

FOOTBALL

BBC desire for early renewal helps FA to 27% increase in value of domestic rights

By Robin Jellis

The BBC's desire to renew its FA Cup rights before its charter is renewed helped the English Football Association increase the value of domestic FA Cup media rights by more than 27 per cent.

The UK public-service broadcaster earlier this month agreed a joint three-season deal, from 2018-19 to 2020-21, alongside pay-television broadcaster BT Sport. The deal will be worth about £65m (€81m/\$93m) per season.

The current joint four-season deal with the BBC and BT, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, is worth £51m per season. The BBC pays £24.5m per season and BT pays £26.5m per season.

The two broadcasters will also continue to cover production costs on top of their

rights fees – smaller matches cost about £50,000 to produce, while bigger matches can cost up to £100,000.

The increase in value is thought to have come mainly from BT, which will have the right to show six more matches per season. The BBC's strong desire to renew early is understood to have triggered renewal discussions.

Threatened by further cuts to its sports budget – which it said in November would be cut by £35m per year – the BBC was keen to renew an important property. If the rights had been sold later it may have had even less bidding power.

The BBC's charter, which sets out the public purpose of the broadcaster and

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REGULATION

Serie A auction errors lead to €66m in fines

By Frank Dunne

The investigation by Italy's antitrust authority into the sale of Serie A rights, which led to €66m (\$75m) in fines being handed down this month, centred on negotiations in a four-day period in June 2014 after bids had been made.

The negotiations – involving the league, its adviser Infront Sports & Media, and pay-television broadcasters Mediaset Premium and Sky Italia – led the authority to conclude a private agreement had taken place which altered the outcome of a competitive process (see box, page 4).

However, the league and Infront were

guilty of strategic mistakes before the auction took place; mistakes which conditioned the whole process.


The problem that led to the four parties trying to thrash out an agreement was Sky making the highest bid for both package A (satellite rights to eight top teams) and package B (digital-terrestrial rights for the same teams). There were two points when the league could have made choices which would have eliminated such a possibility.

First, it could have sold its rights in

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FASTRACK 1

NEWS IN BRIEF

Seven keeps hold on Rugby League World Cup

Australian commercial broadcaster Seven earlier this month maintained its hold on Rugby League World Cup rights at a significantly increased fee.

Seven will pay a combined \$10.6m (€9.3m) in cash and contra for the 2017 tournament, which will be co-hosted in Australia. The \$4m in contra is advertising space for Rugby League International Federation sponsors.

The deal was agreed with the IMG agency, which distributes international rights on behalf of the RLIF.

The fee is about three times what Seven paid for the 2013 tournament. Compared to that tournament – hosted in England, Wales, France and Ireland – the 2017 edition, which will be played in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, is of much greater value.

Seven will cover production costs of all Australia-based matches from the tournament on top of its rights fee.

IMG ran a tender process for the rights. Seven outbid rival commercial broadcaster Nine after two rounds of bidding. Nine's first-round offer was worth \$5.8m in cash and contra. Seven increased its offer in a second round, in order to hold on to its only major rugby league property, but Nine did not.

The agency last year offered the World Cup rights to Australia's National Rugby League at a fixed fee, thought to be slightly less than it has earned from Seven, but the league declined. A deal would have allowed the NRL to include the property in its sale of domestic rights from 2018 to 2022 late last year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:22). The agency had thought this was the best way to maximise its earnings in the country.

Seven's deal for 2013 Rugby League World Cup rights came as a surprise as Nine is the free-to-air broadcaster of all major rugby league in Australia, and had held World Cup rights for 20 years.

IMG has a four-year deal with the RLIF, which operates the tournament,

from 2013 to 2017. It includes rights to the 2013 and 2017 World Cups, and the 2014 and 2016 Four Nations. ■

IOC secures long-term deal in NZ

Sky New Zealand's renewal of Olympic Games rights last month is the latest in a string of long-term deals agreed by the International Olympic Committee.

Pay-television operator Sky will pay close to \$15m (€13.1m) for the rights to four Games from 2018 to 2024. The deal covers the winter Games of 2018 in Pyeongchang and of 2022 in Beijing, as well as the summer Games of 2020 in Tokyo and of 2024, for which the host city is yet to be determined.

As in the existing deal, Sky will have rights in New Zealand and across the Pacific Islands. Sky acts as a distributor in the Pacific Islands, often agreeing deals with local broadcasters in advance of finalising its own deals.

The IOC/Sky relationship began with a \$10.5m deal for the 2010 and 2012 Games. That fee represented a 128-per-cent increase on the \$4.6m public-service broadcaster TVNZ paid for the 2006 and 2008 Games – the increase was largely due to competition between TVNZ and Sky.

Sky's fee for the 2014 and 2016 Games fell by about 38 per cent, to \$6.5m. It faced almost no competition after the New Zealand government cut back on TVNZ funding (*TV Sports Markets* 17:19).

Sky has had pay-television and free-to-air operations in the country since the government approved its acquisition of free-to-air channel Prime in 2006. Buying Prime enabled Sky to bid for major events like the Olympics, which cannot be shown exclusively on pay-television due to the IOC's requirements for free-to-air coverage.

In its most recent sales cycle it has been IOC policy to agree long-term deals wherever possible. The deal with Sky follows similar agreements with NBC in the US, Discovery in Europe, Dentsu across Asia, beIN Media Group

in the Middle East and North Africa, and Globo in Brazil (*TV Sports Markets* 18:9; 19:13; 19:15; 20:1).

Sky is understood to have been willing to pay a per-Games increase of just over 15 per cent compared to its existing fee due to the security of having the rights in a longer deal. ■

CyTAVision renews EPL rights

English Premier League rights fell in value in Cyprus this week as the league offered broadcasters a smaller package in an attempt to combat piracy.

Incumbent pay-television broadcaster CyTAVision renewed its deal for the 2016-17 to 2018-19 cycle, agreeing to pay about €1.2m (\$1.4m) per season.

This is a 40-per-cent fall on the broadcaster's current fee of about €2m per season. CyTAVision won the rights after a single round of bidding.

The league offered non-English-language rights to just 200 matches per season, compared to 380 matches per season in the current cycle.

It views Cyprus as a territory of concern from a piracy perspective. As a result, the highest-profile Saturday 3pm matches – which are not shown live in the UK and hence are most likely to be pirated – will not be included.

Rights in the 2013-14 to 2015-16 cycle were initially sold to pay-television broadcaster Lumiere TV. Lumiere also held rights from 2010-11 to 2012-13 for about €3.3m per season. CyTAVision took over the contract when Lumiere closed its channels in August 2014 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:18).

CyTAVision is also currently bidding for German Bundesliga rights in the country. *TV Sports Markets* understands the league's tender has gone to a second round in Cyprus, with rival bids from telco PrimeTel and at least one agency.

