

MOTORSPORT

Sky provides mammoth UK fee increase as Ecclestone opts for switch to pay-television

By Robin Jellis

Moving coverage exclusively to pay-television in the UK helped Formula One Management increase its media-rights value by about 157 per cent last month.

The six-year deal with Sky, from 2019 to 2024, will be worth about £180m (€229m/\$257m) per year, and covers all Formula One rights in both the UK and Ireland.

FOM, the series' commercial rights-holder, earns about £70m per year from the UK market from 2016 to 2018. Commercial broadcaster Channel 4 pays about £25m per year for rights to half of the grands prix every year. Sky pays about £45m per year for all races: non-exclusive rights to the same races as Channel 4, and exclusive rights to the remaining races

(*TV Sports Markets* 20:1).

The increase was driven by four factors. First, and most importantly, there was strong competition between Sky and rival pay-television broadcaster BT Sport for the rights. Second, a premium had to be paid to take coverage off free-to-air television. Third, the rights are very important to Sky because of the wealthy demographic it attracts. Fourth, Formula One lends itself to developments in broadcasting, on which Sky prides itself.

In November last year, public-service broadcaster the BBC told FOM it had to end its deal early due to budget cuts, prompting expressions of interest in the rights from Channel 4, rival commercial

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FOOTBALL

Euro expansion vindicated with fees up 30%

By Frank Dunne

Uefa will secure an increase of just over 30 per cent in the value of media rights to the Euro 2016 tournament compared to Euro 2012, according to research by *TV Sports Markets*.

With Spain the only major market where the rights remain unsold, European football's governing body is on track to bring in just over €1.1bn (\$1.23bn) for Euro 2016. This is significantly up on revenues of €837.2m for Euro 2012.

The obvious reason for the increase is the expansion of the tournament from 16 to 24 teams, which will increase the

number of matches from 31 to 51.

Guy-Laurent Epstein, Uefa's marketing director, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "We are pleased with the outcome of the sales process. With the inventory growing significantly we were confident about an increase."


Epstein said the success of the Euro 2016 sales process, allied to sales of the European Qualifiers package, vindicated Uefa's decision in 2009 to expand the 2016 competition to 24 teams.

Uefa also earned about €1bn from the

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ATP follows WTA in securing Latin American increase

The ATP World Tour earned a strong increase in the value of its rights in Latin America last month after renewing its deal with ESPN.

It is thought international pay-television broadcaster ESPN will pay about \$2.5m (€2.2m) per year in the new five-year deal, from 2016 until 2020. This is about 66 per cent up on the \$1.5m per year it pays in its current five-year deal, from 2011 to 2015.

The deal covers exclusive rights in Spanish-speaking Latin America and the Caribbean, and includes all nine ATP Masters 1000 events and the season-ending ATP World Tour Finals.

ESPN does not acquire ATP World Tour 500 or 250 series rights; these are acquired non-exclusively by pay-television broadcasters Fox Sports Latin America and DirecTV.

The ESPN deal was struck with ATP Media, the ATP World Tour's dedicated media arm, at the same time as an agreement for 1000 and 500 events for ESPN's Oceanian broadcast arm – also for five years from 2016 to 2020.

The ATP Tour's equivalent in the women's game, the Women's Tennis Association Tour, agreed its own deal covering Latin America in late January.

Pay-television broadcaster Sony acquired WTA rights in a three-year deal, from 2017 to 2019, worth about \$2m per year. The deal was agreed with WTA Media, the joint venture established by the WTA and its global rights-holder, the Perform Group.

WTA Media did not tender the rights, but held conversations with various players. It received serious bids from the incumbent broadcasters and one of either ESPN or Fox.

The previous WTA rights cycle ran from 2013 to 2016. In Brazil, pay-television channel Band Sports paid \$2.7m, or \$675,000 per year. Across Latin and Central America, pay-television operators DirecTV and Sky

México jointly paid \$3m, or \$750,000 per year. Pay-television broadcaster SportsMax held rights in the Caribbean.

The deal appears a good one for the WTA, which achieved a dollar-terms increase in value at a time when currency devaluation is hurting many broadcasters in the region. ■

Vuelta down in home market

The value of Vuelta a España rights in Spain fell for the third successive time in a renewal with TVE last week.

Public-service broadcaster TVE will continue as the cycle race's Spanish rights-holder and host broadcaster in a four-year deal, from 2017 to 2020, worth €8m (\$9m), or €2m per year.

The deal was agreed with the Unipublic agency, which operates the event. Unipublic is owned by the Amaury Sport Organisation.

Unipublic is not thought to have held talks with any other broadcasters. Commercial broadcasters have little interest in the Vuelta because high production costs make it difficult to turn a profit. Annual production costs are thought to be as high as €7m.

TVE currently holds rights in a three-year deal, from 2014 to 2016, worth €2.8m per year. This is down from the €3.5m per year TVE paid from 2011 to 2013, and the €4m per year it paid for rights in 2009 and 2010.

TVE's ability to pay large fees for sport has declined in recent years; its budget has been frozen or cut by the government each year since 2008. ■

MotoGP grows in Americas

MotoGP's deals in the Americas with beIN Media Group and ESPN will bring the motorcycling series' annual value in the region to about \$6m (€5.4m).

Pan-regional pay-television broadcaster ESPN last month renewed its deal with Dorna Sports, MotoGP's commercial rights-holder, for three years, from 2016 to 2018.

The deal is understood to be worth about \$4m (€3.6m) per year, about 167

per cent up on the value of the current four-year deal, from 2012 to 2015, worth about \$1.5m per year. It covers Latin America and the Caribbean.

The increase reflects the importance of the Argentine grand prix, which returned to the MotoGP series in 2014. One local source said discussions over the possibility of adding a Mexican grand prix to the MotoGP circuit in 2018 are currently being held.

Dorna carves out free-to-air rights in certain Latin American countries – it has deals with RCN Televisión in Colombia, Canal 4 in El Salvador and Meridiano Televisión in Venezuela. ESPN's deal is exclusive in Argentina.

In February, Dorna agreed a deal with pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports for MotoGP in the US and Canada. The deal runs for three years, from 2016 to 2018, and is worth about \$2m per year.

From 2013 to 2015, rights in the US were held by the Fox Sports division of commercial network Fox. The lack of US riders and poor timing of most races have hampered MotoGP's US growth.

Until the recent agreement with beIN, there had been no television coverage of MotoGP in Canada. ■

PGA Tour doubles up with Neo

Golf's US PGA Tour has doubled its rights fee in the Indian subcontinent after a six-year renewal with Indian pay-television broadcaster Neo Sports.

The new deal, from 2016 to 2021, is worth close to \$800,000 (€714,000) per year, up from the average of \$400,000 per year Neo paid in its previous six-year deal from 2010 to 2015. The deal granted Neo an exclusive negotiating window in which the new agreement was struck.

In 2008 and 2009 the Tour earned a total of about \$90,000 per year from non-exclusive deals with Neo and rival pay-television broadcaster Ten Sports.

Golf is not a major sport in India, and Tour events usually air late at night. Neo has said the property's value is that its niche following tends to be affluent. ■

MOTORSPORT

UK paywall helps Ecclestone to more than 150% increase

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broadcaster ITV, and Sky.

