotion, last month bolstered its UFC Fight Pass OTT subscription service, maintaining its position as the world's most content-rich combat channel.

The UFC's deal to acquire Glory kickboxing rights was one strand of this strategy – and an expensive one based on what it is paying for the rights.

The other main strand is the gradual shifting of the UFC's higher-tier events exclusively onto Fight Pass. If the UFC gets this wrong it could prove even more costly: it could undermine the value of the promotion's media-rights deals around the world.

Experts say the strategy is a response to slow subscriber growth since Fight Pass's inception in December 2013. The UFC recently acknowledged its service has performed below fan expectation.

Content investment

UFC's parent company, Zuffa, last month signed a one-year deal for global digital rights to Glory's Superfight Series – Brazil and some Caribbean territories are excluded.

Zuffa is thought to be paying upwards of \$100,000 (€91,000) per event for 10 events in 2016. Glory will allocate at least three of its world title fights to the series this year.

UFC earns surprise increase from tough Russian market

The Ultimate Fighting Championship appears to have pulled off what very few rights-holders have managed to do in recent times – secure an increase for the price of its rights in Russia.

The promotion's new deal with Gazprom Media-owned free-to-air broadcaster Match TV will be worth just over \$400,000 (€364,000) in 2016, an increase of up to 33 per cent on the \$300,000 to \$350,000 paid by state broadcaster VGTRK in 2015.

There are two main reasons for the increase. First, the growing popularity of combat sports in Russia, driven in part by the rise of Russian fighters in the UFC. The promotion currently has 27 Russian martial artists on its roster,

three of whom could soon challenge for a world title.

Second, Match TV's emphasis on combat sports. Match TV has created a specialist combat channel – Match TV Fighter – which plays host to many of the world's top combat promotions. It will show all UFC events, as well as ancillary programming.

The deal was agreed at the beginning of February. Match TV also showed the UFC in the final months of 2015 – as part of the consolidation of the Russian sports market, Match TV took on all sports contracts from VGTRK. It paid off the remainder of VGTRK's contract, about \$75,000, from October to December last year. ■

The agreement also includes Glory's archive, along with the archives of now-defunct kickboxing promotions K-1 and It's Showtime. Glory bought the promotions' archives in 2013.

Zuffa also owns the global broadcast rights to a number of smaller mixed martial arts promotions, including Titan Fighting Championships, Eurasia Fight Nights, and the all-female Invicta Fighting Championships.

For regional US promotions such as Titan, Zuffa pays between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per event for exclusive global broadcast rights. Eurasia Fight Nights, which has better production standards, is thought to receive between \$20,000 and \$30,000 per event.

Invicta does not earn a rights fee; it receives contributions to its staff and production costs. The \$100,000-per-event

salary of Invicta's top star, Cristiane Justino, is paid by Zuffa.

As well as Glory rights, Zuffa has also acquired Eddie Bravo Invitational jiu-jitsu tournaments for a nominal fee.

Zuffa now broadcasts the events of 11 martial arts promotions – including its own – live on Fight Pass. It also hosts a complete archive of 12 other defunct promotions on an exclusive basis.

Glory gains

For Glory, the UFC deal has two main advantages: it ensures the promotion receives guaranteed income from its media rights in the US, while strengthening its distribution at a time when it is being challenged by mixed martial arts promoter Bellator.

Glory has a deal in the US with sports broadcaster ESPN for 10 main card

events per year. The deal was originally for 2016 but was recently extended to cover 2017. However, Glory earns no guaranteed rights fee; it is only paid a share of advertising revenue (*TV Sports Markets* 19:23). Glory believes broad coverage, through non-exclusive deals, is key to success in the US.

By aligning itself with the UFC, Glory is also protecting itself against Bellator's advance on its territory. Bellator will soon begin promoting its own kickboxing shows on US commercial channel Spike. It has significant financial backing from its owner, US media conglomerate Viacom, which also owns Spike.