CyTAVision is the incumbent rights-holder, paying about €150,000 per season in 2015-16 and 2016-17. Rights in the new cycle will be sold for four seasons, from 2017-18 to 2020-21 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:2). ■

FOOTBALL

BBC/BT deal helps FA almost recover value of two cycles ago

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guarantees its independence, runs until December 31 and will be renewed this year. One local expert said “we could see a very different BBC” under the new charter agreement as the broadcaster’s content budget could be further reduced. As such, the BBC was keen to agree the renewal now and lock in the commitment.

The BBC and BT jointly approached the FA about a renewal with more than two years of the current deal remaining. The FA then held informal talks with other likely buyers, thought to include commercial broadcaster ITV and pay-television broadcaster Sky, but no formal tender process was initiated.

The FA is understood to have sought a premium to agree the deal directly, without opening a formal tender process.

ITV prioritised the acquisition of England national team rights, which it bought earlier this year from Uefa, football’s European governing body. ITV will show England’s European Qualifier matches from 2018-19 to 2021-22 for about £140m, or £35m per season. This is up from £80m in the current cycle, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, or £20m per season.

Sky, meanwhile, has not shown strong interest in acquiring FA Cup rights for a number of years, one insider said.

The FA Cup provides the BBC with strong football content. For BT, it provides top football on weekends when no Premier League matches are on.

The FA was happy to renew with its two current partners. The BBC has delivered strong live viewing figures and provides additional coverage via ancillary programming such as its *Football Focus* and *Final Score* programmes.

The FA traditionally sold all rights in four-year cycles to coincide with its national team rights, which were sold in blocks including one World Cup and one European Championship.

However, with Uefa’s centralisation of

all national team football – including friendly matches from 2018-19 – the FA had no reason to sell its FA Cup rights in a four-year cycle.

The FA agreed a shorter-term deal this time in case the level of competition between broadcasters for sports rights in the UK continues to increase.

Past values

The new deal represents a second successive rights-fee increase for the FA, and nears the value of the association’s rights three cycles ago.

From 2012-13 to 2013-14, ITV and pay-television broadcaster ESPN, later bought by BT, held rights in deals worth a combined £39.5m per season – £22m per season from ITV and £17.5m per season from ESPN (*TV Sports Markets* 17:14).

The current high levels of competition are in stark contrast to when the FA sold its rights two cycles ago. Then, ITV forced a huge fee decrease from the value of its previous deal, from 2008-09 to 2011-12, in which it paid £73m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 16:1).

Digital rights

Rupert Murdoch’s newspaper group News UK holds non-exclusive clips rights to FA Cup, Community Shield and 14 England friendly matches in the FA’s current cycle, from 2014-15 to 2017-18.

The deal is worth a total of about £400,000 per season – about £250,000 per season in cash and up to £150,000 per season in value-in-kind, such as promotional campaigns for the competition in News UK newspapers.

The new BBC/BT deal includes non-exclusive clips rights, as in the current deal. The FA is yet to decide on its strategy for clips rights in the new cycle – it could sell non-exclusive rights to a digital specialist again, allow the BBC and BT’s clips rights to be exclusive, or retain the rights for in-house use. A decision is likely to be made by late summer.

Coverage

The BBC will continue to show 16 live FA Cup matches per season, while BT will show 30 live matches per season, up from 24 per season in the current deal. BT was keen to increase its number of

live matches and the FA was happy to accept this.

Both broadcasters will show the FA Cup final on a non-exclusive basis, and both will have non-exclusive clips rights to their respective matches.

BT will continue to hold exclusive live rights to the Community Shield, FA Trophy and FA Vase. It will also continue its coverage of men’s youth internationals. It currently shows all U-21 matches and one U-17 and U-19 match per year, but will show more in the new deal.

The BBC will show qualifying matches of the women’s national team, one friendly per year and the women’s FA Cup final – the latter two non-exclusively with BT. The BBC will also show highlights of the top-tier Women’s Super League.

BT will continue as the live broadcaster of the WSL. It will show both women’s FA Cup semi-finals live and all home friendlies of the women’s national team.

International rights

The FA will begin selling its rights outside the UK in the coming months, and is expected to start in the US and work from west to east, finishing in Asia. The association’s current international deals run from 2012-13 to 2017-18. ■

REGULATION

Authority hands fines to Infront, Lega, Mediaset and Sky

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multiple balanced packages on a platform-neutral basis, with a no-single buyer rule.

The model is used successfully by the football leagues of England, France, and Spain, and is being adopted by the German Bundesliga in its current domestic rights process. Ironically, Serie A appears to have opted for its platform-specific strategy under pressure from the antitrust authority, l’Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato.

Second, having opted to sell rights by technology platform rather than on a platform-neutral basis, it could have included in the invitation to tender an

unambiguous rule preventing the same broadcaster acquiring rights to both package A and B. It failed to do so.

Old-fashioned model

The decision to sell the main live rights packages on the basis of delivery technologies was heavily influenced, some insiders say imposed, by the antitrust authority.

The 2008 Melandri law, which governs the collective selling of sports rights, says rights can be sold either by technology platform, on a platform-neutral basis, or a combination of both. For the two previous cycles, from 2010-11 to 2011-12, and from 2012-13 to 2014-15, the league sold the main live rights by technology platform, with Sky picking up the satellite rights and Mediaset the digital-terrestrial rights.

It is understood the league and Infront were considering a switch to a platform-neutral model. It was discussed on several occasions and explained to the clubs at league meetings.

However, when the league sent its sales guidelines to the authority in March 2014, it had not reached a final decision. It did not include a detailed breakdown of how the rights would be offered, merely generic observations about the sales process.

In its response, on April 9, the authority noted that the guidelines were too vague for it to offer a definitive view but said that selling by platform was “preferable” to selling on a platform-neutral basis.

The authority argued that in this way no single operator would have absolute exclusivity in the most important matches, which “would generate greater competition in the marketplace, with evident benefits for consumers”.

It added that selling rights on a platform-neutral basis would lead to a fragmentation of the offering, requiring consumers to take out more than one pay-television subscription.

Missing clause

Faced with this stance from the authority, the league opted to create two equally strong packages of live rights, one for satellite and one for digital-terrestrial, each with 248 matches. A third package of live rights, package D, with 132 matches

Sky the victim of set-up in antitrust reconstruction

The most striking feature of this month’s ruling by Italy’s antitrust authority in the Serie A investigation is the softening of its stance towards Sky Italia since it published its initial findings in December, and the hardening of its position on the behaviour of rival broadcaster Mediaset Premium.

In December, the authority found that all four parties under investigation – Lega Serie A, its adviser the Infront Sports & Media agency, Sky and Mediaset – had been party to an agreement that distorted competition and enabled the two main players in the Italian pay-television market to carve up the rights to Serie A in a way which reflected the market share of each (*TV Sports Markets* 20:2).