At the time, Sky enquired about the possibility of extending its exclusivity to cover all races, but FOM opted to retain free-to-air coverage and awarded the BBC rights to Channel 4.

In July 2011, the BBC and Sky had agreed a joint seven-year deal, from 2012 to 2018, worth a total of £60m per year. The BBC paid £15m per year of this total.

Sky's approach late last year is said to have triggered an offer from BT early this year for exclusive rights to the whole series from 2019. One industry expert estimated BT's offer to have been worth between £120m and £140m per year.

BT's interest in the rights is understood to have been driven by the fact they could have added subscribers. Formula One appeals to most motor racing fans, whereas for other sports like cricket and golf a broadcaster needs several properties in order to encourage people to subscribe.

FOM is thought to have informed Sky of BT's offer, prompting Sky to issue a strong counter offer to stall its rival. FOM is understood to have spoken only to BT and Sky, and didn't approach free-to-air broadcasters about a deal as they would have struggled to pay such high fees.

With its rights already sold until the end of the 2018 season FOM was under no pressure to agree a deal, meaning it could wait for a big offer.

The deal will make Formula One Sky's second most expensive property, behind English football's Premier League.

Formula One currently costs Sky an additional £15m per year in production.

Past free-to-air problems

The timing of the new deal was unfortunate for Channel 4, who were yet to broadcast a live Formula One race before Sky's exclusive deal was agreed.

But, as one source close to the deal pointed out, there was no guarantee

Channel 4 would have even bid had the rights in a new cycle been offered to them. The deal has been met negatively by many who believe the sport will attract fewer viewers as a result of moving off free-to-air television. But pay-television broadcasters, with larger schedules, commit more time to covering the sport and provide in-depth programming.

FOM's last three deals in the UK were triggered by difficulties with its incumbent free-to-air broadcast partners.

ITV held rights from 2006 to 2010 in a deal worth £31m per year, but was forced to end its deal early as it wanted to acquire Champions League rights.

The BBC took over the contract from 2009 to 2013, for £42m per year, but had to hand the rights back as it couldn't afford the cost. From 2012 to 2018 rights were shared by the BBC and Sky, before the BBC pulled out of Formula One coverage entirely.

The UK deal does not represent a trend to take the championship onto pay-television in markets just because higher fees are offered. FOM will make the decision on a market-by-market basis.

Last August, FOM renewed a free-to-air deal in Germany with commercial broadcaster RTL for just under \$50m per year, and a pay-television deal with Sky Deutschland for just under \$20m per year – turning down an exclusive deal with Sky which would have been worth between \$110m and \$120m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

FOM is understood to have been concerned about the low number of Sky Deutschland's pay-television subscribers: it has about 4m subscribers in Germany.

Free-to-air coverage

As part of its deal, Sky has committed to making coverage of the British grand prix and highlights of all other races and qualifying sessions available free-to-air.

At this stage, no plans have been made for this coverage. Sky could show content on its own platforms or sublicense coverage to a free-to-air broadcaster. Sky owns free-to-air channel Pick TV.

One former senior executive at a UK pay-television broadcaster said Sky should keep all rights, rather than sublicensing any content. "The value they will get out

of that is exclusivity, by using that to drive people to Sky Sports," he said.

Sky's soon-to-be-launched Sky Sports Mix channel will show live coverage of two prime-time races each year, on top of any free-to-air coverage. The basic-tier channel will be available to all Sky customers, including those who don't have a subscription to the sports package. The channel will be available in about 11m homes, compared to about 6m homes for Sky's premium sports channels.

All other coverage will be shown on the Sky Sports F1 channel. Sky claim 13m have watched coverage on the dedicated channel since it launched in 2012.

Does it make business sense?

The huge increase in rights fee has led many experts to question whether or not the deal makes business sense for Sky.

Some say that most motorsport or Formula One fans would already have a Sky subscription because the broadcaster shows all races at present. As a result they believe Sky would struggle to add many subscribers, even with exclusive rights.

Others say Formula One hits a different demographic to most other sports shown by Sky, one that is generally wealthier than football fans, for example. One local expert described the sport as providing a "narrow but very loyal audience".

One executive at a UK pay-television broadcaster said the current split of rights with free-to-air didn't suit Sky. "Not having exclusive rights all year probably prevented some people from subscribing. People now have a critical decision to make," he said.

A source close to Sky said: "If you take a hugely popular sport such as Formula One on an exclusive basis then you will gain a significant amount of interest."

Formula One attracts relatively large audiences for Sky, although they dropped last year. Its average audience in 2014 was 1.066m (a 16.6-per-cent share), but this fell to 869,300 (a 10.6-per-cent share) in 2015, partially because it was a less competitive season: Lewis Hamilton won the series with three races remaining.

By comparison, Sky's most important property, the Premier League, attracted an average audience of 1.302m in 2013-14, and 1.476m in the 2014-15 season. ■

FOOTBALL

Euro 2016 expansion helps media rights fees rise to €1.1bn

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first centralised sale of qualifier rights for the 2014-15 to 2017-18 cycle, which was about 47 per cent more than federations had made selling the same rights in the previous cycle – from 2010-11 to 2013-14 they earned about €680m.

Uefa was widely criticised when it decided to expand Euro 2016. Many observers – including top football coaches and broadcasters – said it would reduce the competitiveness of the qualifiers, leading to more dead-rubber games and producing more group-stage encounters between smaller nations in the finals.

“The platform that has been built both inside and outside Europe is very good and is aiming at delivering a great coverage of the tournament. The broadcasters believe in the competition,” Epstein said.

The increased inventory – 20 more matches – gave broadcasters more opportunities to monetise the content, but had two other positive effects.

It enabled Uefa, for the first time, to properly bring pay-television broadcasters into the negotiating process and meant some key matches would be played at 3pm, which helped sales in Asia.

Another factor in favour of Uefa, and its sales agency CAA Eleven, was the ability to tailor-make packages according to conditions in different markets, bundling together one or more finals with one or more European Qualifiers packages. This flexibility will be further enhanced in the next cycle by the creation of the Nations League friendly tournament from the 2018-19 season.

The final factor behind the increase in value, Epstein said, was the strength of the European Championship brand, which he said had grown from edition to edition to become a truly global brand.

Final pieces

As *TV Sports Markets* went to press, Spain was the only major market where Euro

2016 rights remained unsold.

For 2012, commercial broadcaster Mediaset paid a minimum fee of €65m, which rose to €70m as a consequence of Spain winning the competition. Mediaset and its commercial rival Atresmedia are both understood to be interested in securing free-to-air rights but have not been prepared to meet Uefa’s asking price.

Competition for a pay-television package is thought to be more limited. A package of pay-television rights is likely to be sold in the country as free-to-air broadcasters are not keen on showing all matches from the tournament.

Given the country’s economic problems and their impact on the free-to-air market, local experts say it would be a surprise if Uefa was able to maintain the 2012 value.

Uefa is understood to have agreed a deal in another market which has suffered severe economic difficulties in recent years – Greece, where public-service broadcaster ERT has won the rights (see separate story, page 8).