Balancing act

Prior to the launch of Fight Pass, close to

half of the UFC's revenue came from traditional broadcast deals and sponsorship sales, with the rest split between pay-per-view buys, closed circuit rights, and revenue from live events.

In attempting to drive income from Fight Pass, the promotion must be careful not to undermine its other deals.

In each territory, as deals come up for renewal, the UFC will decide whether there is a strong market to drive revenues from Fight Pass or not. Where there is, Fight Pass events will either be carved out of broadcast deals, or broadcasters will have to pay a premium for them.

In development markets, the rights are likely to be rolled into the broadcast deal, as was the case in the Fox Sports Africa deal agreed in October.

The potential pitfalls in this balancing act have already become evident in the UK. Last weekend's Anderson Silva v Michael Bisping event, held at London's O2 Arena, was the first top-tier UFC event shown exclusively on Fight Pass.

Pay-television operator BT Sport's deal for UFC rights in the UK, worth £4m (€5.1m/\$5.7m) per year from August 2013 to August 2016, does not include Fight Pass events.

BT was disappointed to miss out on the rights to the London event, which it tried unsuccessfully to acquire. The UK hosting and the presence of a British fighter (Bisping) would have delivered a large audience. Informed sources say the UFC's insistence on exclusivity for the event is making renewal negotiations fraught. ■

FOOTBALL

Esporte looks to break Globo's grip on domestic rights

By Richard Welbirg

An audacious offer from Esporte Interativo has loosened Globo's stranglehold on Brazilian domestic football.

TV Sports Markets understands that free-to-air and pay-television broadcaster Esporte Interativo has agreed deals for pay-television rights with enough Brazilian top-tier Série A clubs, from 2019 to 2024, to make its investment viable.

Brazilian clubs sell their media rights individually. Local law requires a broadcaster hold rights to the home and away teams in order to air a match.

Esporte Interativo offered up to a total of BRL550m (€127m/\$140m) per year for all 20 top-tier clubs' pay-television rights for six years, from 2019 to 2024. The total will fall by BRL27.5m per year for every club which does not sign.

Série A clubs Atlético Paranaense, Bahia, Coritiba and Santos have confirmed deals with Esporte Interativo.

Media group Globo is the long-term broadcast partner of all Brazilian clubs. It initially made a counter offer to Esporte

Interativo of about BRL1.1bn per year from 2019 to 2024, for all rights.

In its current three-year deals with all clubs from 2016 to 2018, Globo pays a total of about BRL1.3bn per year. This covers free-to-air, pay-television and digital rights, and includes the guarantee paid to clubs for their pay-per-view rights.

But the media group dominates the Brazilian market, and is able to put significant pressure on the clubs.

One local expert told *TV Sports Markets*: "The only reason for a club not to sign with Esporte Interativo is being afraid of not getting a good deal for free-to-air and pay-per-view rights from Globo or someone else thereafter. And Globo is playing with the clubs' fear very well."

Botafogo, 2015 champions Corinthians, and Vitória are understood to have accepted Globo's offer.

São Paulo rejected Globo's initial offer, but Globo made a second offer for pay-television rights only. The offer was worth BRL500m, to be divided between all clubs, and São Paulo was offered BRL60m up front. The club accepted.

Sources close to Globo say the media group has agreed deals with 10 clubs.

It is unclear why Globo made São Paulo an offer for pay-television rights based on all clubs agreeing to the deal when several had already signed on different terms. The status of these deals is uncertain.

Undecided clubs, which as *TV Sports*

Markets went to press included major teams Flamengo and Palmeiras, are required to decide on Esporte Interativo's offer within the month.

Only a small proportion of Globo's BRL1.1bn-per-year counter offer is for pay-television rights. Globo's current allocation for these rights is thought to be about BRL60m per year. Globo's free-to-air allocation is much higher because the media group faced competition in this sector in the early 2010s.