During subsequent hearings with the parties between January and April it shifted its position considerably. In its final analysis, the authority ruled that the negotiated settlement, which replaced the outcome of the tender process, was promoted by Infront primarily for the benefit of Mediaset.

The authority, l’Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato, fined Mediaset €51.419m (€58.6m), Infront €9.05m, Sky €4m, and the league €1.944m.

It said that Infront, far from being an

independent adviser, had played a decisive role in the process, influencing individual clubs to vote in favour of its proposed solution, handling negotiations between Mediaset and Sky, and convincing Sky to give up its threatened legal action.

In evaluating the level of fine for Sky it said the broadcaster “participated in the agreement in a marginal and essentially defensive role, with the objective of obtaining at least one of the two packages which the outcome of the offers presented to the league on June 5 should have awarded to that operator”.

It said that Sky changed from an initial position of outright opposition to the Serie A sharing agreement late in the negotiations after trying, and failing, to include the rights for the Uefa Champions League, held exclusively by Mediaset, into the discussion.

Sky’s behaviour, the authority said, contrasted with that of Mediaset, which from the moment the bid envelopes were opened had shared the rights-sharing solution put forward by Infront and the league. It added that throughout the proceedings Sky had been far more collaborative with the authority than the other parties.

All four are likely to appeal to the regional administrative court of Lazio. ■

of 12 smaller teams, was offered on a platform-neutral basis.

The invitation to tender made it clear that, in line with the Melandri law, no single operator could acquire all live rights on an exclusive basis. There was no such obvious prohibition regarding packages A and B. The lack of such a clause became one of the key battlegrounds of the case.

The league and Infront told clubs that Sky’s bids for packages A and B could not be accepted despite each being the highest for the respective package.

The league commissioned law professor, Giorgio De Nova, to provide an opinion on this. He concurred that selling both packages of rights to Sky, an operator

that was already dominant in the Italian pay-television market, would not be admissible under antitrust law.

On the back of this, the clubs authorised the league to award package A to Sky, and packages B and D to Mediaset. They were told that, in private talks, Mediaset agreed to sell package D to Sky to enable Sky to continue showing all league matches. This negotiation cleared the way for the rights to be awarded and was the reason why all four parties were punished.

The authority rejected all arguments put forward by the league and Infront in defence of this strategy. It said: “The league could have acted differently, respecting what was published in its

guidelines and in the ITT, awarding packages A and B to the party which had made the highest offer (Sky), and moving to a new tender procedure to assign package D (for which there had not been offers above the reserve price)."

It pointed out that neither the guidelines nor the tender contained a prohibition on acquiring both packages and that no such prohibition exists within the Melandri law.

It said that, in any case, in order to reject the highest bids the league was required by law to annul the tender and hold the process again, with such a prohibition included. "What the league could not do was award the rights in violation of the rules," it added. ■

[www. For a timeline of the process and a selection of the emails that exposed the anti-competitive deal, visit our website.](#)

FOOTBALL

Annual ICC increases vindicate patient TV rights strategy

By Frank Dunne

Rights-fee income for the International Champions Cup pre-season football tournament is set to reach about \$21m (€18.6m) for the 2016 edition.

This would represent an uplift of about 40 per cent on the 2015 income of \$15m, following an increase of over 100 per cent between 2014 and 2015.

The large annual increases vindicate the strategy of tournament organiser, Relevent Sports, and its global media rights agency Catalyst Media, to seek one-year deals until the competition is firmly established as a blue-chip property.

Oliver Duss, senior vice president at Catalyst, told *TV Sports Markets*: "We doubled the revenues in 2015 and they will go up again significantly this year. In 2014, no-one would have been prepared to commit to such yearly increases."

The tournament, which features many of the best teams in Europe (see panel), was launched in 2013 and has grown rapidly. Last year, the competition was expanded to include matches in China

and Australia (*TV Sports Markets* 19:16). This year, for the first time, the US tournament will have a league format without a final – until now the two best teams contested a final.

"We deliver these strong teams consistently and now broadcasters are looking for long-term deals. But they have to make the right kind of financial offer for us to go down that road. We are ready to enter a multi-year agreement if it's in line with our multi-year forecast."

Catalyst made such a switch in the US last month when Disney-owned sports network ESPN secured exclusive rights in both English and Spanish in a three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018. The rights had been shared in 2014 and again in 2015 between ESPN and Fox. Both bid for exclusive rights this time, along with US media group NBCUniversal.

A significant part of the value of the deal is thought to be value-in-kind, in the form of marketing and promotion. Local rights experts expect the cash component to be in the low single-digit millions of dollars per tournament.

Duss declined to comment on the financial details, but said: "The US deal involves a very strong commitment from ESPN to show matches on their national channels, backed up with a very strong promotion, which will also help with ticket sales. In terms of reach and eyeballs, our expectation is that this will be a significant step for us."

The agency has signed off about 15 deals in the last three to four months, with a further 25 agreed in principle. In Italy, pay-television platform Mediaset Premium is understood to have beaten competition from rival Sky Italia for the 2016 rights, paying just over €800,000.

There will be 75 separate rights deals in place by July – including 20 in China – covering more than 170 territories.

In 2015, Relevent introduced standardised television production across all matches. Duss said it had made a "huge difference" for broadcasters and that it was a "significant step in taking our product to the next level".

UK talks

Final revenue for 2016 will depend on the outcome of ongoing negotiations in the

Clubs competing in the 2016 ICC

The 2016 edition of the International Champions Cup is divided into three tournaments in the US, China and Australia for a total of 21 matches.

The competing teams are:
 England: Manchester United, Manchester City, Liverpool, Chelsea, Tottenham Hotspur, Leicester City
 Spain: Barcelona, Real Madrid, Atlético Madrid
 Italy: Juventus, AC Milan, Inter
 Germany: Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund
 France: Paris Saint-Germain
 Scotland: Celtic
 Australia: Melbourne Victory

UK, the tournament's most valuable market. This year's ICC will feature seven teams from England or Scotland.

Pay-television broadcaster Sky held the rights in 2014 and 2015 but is facing competition from rival BT Sport. Commercial broadcaster ITV is also thought to have expressed interest.

The amount broadcasters are prepared to pay will be affected by limits to their exclusivity due to deals agreed with individual clubs.

Manchester United and Chelsea have exclusive live rights to their own matches for their club channels. The successful broadcaster will only be able to show these matches from midnight local time.

For Liverpool matches, apart from the match against Chelsea, live coverage will be shared between the club channel and the broadcaster. Only Tottenham, Leicester and Celtic matches will be exclusive to the broadcaster.

One informed source said the total UK value for 2016 could reach £2.5m (€3.1m/\$3.6m). This would include club fees, broadcaster fees and the production costs of matches played in Dublin (Barcelona v Celtic) and Glasgow (Celtic v Leicester), which would be covered by the domestic broadcaster. The two matches are part of the US tournament.