The governing body is close to a deal in another difficult market, Singapore, where cross-carriage regulation has dampened rights inflation. Andrea Radrizzani’s Eleven Sports Network is understood to be close to a deal worth between \$15m and \$20m covering Euro 2016 and Euro 2020 and the European Qualifiers from 2016-17 to 2021-22.

Euro 2020

Maintaining growth at anything like 30 per cent for Euro 2020 will be difficult for Uefa as it won’t have the card of an increased number of matches. Epstein believes, however, that Uefa’s decision to split the hosting of the competition across 13 countries to celebrate 60 years of the Euros will help to increase rights fees.

“For 2020, there might not be the same increase in value as there won’t be any increase in the match inventory,” he said.

“But the proposition of a tournament across 13 countries in Europe is quite exciting for broadcasters – we are in the market and the initial feedback is very positive. There are 13 host countries, which have a bigger interest than other countries. They will want to cover it.”

Euro 2020 matches will be played in: Azerbaijan, Belgium, Denmark, England,

Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Scotland and Spain.

Uefa’s overarching strategy for the sale of national team rights has remained broadly similar for many years: it is based on ensuring free-to-air coverage of, at least, the top match each day, including the national team games in each market, and selling rights on a platform-neutral basis.

Epstein said: “We always believe that the platform for the competition in a single market should be the broadcasters/media companies, so we will probably continue to sell our rights on a platform-neutral basis unless the specificities of the market dictate otherwise.”

He said that while interesting OTT operations were being rolled out, there was still little sign that major technology or internet companies were about to enter the market for premium sports rights.

“The family of [broadcast] partners probably won’t change very much in the next couple of years. But when you see that Perform has bought the Premier League in Germany it is very interesting and we will monitor how that will develop. Also, Twitter just went into a deal with the NFL which is another interesting development.”

The main change since 2012 has been an expansion of the digital content Uefa produces around its events, which broadcasters can use for second-screen applications. A unit of the match production team is now dedicated solely to producing digital content.

Estimates

An exact like-with-like comparison between Euro 2012 and Euro 2016 is not possible because in some markets the tournaments were sold as part of a two-tournament deal in which the split is not available.

In some markets, Euro 2016 was sold with the European Qualifiers and the split in value is not available. In these cases, and in the cases of markets where *TV Sports Markets* does not have a reliable figure, estimates have been made. ■

[www.tsm.com](#) For a detailed table of Euro 2016 media rights deals with values in selected territories, visit our website.

TABLE TENNIS

ITTF takes greater control with Lagardère deal

By Callum McCarthy

The International Table Tennis Federation's decision to sell its media rights in China and other core markets itself left slim pickings for agencies, but hasn't stopped Lagardère Sports from taking on the challenge.

The Lagardère Sports agency will pay about \$750,000 (€670,000) per year in a five-year deal, from 2016 to 2020, for rights to all ITTF events. The deal is a buyout covering global rights, but excludes China, Chinese Taipei, Japan and Singapore – four of the sport's biggest and most valuable markets.

As well as acquiring the rights, Lagardère will be responsible for signal delivery to broadcasters in all territories, as well as advising on the production of ITTF events.

The properties covered by the agreement include the ITTF World Tour, World Cup, World Team Championships, World Championships and junior events.

The deal was completed after private negotiations between the two parties. Lagardère is not thought to have faced much agency competition, but the ITTF did hold talks with pan-regional broadcasters. These talks were handled by TMS International, the federation's in-house marketing agency.

TSA, the federation's previous media rights agent, paid an average minimum guarantee of about \$2.4m per year for global ITTF rights, from 2011 to 2015. The deal was also meant to cover 2016 but was ended one year early. TSA is thought to have earned a total of about \$2.8m per year from all rights.

The TSA deal included the four markets excluded from Lagardère's contract – the ITTF's media rights in these four territories are worth a total of about \$1.9m per year until the end of 2016.

Growing the sport outside the four biggest territories is a top priority for the ITTF, which is worried about the impact

of China's decade-long dominance.

Lagardère's immediate task will be to fill gaps in the ITTF's global coverage in 2016 as the federation already has a number of deals in place until the end of this year. These deals were completed by TSA before its agreement with the ITTF ended.

Lagardère plan

The ITTF retained its rights in China, Chinese Taipei, Japan and Singapore as it wanted to create direct relationships with broadcasters in those territories.

Industry experts have questioned Lagardère's decision to work with the ITTF with core markets excluded, as table tennis is worth very little outside the big markets (*TV Sports Markets* 18:4).

However, a source close to the agency said it was not concerned. Lagardère's efforts will be supported by the ITTF's campaign to grow the sport in Europe, Asia (outside the core territories) and the Americas. It is thought the ITTF hopes to change the format of some of its events to increase their appeal to broadcasters in these regions.

The deal will give Lagardère an opportunity to co-ordinate and implement a global media-rights strategy. Once made up of several agencies – IEC in Sports, Sportfive, Ufa Sports and World Sport Group – Lagardère rebranded as a single entity at the end of last September.

One source at the agency described the deal as a "good education" that will allow its staff around the world to work together on a single project. Lagardère and the federation are creating a strategy for media-rights sales from 2017 onward.

Global interest diminishing

China's table tennis supremacy has propped up the ITTF's media-rights revenue for more than a decade, but its dominance has created indifference toward the sport in most other countries.

The federation currently earns \$1m per year in a deal with state broadcaster CCTV, from 2013 to 2016. It also has deals with regional broadcasters Hunan Broadcasting System and Guangdong TVA, each worth \$100,000 per year.

However, a new four-year deal with the Seca agency, from 2017 to 2020, is

expected to be worth many multiples of its current deals.

The deal covers all internet and mobile rights. Once strictly controlled by the government, China's digital media market is now providing rights-holders with huge increases after the media sector was deregulated in October 2014.

The ITTF will also continue its partnership with CCTV for linear broadcast rights beyond 2016.

With revenue in its biggest market taken care of the federation is focusing on how it can tackle the sport's stagnation around the world.

Even in China, ratings for the World Table Tennis Championships on CCTV have plunged as audiences tire of seeing Chinese competitors face one another in the final every year.

This trend has also worried the Chinese Table Tennis Association, which fears a lack of international competition is decreasing domestic interest and participation. The CTTA is placing more importance on commercial success as the nation becomes increasingly capitalist.

One informed source said: "It's about commercial revenues now, not domination. Table tennis leaders in China realise their future hinges on commercial health as opposed to medal hauls."

Split with TSA

TSA's deal with the federation, from 2011 to 2015, was originally scheduled to run for six years, from 2011 to 2016. A mutual agreement to terminate the deal at the end of 2015 was taken for two reasons.

First, TSA was not confident it could make a profit on its guarantee covering 2016. Before then, TSA had made a small profit in four years out of five, but was unable to agree further deals in 2016 that would have prevented a loss. The agency already had a number of long-term deals in place and would have had to secure deals of some value in markets currently without coverage in order to turn a profit.