Globo coverage

Globo exploits Brazilian football rights across its free-to-air, pay-television and pay-per-view platforms.

The 20-team Série A produces 380 matches over 38 rounds. From each round, three matches are shown free-to-air – each in a different region. Two matches are shown via its SporTV pay-television channels.

All matches are available on pay-per-view channel Premiere FC, which is available on all the country's major pay-television platforms, at an additional cost of about BRL60 per month.

Premiere FC has about 2m subscribers, from about 20m Brazilian pay-television homes. Globo, and the pay-television operators which carry the channel, retain 68 per cent of its revenues. ■

[www. For more details on the offer from Esporte Interativo, visit our website.](#)

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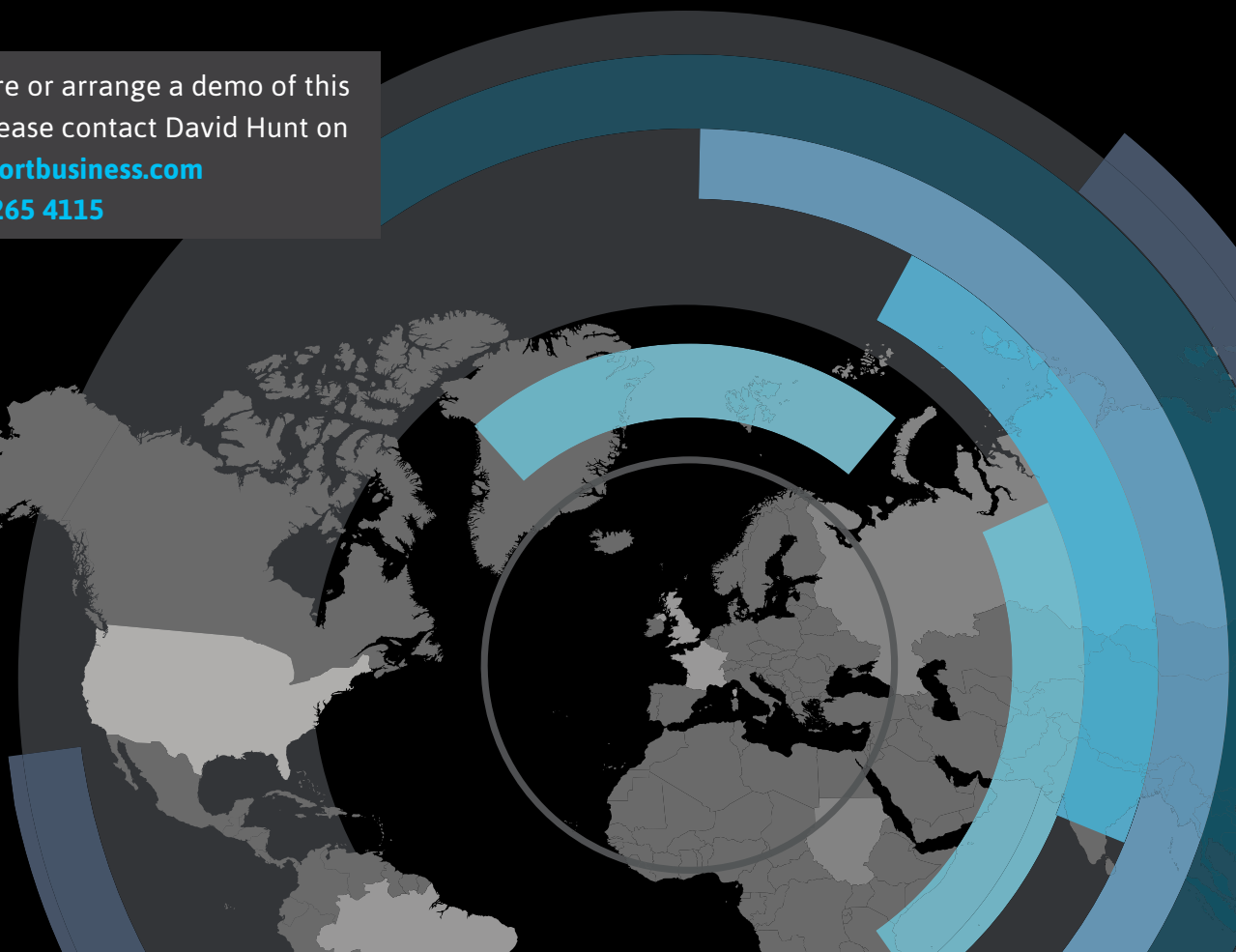
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from February 18 to March 2