China details

In China, operational and promotional rights – including ticketing, sponsorship

and media rights – are held by internet company LeEco as part of a 50:50 joint venture with Relevent China Group, a company created jointly by Catalyst and Relevent.

It is understood that LeEco pays a minimum guarantee of \$11m per tournament in a four-year deal, from 2015 to 2018, and splits profits above that with RCG. It retains streaming rights and sublicenses linear broadcast rights to regional free-to-air broadcasters. ■

[www. For a table of broadcast deals agreed for the 2016 edition thus far, visit our website.](#)

BASKETBALL

Kwesé TV pays big to snap up NBA rights across Africa

By Callum McCarthy

The National Basketball Association has more than doubled the value of its media rights in sub-Saharan Africa after securing an exclusive deal with start-up pay-television operator Kwesé TV.

Kwesé will pay between \$6m (€5.3m) and \$7m per season for free-to-air and pay-television rights in English, French and Portuguese over five seasons, from 2016-17 to 2020-21, across sub-Saharan Africa. The NBA will take pride of place on the Kwesé Sports channel, and will act as the bedrock of its sports offering.

The deal is worth more than double the combined value of the six deals the NBA currently has in the region, which total about \$2.75m per season.

The league has deals with pay-television broadcasters SuperSport (\$850,000 per season), StarTimes (\$600,000 per season), Zuku (\$250,000 per season), Canal Plus Afrique (\$550,000 per season) and Zap (\$250,000 per season), and a deal for free-to-air rights with the Ufa Sports agency (\$250,000 per season) (*TV Sports Markets* 20:2).

Sources close to the negotiations say the league agreed an exclusive deal as Kwesé offered a large rights fee and guaranteed to actively promote it.

The league is believed to have been unhappy with the impact of its current deals, which were designed to maximise exposure and grow interest in the league.

Despite the huge rights-fee increase, Kwesé faced little to no competition for the rights – pay-television rival SuperSport didn't bid.

Some say SuperSport was deterred by Kwesé's willingness to pay a high fee, while others believe SuperSport was unhappy with the NBA's low ratings on its service. One source said SuperSport was not invited to bid by the NBA. The NBA did not respond to requests for comment.

Coverage

A deal between Kwesé and the NBA has been a long time coming; the two parties have been in discussions for over a year.

Kwesé has acquired a package of over 500 NBA games per season, spread across the regular season and the playoffs. Its deal includes carriage of NBA TV, the league's dedicated channel, and magazine programming. Kwesé will also produce its own region-specific NBA content.

For at least the first two seasons, Kwesé will sublicense French- and Portuguese-language pay-television rights. It will focus on building its position in English-language territories before attempting to broadcast coverage in other languages.

TV Sports Markets understands Kwesé will exploit the free-to-air rights on a new Kwesé-owned channel.

It is unknown in how many territories the channel will be available, but it is understood that the channel will also be used to exploit the free-to-air English Premier League rights it acquired last month (*TV Sports Markets* 20:5).

Limited interest

While basketball is the second most popular sport in sub-Saharan Africa, interest in the NBA as a television product is low. Cumulative live audience figures on SuperSport for the final round of regular-season games on April 13 – which included Kobe Bryant's last game and the Golden State Warriors' attempt to secure a record 73rd regular-season victory – did not reach 10,000.

Local experts say Kwesé was desperate to acquire the NBA, despite its poor

ratings, as it was the only top property available until the middle of 2017.

In order to change the property's fortunes, both Kwesé and the NBA will strongly market the sport and the league in sub-Saharan Africa. Kwesé will air games both live and on delay in prime-time slots.

Last year's Global Game in Johannesburg – an exhibition game played between Team Africa and Team World – will become an annual fixture. Kwesé TV's parent company, telco Econet Wireless, will continue to sponsor the event, after acting as title sponsor in 2015.

Kwesé and the NBA will hold live events and viewings in several sub-Saharan African territories to help build grassroots interest in the sport and the league. ■

BETTING RIGHTS

Sportradar buys Sportsman, aims for premium rights

By Robin Jellis

Sportradar's acquisition of Sportsman last week will see the company bid more aggressively for top-tier betting rights, Sportradar chief executive Carsten Koerl told *TV Sports Markets* this week.

Betting and data services company Sportradar is understood to have paid close to €50m (\$57m) to acquire the shares and business of Sportsman Media Holding. The deal was reached with Thomas Krohne and Karl Wieseneder, the chief executives and founders of Sportsman – both held a 50-per-cent stake in the business.

Under the deal, Sportradar will acquire the Sportsman Media Group agency, Laola1 Multimedia, OTT platform Laola1.tv and production company Unas.

The deal represents consolidation in the betting rights market which has, until now, been fought over by digital media specialists the Perform Group, the IMG agency, Sportradar and Sportsman.

Koerl said the Sportsman acquisition means "we will have a bigger reach, we

will have the reach to get tier-one properties. Until now we have focused on long-term deals for smaller rights and have not been as focused on tier-one rights.

“This is the portfolio that Perform, IMG and Sportsman have, and, through this deal, we are now automatically in this sector. We have not had this opportunity before.”

Koerl said three main factors drove the acquisition. First, the desire to expand Sportradar’s existing betting rights portfolio. Second, to make use of Sportsman’s impressive production facilities. Third, Sportradar wanted an OTT platform and acquiring Laola1.tv “opens up all new opportunities”.

Sportsman is understood to have been seeking a buyer, and tendered parts of its business. Sportradar suggested a deal to acquire Sportsman’s main sporting assets and a deal was agreed inside six weeks.

The transaction is subject to approval from the Austrian antitrust authorities, but is expected to be finalised by the end of June.

Krohne and Wieseneder will both leave the company upon completion of the deal, while all other senior management will remain.

Revenues

In 2015, Sportradar had revenues of €130m, while Sportsman had revenues of €90m. Sportradar has not acquired the complete Sportsman business, although the parts it has bought accounted for the majority of Sportsman’s revenue.

Excluded from the deal are World Rally Championship commercial rights-holder WRC Promoter, fitness facility WerderSports and property company DuoDomi Objekteinrichtungen.

Koerl said the company would bid for media rights going forward, as Sportsman has done in the recent past, although he recognised it can be risky.

“The bigger picture for media rights is that this market has already changed, and for Sportsman it’s very difficult as a small agency to go for tier-one rights and be competitive,” he said. “It’s a very risky marketplace if you are only dealing with media rights.

“We will continue with the main businesses where it makes commercial

sense and we will try to diversify.”

Koerl said Sportradar “will try to accelerate nearly every business they [Sportsman] have”. He added that no decision had been taken with regard to a rebranding of the new company.

Flagship properties

Sportradar’s most important betting rights contract is its five-year deal with the International Tennis Federation, from 2017 to 2021, worth about \$14m per year.