Second, the ITTF was keen to sell its own media rights in core territories, negating the main reason TSA acquired the rights. Industry insiders believe TSA invested in the rights as it anticipated a Chinese media market boom in 2013 or 2014, as opposed to 2015. ■

TV AUSTRALIA

Optus strikes up friendship with SBS, reveals its EPL plan

By Richard Welbirg

Telco Optus's surprise deal for English Premier League rights in Australia last November created the opportunity for its partnering with public-service broadcaster SBS last month.

The highlight of the agreement between the two companies is the trading of rights to top sports properties: Optus will sublicense from SBS rights to all 64 games from the 2018 Fifa World Cup, 39 of which will be exclusive.

In return, the telco will sublicense to SBS free-to-air rights for one live Premier League match per round over the course of its three-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Optus, which is owned by Singaporean telco Singtel, will pay \$50m (€45m) per season for the rights (*TV Sports Markets* 19:20).

Additionally, Optus will pay SBS close to \$10m for the 2018 World Cup rights. *TV Sports Markets* understands there is a trigger to extend the deal to cover the 2022 World Cup.

It means SBS has recouped about half of its spend on the 2018 World Cup. The broadcaster paid about \$40m for rights to both the 2018 and 2022 tournaments.

SBS was widely seen as overpaying for the rights when it agreed the deal in 2011, but it did so strategically, reasoning that it was better to acquire the rights and face the possibility of sublicensing than to have nothing at all.

The broadcaster was in fact close to offering World Cup rights to the market before Optus won the Premier League auction. The companies have a good relationship, and began discussions over a mutually beneficial trade.

SBS will be able to pick from the league's Saturday matches. Even with kick-off times at 9.30pm or 11pm AEDT the broadcaster's match will likely have higher ratings than its coverage of the domestic A-League, said one expert.

For Optus there are several advantages.

ICC deal reached after fraught Australian negotiations

Australian cricket fans almost missed out on coverage of cricket's recent Twenty20 World Cup because of a dispute between pay-television broadcaster Star, the international rights-holder, and Australian broadcasters Fox Sports and Nine.

A deal was eventually agreed just before the competition began.

Star and Fox Sports are owned by 21st Century Fox and News Corporation respectively – both arms of Rupert Murdoch's media empire. Intervention from the highest levels was reportedly needed to seal the deal.

A stop-gap deal was agreed for the World T20 while the parties continued negotiating over the remaining ICC rights. Star is understood to be close to a deal with pay-television broadcaster

Fox and commercial network Nine which would be broadly flat on the A\$60m (€40m/\$45m) the two paid in the previous eight-year cycle, from 2007-08 to 2014-15. This total includes the value of the recent World T20, which ran from March 8 to April 3.

Star's Indian and Middle-Eastern arms jointly hold global ICC media rights in a deal worth \$2.1bn (€1.67bn) over eight years, from 2015-16 to 2022-23 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:19).

Sources told *TV Sports Markets* this week Star had overvalued the Australian market. ICC rights are 'nice to have' for Fox but don't drive subscriptions.

Nine is the major cricket broadcaster in the country, and Australia's strict anti-siphoning law enables it to play hardball over acquisitions. ■

Having World Cup and Premier League rights is a powerful offering of the world's top league and international properties. It will also boost demand from restaurants and bars which will want to be able to show all World Cup matches.

One source close to the telco said putting one match on SBS each week would be a useful promotional tool, and pleases the Premier League.

Partnership

The deal to share Premier League and World Cup coverage is part of a broader partnership between Optus and SBS. In the short term this will focus on non-sport programming.

In the future it is likely they will bid jointly for football rights, particularly those that are split into free-to-air and pay-television packages, such as Uefa's Champions League and Europa League club competitions.

But the two are unlikely to bid together for the next cycle of A-League rights, expected on the market in about two months. One local expert said football fans who did not sign up to Optus for the Premier League or World Cup were unlikely to be persuaded by the A-League.

A-League rights are part of a package sold by Football Federation Australia,

which also includes Australia national team home games.

In the current four-season cycle, from 2013-14 to 2016-17, SBS pays A\$8m (€5m/\$6m) per season for free-to-air rights while pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports pays A\$32m per season.

Fox has been the league's pay-television partner since its inception in 2005 and is unlikely to face serious competition. But SBS is unlikely to bid aggressively to renew its deal – it is on target to recoup less than a quarter of its spend on the deal from advertising.

The FFA is being advised on the sale by the Oliver & Ohlbaum agency.

Optus reveals plans

Despite acquiring the Premier League in November, Optus only revealed its plan to exploit the rights last month.

The telco will create a 24-hour channel for its Premier League coverage, which will be available on Fetch, its IPTV service. All 380 matches per season will be shown live.

Matches will also be available via an app for mobiles, tablets and smart TVs. In parts of the country which lack sufficient bandwidth, an encrypted signal will be made available via satellite.

Coverage will be available freely for all

Optus broadband and mobile customers. Non-Optus subscribers will not be able to access its coverage.

Foxtel response

Fox Sports losing the Premier League to Optus after the current 2015-16 season left pay-television operator Foxtel with no channel carrying top football other than the A-League.

Fox Sports is wholly-owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, which also owns 50 per cent of Foxtel.

Foxtel last week responded by agreeing a deal to bring beIN Media Group's channels into its sport package. Three HD beIN Sports channels will launch on the platform on May 15. BeIN holds rights in Australia to several top international football properties, including the Uefa Champions League, Spain's LaLiga, Germany's Bundesliga and Italy's Serie A.

Until now, only a single SD beIN Sports channel has been available, online or as an optional channel to Foxtel subscribers for A\$19.99 per month.

BeIN paid about A\$1m per year to be carried by Foxtel, but retained all subscriber fees. The arrangement was a relic of the distribution of Setanta Sports Australia, the pay-television broadcaster acquired by beIN in October 2014.

Euro 2016

BeIN last week acquired all rights in the country to the Uefa Euro 2016 national team tournament in a deal thought to be worth between \$5m and \$6m. The deal was brokered by CAA Eleven, Uefa's sales agent for its national team competitions.

SBS last month announced a sublicensing deal with beIN for eight knock-out matches. *TV Sports Markets* understands that a deal, worth just over \$500,000, is in fact yet to be finalised. SBS's coverage will be non-exclusive.

This is the same price SBS paid for free-to-air rights to Euro 2012, which were sold by the Sportfive agency. Euro 2012 pay-television rights to all matches were bought by Setanta for \$3.4m (*TV Sports Markets* 15:20; 16:7).

There was little interest from other broadcasters as it is difficult to generate advertising and sponsorship revenue around matches broadcast late at night. ■

RUGBY UNION

France Télévisions keeps hold of Six Nations and FFR

By Robin Jellis

France Télévisions last month retained its hold on Six Nations and national team test rugby in long-term deals, increasing its fees for both by about 25 per cent.

The French public-service broadcaster renewed Six Nations rights for five years, from 2018 to 2022, in a deal worth about €30m (\$34m) per year. This is up from the €24m per year it pays in its current four-year deal, from 2014 to 2017.

France Télévisions also renewed its deal with the Fédération Française de Rugby, the French rugby union federation, for five seasons from 2016-17 to 2020-21. The deal is worth just under €8m per season, up from the €6.25m per season it pays in its current four-season deal, from 2012-13 to 2015-16 (*TV Sports Markets* 16:11).