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: Euro 2016, Premier League, Chinese Super League and more

- **Football:** Italian state broadcaster Rai and pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia acquired rights for the Uefa Euro 2016 national team tournament (page 5).
- **Football:** Austrian commercial broadcaster ATV acquired a package of Euro 2016 rights via a sublicensing deal with public-service broadcaster ORF. The agreement includes six games from the final round of group stage matches but will not include Austria's final group fixture against Iceland on June 22.
- **Football:** Belgian pay-television operator Proximus TV struck a deal with the country's Pro League that will coincide with a restructuring and renaming of the second tier. Proximus TV acquired exclusive rights over four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, to D1B, a new eight-team competition that will operate beneath the expanded 24-team Pro League. The deal includes non-exclusive rights for the top division over the same period. Proximus TV will also be D1B's title sponsor.
- **Football:** International sports broadcaster Eurosport extended its rights deal in Romania for the English Premier League for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. The deal was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 20:2.
- **Football:** Le Sports, which is operated by Chinese internet company LeEco, struck a deal for 2016 and 2017 Chinese Super League rights in several markets. Le Sports and its subsidiary Zhangyu TV will show all 240 matches per campaign (page 1).
- **Football:** The China Sports Media agency, also known as Ti'ao Dongli, secured a new four-year rights and production deal, from 2016 to 2019, with the Chinese Football Association for its CFA Cup and CFA Super Cup club competitions (page 1).
- **Football:** Sky Italia acquired rights for the 2016 Copa América Centenario national team tournament. Sky Italia will provide exclusive live coverage of all 32 matches at the tournament (page 5).
- **Football:** French basic-tier sports broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport acquired rights for the Concacaf Champions League club tournament. MCS will provide coverage of the 2015-16 competition from the quarter-final stage onwards. The tournament is operated by Concacaf, the sport's governing body in North and Central America and the Caribbean.
- **Football:** US pay-television channel GolTV acquired exclusive rights to the Coppa Italia knockout tournament, beginning with live coverage of the second legs from each semi-final in the 2015-16 competition. The deal, which also covers the final on May 21, includes coverage in Spanish and English.
- **Football:** North American Major League Soccer club Columbus Crew secured a deal with US media company Sinclair Broadcast Group and domestic pay-television operator Time Warner Cable. The multi-platform agreement will cover 31 regular-season games during the 2016 campaign. Coverage will be available on Sinclair regional channels CW Columbus, ABC-6, FOX-28 and MyTVColumbus, as well as Time Warner Cable's SportsChannel cable-television channel. Subscribers to the MLS Direct Kick pay-television service or the MLS Live digital service will also have access to all regionally broadcast games.
- **Football:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights for the England women's national team's games in this year's inaugural SheBelieves Cup, a new national team tournament organised by US Soccer.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Canal Plus agreed a five-year deal, from 2016 to 2020, to become the exclusive carriage partner in France of the beIN Sports pay-television channels. The agreement requires the approval of France's competition authority, l'Autorité de la Concurrence. The deal could lead to Canal Plus's parent company Vivendi acquiring a stake in beIN Sports France.
- Italian media company Mediaset denied reports it is in talks with Vivendi over a possible deal to sell its pay-television division to the French media company. According to Italian newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera*, Vivendi tabled an offer for a majority stake in sports broadcaster Mediaset Premium.
- UK media regulator Ofcom closed an investigation into pay-television broadcaster Sky regarding the alleged abuse of a dominant market position concerning the wholesale supply of its Sky Sports 1 and Sky Sports 2 channels. Ofcom ruled that the "principal risk" to the interests of the consumers identified in the original complaint from telco BT had been brought to an end, with the regulator noting that BT has since obtained access to the channels on a non-reciprocal basis.
- Media company Sinclair Broadcast Group was given the green light to complete its \$350m (€317m) takeover of pay-television broadcaster Tennis Channel by the US Federal Trade Commission.
- Media-rights deals between Guatemala's football association and Mexican media magnate Ángel González were agreed at below market value, sources from an audit committee appointed by football's global governing body, Fifa, told the Reuters news agency. The contracts were signed by the national association's former president, Brayan Jiménez, who is awaiting extradition to the US on corruption charges.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- Time sealed a partnership with pan-Asian sports broadcaster ASN to develop a network of channels and digital platforms that will carry the brand of the US media company's flagship sports magazine, *Sports Illustrated*. As part of the deal, the Hong