Sportsman’s biggest betting rights deal is its contract for the German Bundesliga in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons. The deal is worth €15m per season, a 400-per-cent increase on the €3m per season Sportsman paid from 2012-13 to 2014-15 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:5).

One source at a betting rival to the company said that although the deal removes one company from the sector it has made another much stronger.

Although strong competition for betting rights in recent years has seen fees soar, there is still some room for growth within the sector, one expert said. ■

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

FOOTBALL

Euro 2016 FTA sales underway in sub-Saharan Africa

By Callum McCarthy

Free-to-air sales in sub-Saharan Africa for the Euro 2016 tournament are well underway, with the CAA Eleven and TV Media Sport agencies enjoying some success in their respective territories.

CAA Eleven, Uefa’s sales agent for its national team tournaments, has secured deals in South Africa and Tanzania with state broadcaster SABC and pay-television operator Azam respectively. Azam will launch a digital-terrestrial channel on its service in time for the tournament’s opening match on June 10.

The deal with Azam is thought to be worth between \$500,000 (€438,000) and \$600,000. CAA Eleven now has six

remaining territories in which to sell its rights: Angola, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda. CAA Eleven retained rights in these eight territories as they are strategically important.

CAA Eleven is thought to be seeking about \$1.1m for the rights in Nigeria, \$300,000 in Kenya, \$200,000 in Ghana, and at least \$20,000 in Rwanda. A deal in Kenya is thought to be close and talks are ongoing in Angola and Ghana, but negotiations in Nigeria have stalled after a consortium of broadcasters could not reach CAA Eleven’s fee expectations.

TV Media Sport, which is selling free-to-air rights in the remaining 40 territories in sub-Saharan Africa, has agreed about 20 deals. These deals range in value from \$1,000 to just over \$40,000 – Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Senegal and Zambia being the most lucrative territories.

The agency is unlikely to secure deals worth more or less than this range in its 20 remaining territories. It expects to complete a minimum of 15 more deals.

TVMS bought the rights from Uefa in November, paying about €1m. The deal was a buyout – the agency will keep all revenue it earns. The free-to-air package being sold by CAA Eleven and TVMS comprises of 12 matches and a daily, hour-long highlights package.

Pay-television broadcaster SuperSport acquired rights to the tournament across sub-Saharan Africa in November 2010, in a deal covering both Euro 2012 and 2016. The 2016 edition is worth about \$20m (*TV Sports Markets* 20:6).

Rights fees, not airtime

Due to the volatility of broadcast markets in sub-Saharan Africa, agencies selling free-to-air rights in the region are not guaranteed to receive rights fees.

Multiple sources with experience of selling to free-to-air broadcasters in the region say barter deals, where agencies are given airtime by broadcasters instead of a rights fee, are becoming fraught with risk.

One source said: “Free-to-air broadcasters will sometimes accept the contract and then look the other way when it comes to putting your sponsors and advertisers on the air. They’ll just get their own sponsors and you can’t do

anything. You can take legal action but the probability of winning is low.”

Local experts say the 12-match package offered to free-to-air broadcasters lacks appeal to advertisers and sponsors in the region. Broadcasters will only be able to show one match every few days, and the matches have no local relevance.

As a result, both CAA Eleven and TVMS are seeking straight cash deals in their respective markets.

Nigeria proving difficult, again

Despite being sub-Saharan Africa's second biggest market, Nigeria is one of the region's most difficult to sell into. No free-to-air broadcaster has nationwide reach, so to achieve maximum coverage deals must be struck with multiple broadcasters.

CAA Eleven was close to a deal with the Bravig agency, which was representing a consortium of free-to-air broadcasters. But it is thought Bravig's clients could only afford to pay a total of about \$800,000 for the rights – \$300,000 shy of CAA Eleven's asking price. ■

OLYMPIC GAMES

YLE signs up with Discovery but ice hockey carved out

By Robin Jellis

YLE will pay a 10-per-cent increase for media rights in Finland to the Olympic Games of 2018 and 2020, despite being unable to secure coverage of some of the most valuable events.

US media group Discovery Communications last week agreed a sublicensing deal with Finnish public-service broadcaster YLE for both Games worth a total of about €11m (\$12.6m). For the 2014 and 2016 Games, YLE acquired all rights from the Sportfive agency in a deal worth €10m.

The deal looks a good one for Discovery – it has secured an increased rights fee from YLE compared to its spend on the 2014 and 2016 Games, while retaining exclusivity for its local

channels: commercial channel TV5 and pay-television channel Eurosport.

The fact Discovery owns TV5, a free-to-air channel on which it could meet the IOC's minimum coverage requirements, encouraged YLE to pay a decent fee.

Coverage plans are not yet finalised, but TV5 will show all matches of the Finnish ice hockey team during the 2018 Games. Ice hockey is the most popular sport in Finland, with national team matches often receiving an audience share of 80 per cent on the main free-to-air channels.

YLE initially sought to acquire coverage of all events, as it has for previous Games. Discovery was not willing to agree to this as it is seeking to improve the relevance and performance of its own channels. In 2015, TV5 had an average audience share of only 3.5 per cent.

TV5 will also show a highlights programme for 2018 between 7pm and 9pm local time; a time when YLE cannot show any Olympics-related content. This is a slot when there will be no live coverage as the 2018 Olympics will be held in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

For 2020, YLE will have coverage of athletics, the most popular discipline at the summer Games. However, Discovery will retain exclusive coverage of two yet-to-be-decided disciplines.

Discovery holds rights to four Olympic Games from 2018 to 2024 across Europe in a €1.3bn deal agreed last July with the International Olympic Committee (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13).

The deal in Finland is Discovery's third sublicensing deal, following agreements in the UK with public-service broadcaster the BBC and in the Netherlands with public-service broadcaster NOS. From these deals it has recouped 14 per cent of its outlay (*TV Sports Markets* 20:2; 20:6).

Negotiations

Discovery is understood to have held talks with all local broadcasters to investigate their interest in acquiring Olympics rights, but no tender process was held.

YLE did not face strong competition from its main rivals. Neither MTV3 nor Nelonen – both commercial and pay-television broadcasters – are thought to have seriously studied a bid. Local experts

say neither broadcaster was in a particularly strong financial position to challenge YLE for the rights.

Negotiations lasted just under five months, having begun in December. Discovery was only looking to sell rights to the 2018 and 2020 Games – there were no discussions about the 2022 and 2024 Games. Discovery is focusing on the first cycle of the Games and is reluctant to sell its rights so far in advance.

Other Nordic markets

Discovery is expected to retain coverage of the Olympics for use on its SBS channels in the three other Nordic markets – Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

However, one local expert said the Olympics provided Discovery with a “playing card” which could be used in barter agreements with local broadcasters. Discovery may also sublicense coverage if it makes financial sense to do so.