The bulk of the value of the FFR deal is for France's men's autumn internationals, including warm-up matches ahead of the 2019 Rugby World Cup.

France Télévisions faced limited competition for either property, although commercial broadcasters M6 and TF1 studied the possibility of a bid.

The Six Nations is fully listed under French legislation, meaning pay-television broadcasters did not consider bidding. Although the federation rights are not listed, they are regarded by all local broadcasters as a free-to-air property.

The Six Nations deal was agreed with the Six Nations Committee, which was advised by the Bridge Television agency. The rights were not tendered, but direct talks were held with broadcasters. It was France Télévisions who pushed for a longer term in the renewal.

The main reason for the increase is the importance of the rights to France Télévisions. Six Nations rugby, along with cycling's Tour de France and French Open tennis, is one of the broadcaster's most valuable properties.

Increases in other markets led the Six Nations Committee to believe the fee

should also rise in France. Values in the UK jumped by about 22 per cent and doubled in Ireland from 2018 onward (*TV Sports Markets* 19:14; 19:21).

On top of its rights fee, France Télévisions will cover production costs for matches taking place in France, at about €140,000 each.

FFR renews

The federation sold its rights itself, launching a tender on January 7 and announcing broadcast deals on March 18. It made five packages available to broadcasters. They were for:

- 1) autumn internationals and Rugby World Cup warm-up matches of the men's national team
- 2) matches of the U-20 men's national team in the Six Nations
- 3) matches of the women's national team in the Six Nations and the Top 8 domestic women's league
- 4) matches of the men's third-tier Fédérale and the Trophée Jean Prat
- 5) domestic matches of the French Barbarians.

France Télévisions acquired rights to package one, and will share package three with sports broadcaster Eurosport following a joint bid.

The public-service broadcaster will show matches of the women's national team in the Six Nations tournament, plus the Top 8 final. Eurosport will show delayed coverage of the women's Six Nations matches and all Top 8 matches.

French digital-terrestrial broadcaster L'Équipe 21 picked up packages four and five. Eurosport currently holds both.

Only package two was unsold as the federation felt the three offers it received were too low. A second tender for these rights was launched on March 21.

The last time the federation tendered its rights, in June 2012, the rights in packages two and three were sold together.

The federation is yet to sell its international rights in a new cycle. These are currently held by the IMG agency in a four-season deal, from 2012-13 to 2015-16, in which it pays a minimum guarantee of about €600,000 per season.

The international rights are expected to be tendered once the federation has sold package two, covering the U-20s. ■

OLYMPIC GAMES

NOS moves quickly to acquire Olympics rights from Discovery

By Callum McCarthy

Dutch public-service broadcaster NOS moved quickly to sublicense rights to the 2018 and 2020 Olympic Games from Discovery Communications, paying a like-for-like increase of about 11 per cent.

NOS will pay about €20m (\$22.4m) for the 2018 winter and 2020 summer Games, to be held in Pyeongchang and Tokyo respectively. The 2018 Games will be worth about €7m while the 2020 Games will be worth about €13m.

The deal represents an increase of just over 11 per cent on NOS's previous deal for the 2014 and 2016 Olympic Games. That deal, between NOS and the Sportfive agency, was worth about €18m.

However, the 2014-16 deal was for exclusive rights to both Games. In its new deal, NOS will share rights with sports broadcaster Eurosport, owned by Discovery, which holds exclusive pay-television rights to four Games from 2018 to 2024 across Europe after last July's €1.3bn deal (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13).

NOS is expected to show about 160 hours of the 2018 Games. While the number of hours it will broadcast in 2020 is yet to be decided, NOS is expected to show more than the International Olympic Committee's 200-hour minimum free-to-air requirement.

While NOS was keen to secure rights to the 2022 and 2024 Games, Discovery was not interested in selling them. As the host city of the 2024 Games is undecided, the US media group is waiting to see whether the Games will be hosted in a favourable time-zone for European audiences. The candidate cities for 2024 are Budapest, Los Angeles, Paris and Rome.

The sublicensing deal with NOS is Discovery's second after a deal in February with UK public-service broadcaster the BBC worth £115m (€146m/\$164m).

NOS faced no competition for the rights. Discovery held informal talks with

RTL to gauge the level of the commercial broadcaster's interest, but a deal was not feasible. Both RTL and Discovery would have tried to refinance the deal – at least in part – through advertising, and would have been competing against each other for advertisers and sponsors.

Talks between NOS and Discovery began almost immediately after Discovery's deal with the IOC. Sources close to the deal described an agreement between the two as "inevitable".

Discovery exclusivity

One of Discovery's aims was to retain exclusivity to marquee events while still meeting the IOC's minimum free-to-air requirements: 200 hours for a summer Games and 100 hours for a winter Games.

Discovery sought to carve out certain events to differentiate its coverage from free-to-air. In its deal with NOS, Discovery will retain exclusive rights to ice hockey during the 2018 Games, as well as one summer sport for 2020.

But even this option has limitations. NOS was unlikely to have agreed a deal had sports such as cycling, rowing, speed-skating and swimming been carved out, due to the Netherlands' success in each. Ice hockey is of limited interest in the Netherlands, but Discovery is happy to have exclusive content that will span 12 of the 15 days at the 2018 Games.

Discovery will also use these carve-outs as bargaining chips in deals to ensure free-to-air broadcasters pay a fair value regardless of market conditions. ■

TV GREECE

ERT deals for Euro 2016 and F1 show signs of recovery

By Robin Jellis

Greek public-service broadcaster ERT's acquisition of two blue-chip properties is a sign it may slowly be recovering after its short-lived closure almost two years ago.

ERT was closed in June 2013 under austerity measures. Nerit, a smaller replacement, was introduced the following month, before ERT's return last June.

Before its closure, ERT had been one of the biggest buyers of sport in Greece.

ERT is understood to have finalised a deal for Euro 2016 worth about €2.5m (\$2.75m) in cash, plus a similar amount in airtime. The deal was agreed with the CAA Eleven agency on behalf of Uefa, European football's governing body.

There was no interest from other free-to-air broadcasters as they felt they could not afford Uefa's fee expectations. The value was also restricted as Greece failed to qualify for the tournament.

The fee has fallen significantly from the value of Euro 2012 in the country. ERT paid about €13m for rights in Greece to that tournament as part of a €130m deal agreed by the European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of public-service broadcasters (*TV Sports Markets* 13:9).

As well as the national team's failure to qualify, the value of the rights has fallen dramatically because of the crash of the Greek economy since the signing of the EBU deal with Uefa in September 2009.

Greece was excluded from an EBU deal covering 26 territories for Euro 2016 last June (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13).

Formula One

ERT also acquired free-to-air rights to the Formula One championship last month in a three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018, worth about €600,000 per year.

The deal was agreed with the Asset Ogilvy agency, which handles media-rights sales for Formula One in Albania, Cyprus, Greece and Macedonia. Talks over a free-to-air deal in Greece have been taking place since October.

The broadcaster last held Formula One rights in 2013, when it paid €1.425m in a one-year deal. Then, it paid only €125,000 in cash, with the remaining €1.3m per year in advertising airtime (*TV Sports Markets* 18:5). ERT is paying its fee in the new deal solely in cash.