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from February 18 to March 2

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

Carifta Games, World Baseball Classic, NBA, World Twenty20 and more

- **Athletics:** Flow, the Caribbean pay-television platform owned by telco Cable & Wireless Communications, signed a partnership with the North American, Central American and Caribbean Athletics Association to be the exclusive broadcast partner and sponsor of the Carifta (Caribbean Free Trade Association) Games. The deal will begin with the 2016 edition, which takes place in Grenada from March 26-28. The Games will be shown in 10 markets around the Caribbean on the recently launched Flow Sports channel.
- **Badminton:** International sports broadcaster Eurosport agreed an exclusive streaming rights deal with the Badminton World Federation for 2016 and 2017. Eurosport will stream coverage via its Eurosport Player digital service. The deal covers the 2017 World Championships; the 2016 editions of the men's Thomas Cup and women's Uber Cup team events; the 2016 and 2017 World Superseries and Grand Prix Gold Series; and the 2017 Sudirman Cup mixed-team event. The deal excludes Denmark for all events, and France for the Thomas Cup, Uber Cup Finals and 2016 World Superseries.
- **Badminton:** Eurosport acquired rights in the UK and Ireland for the 2016 All England Open Badminton Championships. Eurosport struck the deal with Badminton England, the sport's national governing body.
- **Baseball:** The MP & Silva agency extended its distribution deal for the World Baseball Classic through to the 2017 edition of the national team event. The worldwide agreement – which excludes Japan, Puerto Rico and the US, but includes Canada for the first time – covers the tournament and its qualifying events across all platforms.
- **Basketball:** Caribbean pay-television broadcaster SportsMax renewed a multi-year rights deal with the National Basketball Association. SportsMax will show 112 regular-season games – up from 48 in the previous deal – and 53 post-season contests – up from eight – to nearly 30 territories across the Caribbean.
- **Cricket:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand sealed a deal for the 2016 World Twenty20 tournament.
- **Cricket:** The ICC awarded digital clip rights in the US and Canada to Times Internet, the online and mobile arm of Indian publishing company Times Group, for four years, from 2016 to 2019. The deal includes exclusive rights to pre-match, in-match and post-match clips. The agreement covers: the 2016 World Twenty20; the 2017 Champions Trophy and Women's World Cup; the 2018 U19 Cricket World Cup, Cricket World Cup Qualifier and Women's World Twenty20; and the 2019 Cricket World Cup.
- **Cricket:** Pakistani mobile phone company Khaleef secured exclusive clip rights for all ICC events for four years, from 2016 to 2019. The rights will be exploited via Khaleef-branded online portals and mobile applications.
- **Cricket:** Pay-television operator Flow acquired rights in the Caribbean for the 2016 Asia Cup Twenty20 tournament.
- **Cycling:** The International Cycling Union appointed the IMG agency to distribute rights for the *inCycle* magazine show. The series will feature 12 shows of 26 minutes each, with a segment dedicated to the new Women's WorldTour. The shows will also be available via the *incycle.tv* and *tv.uci.ch* websites.
- **Handball:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 struck a deal with the German Handball Federation to show coverage of two friendly matches featuring the country's national team against Qatar on March 13 and Denmark on April 1. The deal was brokered by the Lagardère Sports agency.