For the 2014 and 2016 Games, rights were acquired: in Denmark by public-service broadcaster DR and commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 for about €15m; in Norway by public-service broadcaster NRK and commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 for €18m; and in Sweden by Modern Times Group's pay-television broadcaster Viasat in a deal worth €27m. Rights were sold separately in all three territories by Sportfive. ■

US COLLEGE SPORT

CBS and Turner wrap up March Madness rights until 2032

By Richard Welbirg

US broadcasters CBS and Turner agreed to pay a 43-per-cent fee increase to lock down NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship rights until 2032.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association's existing 14-year deal with the two broadcasters, from 2011 to 2024, is worth \$10.8bn (€9.5bn), or \$771m per year. The new agreement extends the deal by eight years, from 2025 to 2032, at a

cost of \$8.8bn, or \$1.1bn per year.

The Championship is a 68-team knockout tournament played each spring, known as 'March Madness'. It is shown on CBS's eponymous commercial channel, Turner's basic-tier pay-television channels TBS and TNT, and its pay-television channel truTV. The broadcasters share production resources and programming is identical across all four channels.

Turner and CBS pushed for the extension in late 2015 during a "look-in" period – an agreed point in the contract during which the parties can review it. Agreeing deals so far in advance helps to future-proof their business.

Broadcasters like Turner need top sport to strengthen their hand in carriage negotiations with operators who are looking to push per-subscriber fees down in line with the overall trend in US pay-television subscription numbers.

According to media analysts SNL Kagan, TNT's average monthly per-subscriber fees in 2015 was \$1.65, second only to ESPN. "No operator can afford not to carry the NCAA," US rights expert John Mansell told *TV Sports Markets*.

Similarly, the property helps CBS affiliates keep retransmission fees high – these are paid by pay-television operators to broadcasters when they sell free-to-air channels in their packages.

Retransmission fees have become an increasingly important revenue stream for free-to-air broadcasters over the past decade. According to SNL Kagan, total broadcast retransmission fees rose from \$757m in 2009 to over \$6bn in 2015.

Lastly, pinning down digital rights over such a long period could mitigate difficulties for the broadcasters if cord-cutting, or cord-shaving, accelerates. Digital rights are particularly valuable for March Madness as many games are played during working hours. The number of live streams doubled between the 2011 and 2015 competitions, to 80.7m last year.

One former US broadcast executive said Turner and CBS's fee was "entirely reasonable" given a decade and more of ever-escalating rights fees.

An agency expert said the NCAA was a "risk averse" organisation that preferred to lock in its income rather than risk selling to a cooler market in the early 2020s.

Division I basketball is the NCAA's flagship property. Rights outside the US are held by international pay-television broadcaster ESPN as part of a deal that covers global rights to 24 other NCAA sports championships. The deal runs for 13 seasons, from 2011-12 to 2023-24, and is worth \$500m, or \$38.5m per season. ■

BOXING

BoxNation shows it's up for the fight with group of new deals

By Callum McCarthy

Specialist UK boxing broadcaster BoxNation told *TV Sports Markets* this week its recent acquisitions of three world-class events could potentially double its subscriber base, boosting its chances of long-term survival.

Of these acquisitions, the July 9 lineal world heavyweight title fight between Tyson Fury and Wladimir Klitschko is by far the most significant. BoxNation is thought to be paying a flat rights fee of about £5m (€6.2m/\$7.1m) to show the fight in the UK – the most it has ever paid for a single event. The deal was completed with Hennessy Sports, Fury's promoter.

BoxNation also acquired rights to the lineal world middleweight title fight between Amir Khan and Saúl Álvarez on May 7. The deal, worth about £1.8m, was completed with Khan Promotions, which held the UK rights to the fight.

BoxNation further bolstered its programming with deals for top-level international fights. Its deal for the April 23 event where Kazakhstan's Gennady Golovkin and Nicaragua's Román González both fought was worth between £80,000 and £100,000. The deal was agreed with agency Tryfan Technologies, which represents Golovkin in the UK.

Jim McMunn, BoxNation's managing director, told *TV Sports Markets*: "When we started we were told we wouldn't last six months. But we're still here, still in the market for top fights and we'll continue to do that and grow the business.

"The subscriber numbers these fights will generate over the next few months

will change the face of the business," McMunn added. "I'm convinced we'll more than double our subscriber base."

BoxNation, which launched in July 2011, currently has about 120,000 subscribers, significantly lower than its 2012 peak of about 200,000. This peak was achieved by broadcasting an all-British heavyweight fight between David Haye and Dereck Chisora.

Like Haye and Chisora, Fury and Khan are household names in the UK. Local experts, however, believe a subscriber jump of between 80,000 and 100,000 is more realistic. BoxNation's current subscription price is £12 per month.

While the outlay of almost £7m on two major events could see a steep rise in subscriber numbers for BoxNation, its aggression is considered by many to be a huge risk given its unstable footing.

A 2015 independent auditor's report cast doubt on parent company Boxing Channel Media's "ability to continue as a going concern" due to debts of just over £8m, and detailed the company's ambition to procure outside investment before March 2017 in order to stay afloat. The report showed BoxNation made a net loss of £1.7m in the financial year up to 2015.

Sky competition cools

For all three events, BoxNation faced limited or no competition from pay-television broadcaster Sky, its main rival for boxing content in the UK.

For the Fury v Klitschko fight, Sky is thought to have showed only tentative interest. Sky broadcast the first fight between the two last November on Sky Box Office, its pay-per-view service.

Sky's lack of interest is said to be due to its increasing focus on fights promoted by the Matchroom Boxing promotion.

Matchroom's top heavyweight fighter, Anthony Joshua, will fight Dominic Breazeale on June 25, two weeks before Fury v Klitschko – Joshua's fight will be shown on Sky Box Office. Matchroom is thought to have been keen to ensure Joshua's fight would not be overshadowed.

Sky has a five-year deal with Matchroom, from summer 2016 to summer 2021, worth about £4m per year excluding shared revenue from pay-per-view events (*TV Sports Markets* 19:10). ■

FASTRACK 2

NEWS IN BRIEF

Global reach helps Twitter win NFL streaming rights

Twitter's "great global reach" helped the social media giant to become the NFL's international streaming partner, the American football league told *TV Sports Markets* this week.

The NFL added that Twitter was "very complementary to the broadcast experience" the league currently enjoys.

TV Sports Markets understands the social media giant is paying close to \$14m (€12.3m) for global digital rights in the 2016 season only.

Twitter will live stream the feed of the 10 games produced by commercial networks CBS and NBC under their deal for the Thursday Night Football package (*TV Sports Markets* 20:3).

The deal comes after several months of discussions between the NFL and interested parties. Twitter is thought to have beaten competition from internet company Amazon and telco Verizon.