Commercial broadcaster Alpha held free-to-air rights in both 2014 and 2015 in one-year deals as it didn't wish to commit to a longer term.

Asset Ogilvy has a separate deal in place for pay-television rights with OTE. That deal – agreed last May – is for two years, from 2016 to 2017, and is worth just under €1m per year. ■

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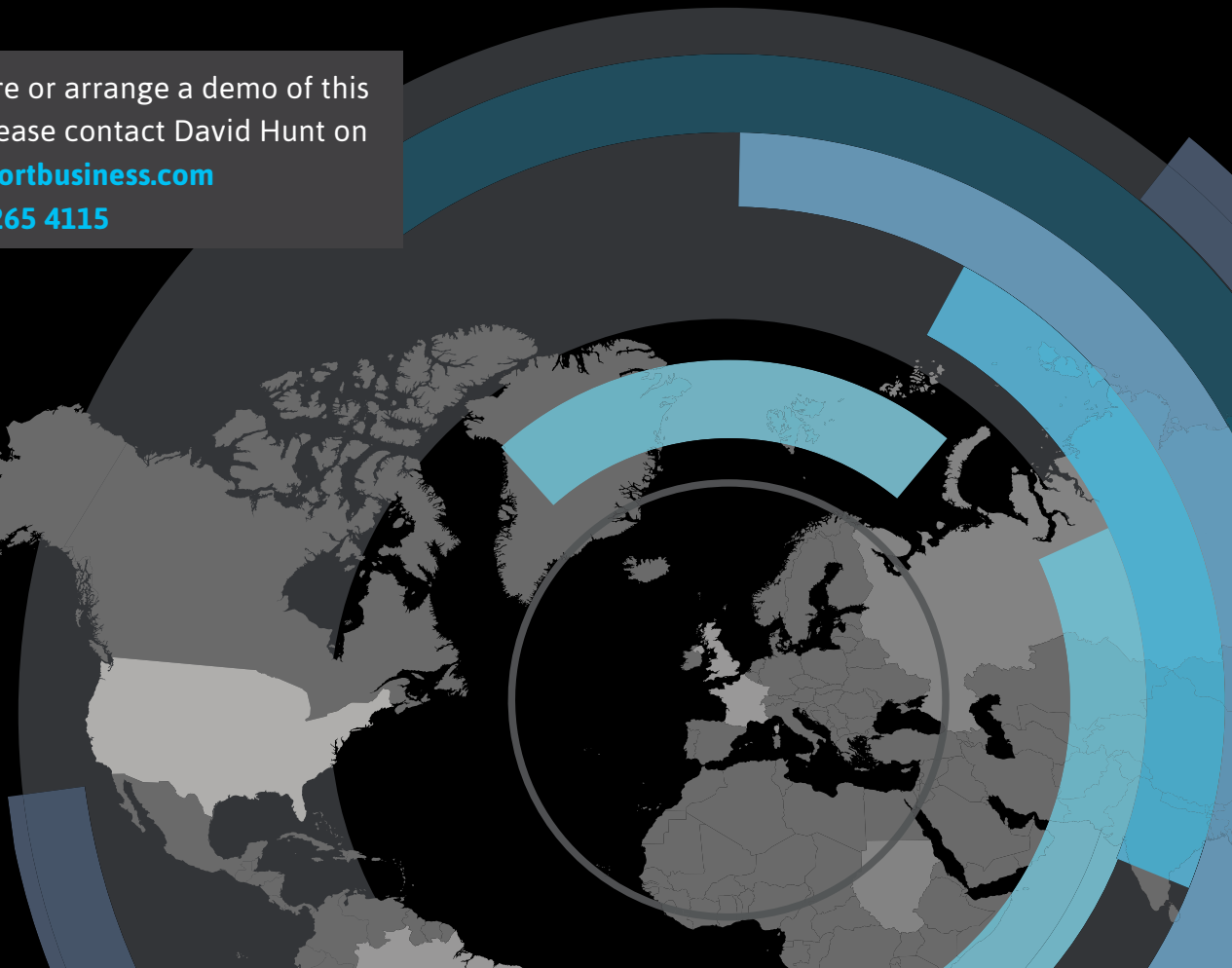
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from March 24 to April 6

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: Argentinian leagues, Copa América Centenario and NASL

- **Football:** The Torneos agency extended a rights deal with the Argentinian Football Association to cover the country's national team and lower-league matches. The rights include home Argentina friendly matches and qualifiers for the 2018 and 2022 Fifa World Cups, plus rights for the National B Division and First Division B club competitions. According to the *Buenos Aires Herald* newspaper, Torneos has paid ARS1.5bn (€89m/\$100m), a 55-per-cent increase on its last deal. Torneos will pay ARS300m up front.
- **Football:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights in the Netherlands for the Copa América Centenario and International Champions Cup. The Copa América deal covers all 32 matches from the 2016 national team tournament. Fox Sports will also show coverage of 25 matches during the International Champions Cup pre-season club competition.
- **Football:** The North American Soccer League sealed a rights deal with beIN Media Group for the competition to be broadcast on the beIN Sports pay-television channels. BeIN Sports will broadcast live coverage of at least 34 matches during the 2016 season in the US, Canada and Puerto Rico. Coverage will include one live match per weekend throughout the season as well as five week-day games. Matches will also be available via the beIN Sports Connect digital platform.
- **Football:** The NASL agreed a rights deal with CBS Sports Network, under which the US pay-television broadcaster will show 12 games live during the 2016 season.

SINCE LAST TIME

- Le Sports, which is operated by Chinese internet company LeEco, was valued at CNY21.5bn (€2.96bn/\$3.3bn) following its latest round of funding from about 30 investors. HNA Capital, the private equity division of Chinese conglomerate HNA Group, will have a 5.85-per-cent stake in Le Sports following the investment round.
- The WME-IMG agency is close to attracting another “blue chip” investor and is set to report significantly improved financial figures for 2015, according to US magazine *Hollywood Reporter*.
- Gianni Infantino, the president of football's global governing body Fifa, denied any wrongdoing after the ‘Panama Papers’ leak showed he had co-signed a rights agreement with a company based in a tax haven during his time at European governing body Uefa. Infantino, while serving as director of legal services at Uefa, co-signed the contract with the Cross Trading agency covering Uefa Champions League club competition rights in Ecuador from 2006-07 to 2008-09. Cross Trading, an offshore company registered in the Pacific island of Niue, paid \$111,000 (€99,000) for the rights before selling them on to Ecuadorian broadcaster Teleamazonas for \$311,000.
- Rafael Callejas, the Honduran former member of Fifa's television and marketing committee, pleaded guilty to racketeering conspiracy and wire fraud conspiracy in a Brooklyn federal court. Callejas admitted to abusing his position to award contracts to the Media World agency. Media World received media and marketing rights to Honduras national team home matches.
- New York Supreme Court Justice Lawrence Marks told Major League Baseball franchises the Baltimore Orioles and Washington Nationals to enter mediation over a long-running dispute that centres on US regional cable-television broadcaster MASN. In November, a New York judge threw out an arbitration decision that stated MASN, which is controlled by the Orioles, owed the Nationals \$298m (€266m).
- Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred and Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti called for a resolution in the carriage dispute that is restricting Los Angeles Dodgers coverage in the team's region. Pay-television operator Time Warner Cable has been engaged in a long-running dispute with operators over distribution of its SportsNet LA channel, which shows Dodgers games.
- Six German Bundesliga clubs – Eintracht Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hertha Berlin, Köln, Stuttgart and Werder Bremen – established ‘Team Marktwert’, a pressure group with the aim of reforming the distribution of rights income across the top two divisions of German football. Team Marktwert wants the commercial appeal of clubs – such as their fan bases, television ratings, membership levels and social media presence – to be taken into account when income is distributed. In March, the German football league, the Deutsche Fußball Liga, kicked off the domestic rights sales process for the next four-year cycle, from 2017-18 to 2020-21, for the top two divisions and the Supercup knockout competition.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- The NFL Films division of the American football league linked up with internet company Amazon to create a new reality programming series, ‘All or Nothing’. It will provide behind-the-scenes footage of players, coaches and owners and will be shown exclusively via the Amazon Video service.
- Sports production and host broadcasting company HBS was named as the production partner of the 2016 Copa América Centenario national team football tournament. HBS struck the deal with: Concacaf, the sport's governing body in the Caribbean, North America and Central America; Conmebol, the South American football confederation; and the tournament's local organising committee. HBS will produce 24-minute daily highlights packages, as well as ‘El Centenario’, a review show that will be shown on June 27, the day after the final.
- Spanish media company AS entered into a digital partnership with the North American Soccer League. During the 2016 season,