Kong-based ASN and ASN2 pay-television sports channels will rebrand as Sports Illustrated and Sports Illustrated 2, with accompanying websites and mobile applications also changing their names. The changes will occur this spring. Time will provide the infrastructure technology for the digital revamps, with the two companies working together on marketing and advertising sales.

- US pay-television provider Dish and its OTT subsidiary, Sling TV, agreed a long-term extension to their content partnership with cricket-dedicated broadcaster Willow TV International. The deal marks the first time that major International Cricket Council events will be provided at no additional charge on the Willow cricket channel, with many of the competitions only previously available via pay-per-view.
- Italian Serie A football clubs approved the distribution of media-rights revenues for the 2015-16 season. Clubs relegated to Serie B will receive up to €60m (\$66m) in parachute payments, depending on how many seasons they have spent in Serie A, up from €30m. Clubs that finish in the top 10 will receive a greater proportion of revenues than those who finish in the bottom 10. Eighteen Serie A clubs voted in favour of the distribution model, with Chievo and Palermo voting against.
- German production company Wige Media sealed a strategic partnership with the Alibaba Sports division of Chinese e-commerce company Alibaba Group. The deal will cover the motorsports sector, video transmission technology for sports arenas and remote production.
- North American pay-television broadcaster One World Sports extended a carriage deal with German Bundesliga football club Bayern Munich. One World Sports will carry the club's international magazine programme, including match replays plus highlights, interviews, behind-the-scenes segments and pre- and post-match press conferences in a multi-year agreement.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from February 18 to March 2