Twitter's fee is less than the \$20m internet company Yahoo paid for global rights to the Buffalo Bills v Jacksonville Jaguars game on October 25, 2015 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:12). That deal was widely seen as the NFL testing the market ahead of a broader deal.

There are two reasons why Twitter is paying less than Yahoo for more games. First, exclusivity. The Bills v Jaguars game was a global exclusive for Yahoo. In the US, Twitter's 10-game Thursday Night Football package will be shown across several outlets: on CBS, NBC, their respective online services, the NFL Network pay-television channel, and to Verizon mobile devices.

Verizon has a four-year deal with the NFL, from 2014 to 2017, worth \$250m per year, which includes mobile streaming rights to Thursday, Sunday and Monday Night Football. The NFL's international deals also generally grant broadcasters ancillary online rights.

Second, sponsorship. Yahoo had complete freedom over advertising sales around its stream. The Twitter

feed will carry advertising sold by CBS and NBC. Twitter will be able to sell advertising in slots that on linear television are allocated to local broadcasters. This amounts to about 10 30-second spots for each game.

It is unlikely to be able to refinance its investment via advertising, but the acquisition carries strategic goals.

Twitter's user growth rate has been in decline since 2012, and in Q4 2015 it lost users. Twitter has listed live streaming video as one of its priorities for 2016. ■

BBC deal decent result for CGF

A difficult time zone explains the much-reduced fee the BBC will pay for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, being hosted on Australia's Gold Coast.

The UK public-service broadcaster will pay just over £3m (€3.7m/\$4.3m) for the rights – significantly less than the close to £12m it paid for the 2014 edition (*TV Sports Markets* 18:7).

That fee was inflated by the Games being hosted in Glasgow, Scotland. Much of the larger fee went toward production costs, which were met by the local organising committee.

There was also a political angle, as the Games came two years after the London Olympic Games of 2012. It was important for the broadcaster to fulfil its remit of representing the entire UK by giving the Glasgow event due coverage relative to the London event.

Gold Coast 2018 will take place nine hours ahead of UK local time. The BBC will broadcast live coverage throughout the night but ratings are likely to be very low. Repeats and highlights will be aired during the day across the BBC One and BBC Two channels.

The BBC paid less than £3m for rights to the Melbourne Games in 2006 and close to £2.5m for the Delhi Games of 2010. Gold Coast 2018 will be the 17th consecutive Commonwealth Games to be broadcast by the BBC. The latest deal was agreed with the Commonwealth Games Federation. ■

SuperSport in court over NPFL

A dispute over Nigerian Professional Football League media rights between SuperSport and Total Promotions Limited has gone to private arbitration, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

TPL – which acted as the Nigeria Football League Limited's sales agent for broadcast and sponsorship rights until the league's dissolution in 2012 – claims pay-television broadcaster SuperSport contravened the terms of a deal between the two, as well as an interim injunction ordering SuperSport to stop showing league matches until the suit outcome had been determined.

SuperSport held pay-television rights to the Nigeria Premier League, which dissolved with the NFL in 2012. The broadcaster acquired these rights from TPL in a deal that was scheduled to expire at the end of the 2014-15 season.

When the Nigerian government created the League Management Company in late 2012 to take charge of a new top-tier domestic league – what is now the NPFL – the LMC sold the broadcast rights to SuperSport.

This deal began in 2013-14 and runs to the end of 2018-19. SuperSport paid the LMC \$2m (€1.8m) per season in 2013-14 and 2014-15, and is paying about \$7.5m per season from 2015-16 to 2018-19 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:15).

TPL claims its rights were infringed as a result of this deal, while the LMC claims all TPL contracts became null and void upon the LMC's creation.

SuperSport's solicitors this week told *TV Sports Markets*: "SuperSport was obliged to oppose the spurious claim by TPL (whose contract with SuperSport has expired) and denies TPL's claims.

"We have the full support of the current and legitimate Nigerian Football Federation and the League Management Company. SuperSport has a current agreement with the LMC."

TPL could not be reached for comment. The case is being heard at the London Court of International Arbitration. ■

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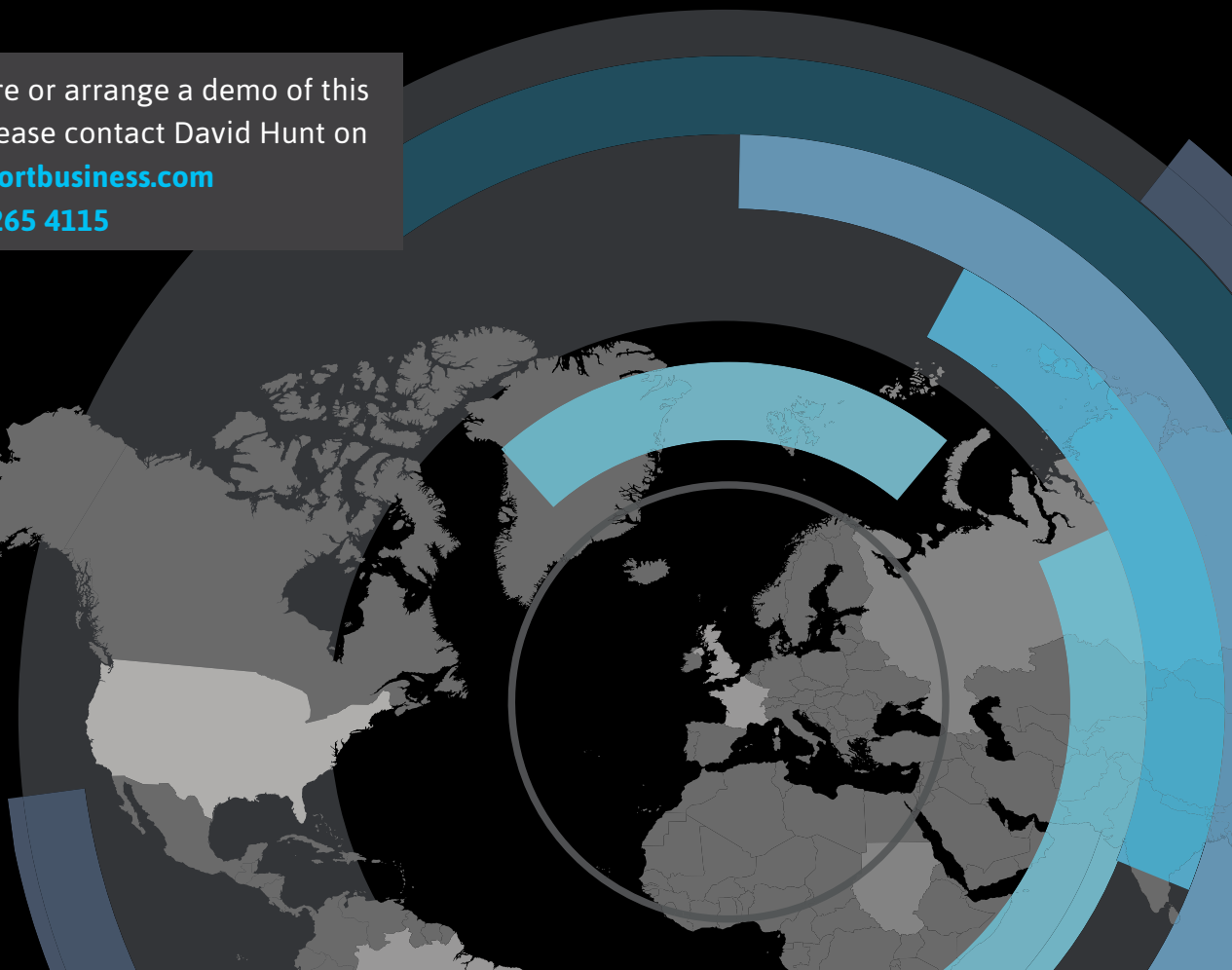
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 7 to 27