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from March 24 to April 6

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

NFL, European Athletics, MLB, World Championship cycling and more

- **American Football:** The NFL awarded digital streaming rights for its Thursday Night Football package of games to social media company Twitter. Twitter will stream the 10 Thursday Night Football games broadcast by the NBC and CBS networks – which will also be simulcast by pay-television broadcaster NFL Network – until the end of the 2016-17 season. Coverage will be available worldwide for free. The deal includes in-game highlights as well as pre-game video content from players and teams via Twitter's Periscope service.
- **American Football:** Swedish commercial broadcaster TV4 expanded a rights deal for the domestic Superserien league. TV4 Sport and TV4 Play Premium will broadcast one game per week every Friday during the 2016 season. The agreement covers 15 games, including the semi-finals and final.
- **Athletics:** The European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters agreed a deal with sports broadcaster Eurosport covering multi-platform rights in Europe to European Athletics events over four years, from 2016 to 2019. The deal includes the 2016 European Athletics Championships; the 2017 and 2019 Indoor Championships; and the 2017, 2018 and 2019 Team Championships. Eurosport's rights for the 2016 European Athletics Championships will be exclusive in the UK.
- **Aussie Rules:** Australian Football League club Port Adelaide sealed a rights deal with Chinese state-owned broadcaster CCTV for matches against Essendon on April 8 and Geelong on April 23. The Geelong contest will be shown live. The deal includes a 25-week documentary series, 'The AFL Show', which will feature highlights of the team's games as well as other matches and a regular segment on Adelaide's Chinese recruit, Chen Shaoliang. The agreement also includes 57 films to promote South Australia.
- **Baseball:** Internet company Yahoo struck a deal to stream one Major League Baseball game per day for the remainder of the 2016 season in the US. The 'Game of the Day' programme will be available free, with a total of 180 games shown before the end of the regular season. The coverage will include advertising and will be blacked out in the local markets of the teams involved.
- **Baseball:** Major League Baseball renewed a rights deal in Japan with the Dentsu agency for five years, from 2016 to 2020. Dentsu then agreed sublicensing deals covering at least the 2016 season with Japanese public-service broadcaster NHK; commercial broadcasters Fuji TV, TBS, TV Asahi and TV Tokyo; and media company J Sports.
- **Baseball:** MLB extended a rights deal with Mexican pay-television operator Televisa for three years, from 2016 to 2018. Pay-television channel Televisa Deportes Network will show a game of the week every Saturday afternoon, as well as games on Monday nights and at least one contest on either Tuesday or Thursday nights.
- **Baseball:** MLB agreed deals covering the 2016 season with: telco Bell in Canada; pay-television broadcaster In Demand in several Caribbean territories; media company FTV in Chinese Taipei; pay-television channel Win Sports in Colombia; media company Teletica in Costa Rica; media company UTS in Curaçao; media company Telemicro in the Dominican Republic; pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports in France; pay-television operator DirecTV in Latin America and the Caribbean; Israeli pay-television broadcaster the Sports Channel; commercial broadcaster MBC in South Korea; UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport; FC Center and telco Ole Communications in Venezuela.
- **Baseball:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Asia extended its pan-Asian MLB deal to cover the 2016 season.
- **Boxing:** Pay-television channel BoxNation secured exclusive rights in the UK for the middleweight world title fight between British fighter Amir Khan and Mexican Saul Álvarez on May 7.
- **Cycling:** The International Cycling Union (UCI) agreed an eight-year deal, from 2017 to 2024, for the European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters and the IMG agency to distribute worldwide rights to all World Championship events. The deal covers the UCI's annual road, track, mountain bike, cyclo-cross, BMX and urban cycling World Championships, as well as the track cycling and cyclo-cross World Cups. The EBU will handle distribution of the multi-platform rights in Europe and, under a sublicensing agreement with the EBU, IMG will distribute rights for the rest of the world. The EBU's Eurovision Production Coordination division will serve as host broadcaster for the road and track cycling World Championships.
- **Cycling:** The UCI extended and expanded a rights and production partnership with the Red Bull Media House for a further three years, from 2016 to 2018. The agreement covers the cross-country Olympic and downhill racing rounds of the mountain bike World Cup.
- **Cycling:** Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE renewed its deal for the Vuelta a España race for four years, from 2017 to 2020 (page 2).
- **Cycling:** International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network acquired rights in Belgium and Poland for the 2016 Giro del Trentino event in a deal with the Oneplayer agency.
- **Hockey:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport struck a rights deal with the International Hockey Federation for exclusive rights in the UK and Ireland to this year's Champions Trophy national team tournaments for men and women. It will also serve as the host broadcaster.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from March 24 to April 6**MEDIA RIGHTS 3****German ice hockey, Formula One, Olympic Games, rugby sevens and more**