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

UFC, Glory kickboxing, MotoGP, Formula One, America's Cup and more

- **Karate:** The International Sports Broadcasting agency struck a deal to distribute rights for two key World Karate Federation properties. ISB will also serve as the host broadcaster for the Karate1 Premier League and Senior World Championships over four years, from 2017 to 2020.
- **Kickboxing:** Glory World Series sealed a two-year rights deal with US sports broadcaster ESPN. The two initially partnered in November 2015 (page 7).
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC agreed a digital streaming rights deal with the Ultimate Fighting Championship. The broadcaster's BBC Three online platform will show UFC video content such as previews, post-fight reactions and behind-the-scenes material.
- **Motorcycling:** Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports acquired exclusive rights in the US and Canada for the MotoGP world championship and renewed a deal for the Superbike World Championship. The deals were brokered by Dorna Sports, the series' commercial rights-holder.
- **Motorcycling:** Australian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports secured an extension to its exclusive rights deal for the Superbike World Championship. The agreement with Dorna will cover the 2016 season. The broadcaster will also provide coverage of the WorldSSP support series. Fox Sports' coverage will be complemented by an expanded highlights show on public-service broadcaster SBS after every race.
- **Motorcycling:** Sina Sports acquired rights for the Motocross World Championship. Sina Sports will show the *Behind the Gate* series of 26-minute magazine programmes featuring race highlights and behind-the-scenes footage from each round of the 2016 championship. The agreement was brokered by Youthstream, the series' global rights distributor.
- **Motorsport:** Catalan public-service broadcaster TV3 struck a sublicensing rights deal with Spanish telco Telefónica for coverage of the Formula One world championship. TV3 will broadcast the Spanish Grand Prix on May 15 and show repeats of the season's other races on a 60-minute delay. It will also show Formula One news clips.
- **Sailing:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand acquired exclusive rights for the 2016-17 America's Cup series.
- **Sailing:** The Fox Networks Group division of media company 21st Century Fox acquired exclusive 2016-17 America's Cup rights in Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Malta, the Netherlands and Turkey.
- **Sailing:** The Sina Sports division of internet operator Sina acquired rights in China for the 2016-17 America's Cup.
- International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network agreed carriage deals in Poland for its Eleven and Eleven Sports channels with telco Orange Polska and cable-television operator Vectra.
- Mixed martial arts series the Ultimate Fighting Championship entered into a multi-year partnership with Philippine telco Smart. Smart will be a provider of OTT service UFC Fight Pass.
- The Confederation of African Football launched an invitation to tender for host broadcast rights to a series of its competitions. The competitions covered by the tender, which closed on February 29, included the federation's Champions League, Confederation Cup, Super Cup and the preliminary tournaments for the Africa Cup of Nations and African Nations Championship.
- German media company ProSiebenSat.1 will not submit an offer for the next cycle of domestic rights to the Bundesliga, the top division of football in the country. According to ProSiebenSat.1 chief executive Thomas Ebeling, acquiring the rights would not make financial sense for a company that relies on advertising rather than pay-television subscription revenue. The sales process is expected to be concluded by early June.
- Brazilian sports broadcaster Esporte Interativo submitted a bid of R\$550m (€126m/\$139m) per year to secure the pay-television rights to Campeonato Brasileiro Série A, the top division of Brazilian football (page 8).
- A motion to reserve all Gaelic Athletic Association games in the Republic of Ireland for free-to-air television was rejected by 85 per cent of delegates at the association's annual congress. Pay-television broadcaster Sky's current GAA deal will conclude at the end of 2017.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- CBS is hoping to acquire streaming rights for American football's NFL from the start of the 2016-17 season, the US network's chief executive, Leslie Moonves, told investors. The coverage would be shown on the CBS All Access broadband service.
- Australian free-to-air and pay-television broadcasters rejected the opportunity to acquire rights for the 2016 World Twenty20 international cricket tournament, according to *The Age* newspaper. It said the main stumbling block was the price sought by the International Cricket Council's global broadcast partner, pan-Asian pay-television broadcaster Star Sports.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- MLB Advanced Media, the interactive media and internet company of Major League Baseball, is keen to enter the market for OTT rights to global sports programming, according to chief executive Bob Bowman.
- The Fox Sports division of US network Fox sealed a partnership with virtual reality technology provider NextVR. The two parties

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from February 18 to March 2

- will collaborate to offer viewers live virtual reality coverage of US sports events for five years, from 2016 to 2020.
- The English Football League started a review of the digital platforms operated by its Football League Interactive subsidiary. The league, which governs the three divisions below the top-tier Premier League, invited agencies, sports technology and media companies specialising in sports-specific solutions for online and mobile platforms and payment management services to take part.
 - Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE stopped showing recaps of matches from the country's top-tier Primera Liga in protest at a ruling by the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia, the national competition authority. TVE was angered by the ruling that every media company should have access to the clips as they are of public interest. It has a package of rights for 90-second recaps of each game.
 - Public-service broadcaster France Télévisions will show more than 100 hours of live coverage of the 2016 summer Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. France Télévisions will broadcast the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as a live daily show during the event, on its France 2 and France 4 channels.
 - The European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters called on government authorities to save its member in Bosnia and Herzegovina, BHRT, which could be forced to close due to financial difficulties.
 - The Rugby League Players Association wants additional revenue distributed to its members from the media-rights deal struck last year by the National Rugby League, the top division of the sport in Australia. The RLPA's collective bargaining agreement with the league is due for renewal after the 2017 season, but the association is seeking an extra A\$4.5m (€3m/\$3.2m) over the final two years of the current agreement, 2016 and 2017.
 - Australia's anti-siphoning rules concerning broadcast coverage of major sports events will remain intact under a reform package unveiled by the government. Under the changes both the reach rule – which prevents mergers between regional television channels and metropolitan affiliates – and the 'two-out-of-three rule' – which stops any proprietor from owning a newspaper, radio station and television network in the same major market – will be scrapped.
 - The ACT Brumbies Australian rugby union club launched its own weekly free-to-air television programme, featuring news, interviews and behind-the-scenes footage, after striking a deal with commercial broadcaster Ten. The series of half-hour programmes, shown on Ten's One HD channel, is available in Canberra, Dubbo, Orange, South Coast, Wagga Wagga, Wollongong, and the surrounding areas.
 - United World Wrestling, the sport's global governing body, streamed live coverage of the Pan-American Championships in February and confirmed plans to show the Pan American Olympic Qualifier, which takes place from March 4-5, via the unitedworldwrestling.tv website, through a partnership with the FloWrestling digital media service.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Media and entertainment company Discovery Communications, which owns international sports broadcaster Eurosport, appointed Michael Lang to the new position of executive vice-president of international development and digital. • The Discovery Networks Central & Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa division of Discovery appointed Sascha Kojic to the new role of vice-president of sports. The former MP & Silva agency chief representative will report to Kasia Kieli, the region's president and managing director. • German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland appointed Hans Gabbe to the position of senior vice-president of sports rights. Gabbe replaced Volker Winter, who left the company by mutual consent. Gabbe will report to Holger Ensslin, managing director of legal, regulatory and distribution. • SuperSport, the pay-television broadcaster that operates in sub-Saharan Africa, appointed Gideon Khobane as its new chief executive. • Tim Cooper, currently head of operations at internet monitoring and enforcement company NetResult, will join the British Phonographic Industry as head of content protection on April 20.

EDITORIAL

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

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Designer	Hanna Clements
----------	----------------

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
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SPORTELASIA PANELS

SPORTEL & TV SPORTS MARKETS EXPERT PANEL

In association with
TVSportsMarkets

Tuesday 15 March
14:30-15:15

"CHINA: WHAT NEXT?"

Speakers:
Richard Welbirt, Senior Reporter, TV Sports Markets (Moderator)
Beatrice Lee, Managing Director, Asia Pacific, MP & Silva
Sam Li, Head of Content Acquisition, Sina Sports
Jim Small, Vice President of Asia Pacific, Major League Baseball
Hang Yu, Vice President of Strategy, LeSports

SPORTEL & SPORT SINGAPORE PANEL

In support of sports franchise
Sport
SINGAPORE

Tuesday 15 March
15:45-16:30

"OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SPORTS MEDIA INDUSTRY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA"

Speakers:
PJ Roberts, Senior Vice-President, Repucom (Moderator)
Kok Keng Lau, Partner, Rajah & Tann Partners
Beatrice Lee, Managing Director, Asia Pacific, MP & Silva
Mo Maghazachi, Senior Partnerships Manager, Everton FC (TBC)

LALIGA PRESENTATION



Wednesday 16 March
11:00-12:00

"GLOBAL INNOVATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONTENTS AND TO ADD VALUE TO OUR AUDIOVISUAL RIGHTS"

Speaker:
Javier Tebas, President, LaLiga,

SPORTEL & SVG BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY PANEL

In partnership with
SVG
SPORTS VIDEO GROUP

Wednesday 16 March
15:30-16:30

"VIRTUAL REALITY, UHD, AND THE FUTURE OF SPORTS CONTENT DELIVERY"

Speakers:
Ken Kerschbaumer, Editorial Director, Sports Video Group (Moderator)
Damon Garwood, Managing Director, Digital & Production Business Unit, MP & Silva
Thomas Neubert, Chief Commercial Officer, Virtually Live
Nacho M Trujillo, Strategic Projects Director, LaLiga
Hang Yu, Vice President of Strategy, LeSports

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