- **Horse Racing:** French commercial broadcaster TF1 sealed a rights deal with the sport's rights-holders in the country, France Galop and LeTrot, for three years from 2016 to 2018. TF1 will show all major events as well as weekly support programming. The coverage will be available on the main TF1 channel, free-to-air DTT channel LCI, and online.
- **Ice Hockey:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 acquired free-to-air rights for the country's Deutsche Eishockey Liga top division in a sublicensing deal with telco Deutsche Telekom. The deal runs for four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, and covers exclusive rights in Germany and non-exclusive rights in Austria and Switzerland. Sport1 will show at least 40 games per season on free-to-air television and via the sport1.de website, including the playoffs, finals and the DEL Winter Game in 2017 and 2019.
- **Motorsport:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky struck a deal for exclusive rights in the UK and Ireland to the Formula One world championship for six years, from 2019 to 2024 (page 1).
- **Motorsport:** Austrian public-service broadcaster ORF agreed a three-year extension, from 2017 to 2019, to its rights deal for the Formula One world championship. According to Austrian newspaper *Kleine Zeitung*, ORF will pay about €10m (\$10.1m) per year for the rights, down from about €15m per year in its current deal.
- **Olympic Games:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky extended a rights deal in Oceania for four Games from 2018 to 2024, including two summer and two winter editions. As well as New Zealand the deal covers the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.
- **Olympic Games:** The Nigerian Olympic Committee agreed sublicensing deals for the 2016 Games with free-to-air broadcasters AIT, the Nigerian Television Authority, Silverbird Television, and Smooth Promotions.
- **Rugby Union:** Singaporean pay-television broadcaster StarHub acquired rights for the World Rugby Sevens Series for four years, from 2016 to 2019. StarHub will serve as host broadcaster of the Singapore round of the national team series and will provide live coverage on free-to-air channel Supersports Arena. Other rounds will be shown on its SuperSports pay-television channels.
- **Table Tennis:** Chinese sports marketing company Seca secured exclusive digital rights to several International Table Tennis Federation events. The four-year deal, which will run from 2017 until 2020, covers rights in mainland China to the World Table Tennis Championships, men's and women's World Cups, World Team Cup, World Junior Table Tennis Championships, and the World Tour and World Tour Grand Finals.
- **Triathlon:** French digital-terrestrial broadcaster L'Équipe 21 struck a rights deal for International Triathlon Union World Cup events and the World Triathlon Corporation's Ironman series.
- **Volleyball:** The NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal renewed a rights deal with the Association of Volleyball Professionals Pro Beach Volleyball Tour. Live coverage of all eight tournaments on the 2016 tour will be broadcast on the NBC network, pay-television channel NBC Sports Network and the NBC Sports Live Extra digital platform.

the company's AS USA arm will produce Spanish-language video and editorial content for the league.

- Canadian telco Rogers Communications began offering its sports channels online to viewers who do not have a cable-television subscription. Rogers' streaming package of six Sportsnet channels is available for C\$24.99 (€16.90/\$18.90) per month.
- French telco Numericable-SFR, operated by telco Altice, unveiled plans to launch a new sports channel, SFR Sport. The channel will show English Premier League football from the 2016-17 season, as well as English rugby, extreme sports, basketball – including the French top-tier Pro A – and other football competitions. SFR Sport will exploit rights currently shown by Altice's basic-tier broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport, other than tennis coverage.
- North America's Major League Baseball sealed carriage deals for the MLB Network pay-television channel with the Cable Onda and TDS platforms in Curaçao and Panama respectively.
- Pay-television channel Motorvision TV agreed a carriage deal with pay-television provider My-HC in Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the UAE and Yemen. The channel also secured carriage deals with media company Zabava TO in Croatia; Cypriot pay-television broadcaster CyTA; telco Vodafone's Home TV service in Greece; telco UPC in Romania; and Nigeria's Suburban Fibre Company.
- Italian Serie A football club Inter Milan sealed a partnership with Indonesian telco Indosat for carriage of its club pay-television television channel. Inter Channel will provide four daily updates to Indosat customers on smartphone and tablet devices.
- Australian pay-television operator Foxtel struck a carriage deal with beIN Media Group to add three beIN Sports channels to its sports package. The high-definition beIN Sports 1, 2 and 3 channels, which will replace the existing standard-definition channel, will be added on May 15 (page 6).

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- Coritiba became the fourth Campeonato Brasileiro Série A club to publicly accept an offer from sports broadcaster Esporte

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from March 24 to April 6

Interativo for pay-television rights over six years, from 2019 to 2024, to the top division of Brazilian football, while Corinthians opted to extend its contract with media company Globo. Corinthians agreed to extend its free-to-air and pay-television rights deal with Globo to 2024, including a renegotiation of the 2019 and 2020 campaigns.

- US media group Turner is interested in moving into the Argentinian market by acquiring domestic football properties, according to newspaper *La Nación*.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- US network NBC surpassed \$1bn (€892m) in advertising sales around the 2016 summer Olympic Games and is on course to generate record advertising sales for any event on US television.
- Sports marketing agency Two Circles extended its partnership with TennisTV, the direct-to-consumer streaming service managed by ATP Media, the broadcast arm of top professional men's tennis circuit the ATP World Tour.
- New North American Soccer League franchise Miami FC claimed a first for the football competition as it will be the only club to broadcast all its matches internationally. Outside the US, nine different media companies will cover Miami FC matches in over 100 countries following deals brokered by the MP & Silva agency on behalf of the franchise.
- Organisers of US golf major the Masters enabled the first-ever live 4K broadcast of a sporting event in the US, featuring action from the famous Amen Corner – encompassing the 11th, 12th and 13th holes at the Augusta National course. Organisers also placed special cameras through the course, allowing viewers at home with the NextVR application and Gear VR headsets to experience virtual reality coverage at holes six and 16.
- The Formula E electric car-racing championship entered into a partnership with virtual reality technology company Virtually Live, which will continue to test live broadcasts of Formula E races in the format for the remainder of the 2015-16 season.
- Spanish agency Mediapro posted a 40-per-cent increase in its gross operating profit for the 2015 financial year and expects a further rise in 2016. Mediapro generated earnings before interest,

tax, depreciation and amortisation (ebitda) of €129m (\$145m) versus the 2014 figure of €90m despite a 1.37-per-cent drop in turnover from €1.53bn to €1.509bn. Mediapro forecasts 2016 ebitda of €170m.

- The Professional Darts Corporation secured partnerships with full-service digital agency Rippleffect and video streaming specialist StreamAMG. Rippleffect and StreamAMG will merge the main PDC website and video channel to create a new video content platform, due to launch later this year.
- James Warburton, chief executive of the V8 Supercars Australian motor racing series, called for the country's government to reform anti-siphoning regulations and warned that retaining the current system would restrict the development of Australia's sports media market. According to Warburton, it should be up to the property itself to decide what should be on free-to-air and pay-television in order to "get the balance right between having a home and the best outcome for the fans and overall exposure".
- Australian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports will show three women's Aussie rules football exhibition games this season ahead of the launch of a league next year. Although the teams featuring in the matches on April 9, May 22 and June 5 have not been confirmed, the contests will be broadcast immediately before Australian Football League men's games.
- The WWE wrestling organisation signed a multi-year partnership with social media platform Snapchat, which will cover events through its Live Story function.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Andrea Zappia was named as the head of European pay-television company Sky's new unified sports division. Zappia, who will remain chief executive of the Sky Italia division of the company, will be responsible for all aspects of the sports operation from rights acquisition and production through to identifying new commercial opportunities. • Media and entertainment company Discovery Communications, the parent company of international sports broadcaster Eurosport, appointed Dominic Baillie to the new role of chief technology officer, Olympics and sports, while Simon Farnsworth was named as senior vice-president, Olympic technical distribution.

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2nd Floor, 5 Thomas More Square, London E1W 1YW
© TV Sports Markets Ltd 2016.
Printed by Rapidity, Citybridge House,
235-245 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7JD



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