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: FA Cup, Euro 2016, Copa América, MLS, Brazil Série A and more

- **Football:** The English Football Association renewed domestic rights deals for the FA Cup knockout club competition with public-service broadcaster the BBC and pay-television broadcaster BT Sport for three seasons, from 2018-19 to 2020-21. Both broadcasters will show live coverage, with up to 30 matches being available on BT Sport (page 1).
- **Football:** Polish public-service broadcaster TVP acquired the European Qualifiers package of rights ahead of the Uefa Euro 2020 and 2022 Fifa World Cup national team tournaments as well as rights to Euro 2020. The deal includes the 2018-19 and 2020-21 Nations League competitions and other matches. TVP struck the deal with the CAA Eleven agency, which brokered the deal on behalf of Uefa, the sport's European governing body.
- **Football:** Turkish pay-television operator Digiturk acquired rights for the Uefa Euro 2016 national team tournament under a sublicensing deal with state broadcaster TRT. The deal was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 20:5.
- **Football:** International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network acquired exclusive rights to Euro 2016 in Singapore.
- **Football:** K Plus of VSTV, a joint venture between national broadcaster VTV and French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus, retained rights for the English Premier League in Vietnam after agreeing a sublicensing deal with the MP & Silva agency. The deal will run for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, and covers all 380 matches per season.
- **Football:** North America's Major League Soccer agreed a two-season rights deal with Japanese commercial broadcaster Fuji TV. The deal will include coverage of two regular-season matches per week, 2016 MLS Cup Playoff games and MLS Cup matches in the 2016 and 2017 seasons. MLS will retain live digital rights and news clip rights in Japan.
- **Football:** Thai digital platform PPTV acquired English Premier League rights in a sublicensing deal with beIN Media Group. The agreement will run for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. PPTV will show free live coverage of 26 matches per season.
- **Football:** Cypriot pay-television broadcaster CyTAvision agreed a three-season extension to its exclusive English Premier League rights deal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (page 2).
- **Football:** Australian public-service broadcaster SBS acquired free-to-air rights in the country for the 2016 Copa América Centenario national team tournament, which is being hosted in the US. SBS will broadcast live coverage of all seven knockout games plus highlights via the World Games online platform.
- **Football:** SBS acquired rights in Australia for the final of the 2015-16 Copa del Rey knockout competition in Spain.
- **Football:** SBS acquired rights in Australia for the final of the 2015-16 Coppa Italia knockout tournament in Italy.
- **Football:** Pay-television operator Singtel acquired rights in Singapore for the Copa América Centenario.
- **Football:** Colombian commercial broadcaster RCN acquired rights for the Copa América Centenario.
- **Football:** Major League Soccer expanded its rights deal with Le Sports, which is operated by Chinese internet company LeEco. Le Sports will show multiple live regular-season matches per week, along with the All-Star Game, the 2016 MLS Cup Playoff games and MLS Cup. Le Sports will continue to show highlights, player features and other MLS content across its digital platforms.
- **Football:** French basic-tier sports broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport acquired rights for the Chinese Super League. MCS will broadcast two live games per day every weekend for the remainder of the 2016 season.
- **Football:** Brazilian pay-television broadcaster Bandsports acquired rights for the Chinese Super League, covering the remainder of the 2016 and the 2017 season.
- **Football:** Campeonato Brasileiro Série A club Flamengo accepted an offer from media company Globo for its pay-television and free-to-air rights over six seasons, from 2019 to 2024.
- **Football:** Campeonato Brasileiro Série A club Ponte Preta accepted an offer from sports broadcaster Esporte Interativo for its pay-television rights starting in 2019.
- **Football:** The Fox Sports division of US network Fox agreed a one-season extension to its rights deal with the domestic National Women's Soccer League. Pay-television channel Fox Sports 1 will broadcast three regular-season games from the 2016 season, as well as all three playoff matches. All six games will also be streamed live on the Fox Soccer 2Go and Fox Sports Go platforms.
- **Football:** Canadian media company Bell extended a rights deal with the Canada Soccer governing body. The deal includes the 2016 Road to Rio Women's International Series, which will be broadcast on pay-television sports broadcaster TSN and French-language sister channel RDS in June.
- **Football:** Chinese state broadcaster CCTV acquired rights for a friendly match between German Bundesliga club Wolfsburg and Chinese Super League club Changchun Yatai which will take place on May 18.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 7 to 27

MEDIA RIGHTS 2

London Marathon, Basketball Champions League, Euroleague and more

- **Athletics:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC extended an exclusive rights deal for the London Marathon for three years, 2019 to 2021.
- **Basketball:** Telco Ecomet bought rights in sub-Saharan Africa to the National Basketball Association (page 6).
- **Basketball:** Fiba, the sport's global governing body, agreed a rights distribution partnership with digital sports media company Perform and the Taf Sports Marketing agency. Perform and Taf will be responsible for selling rights to the new Basketball Champions League – a new 50-50 joint partnership between Fiba and 11 top European leagues. The partnership will guarantee an investment of €50m (\$57m) in production, broadcast services and data, as well as editorial services, over the first five years of the BCL, from 2016-17 to 2020-21. A joint venture, Basketball Champions League Media, will be created to manage the project.
- **Basketball:** French basic-tier sports broadcaster Ma Chaîne Sport acquired rights for both legs of the 2015-16 Eurocup Finals between French club Strasbourg and Turkish club Galatasaray in a deal with Euroleague Basketball.
- **Basketball:** Turkish commercial broadcaster NTV acquired rights for the 2015-16 Eurocup Finals in a deal with Euroleague Basketball.
- **Basketball:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC struck a deal for this year's British Basketball League and Women's British Basketball League play-off finals. It will show live coverage online and via its Red Button service.
- **Billiards:** The Union Mondiale de Billard, a global promoter of the sport, agreed a rights distribution deal with the Kozoom International agency.
- **Boxing:** UK pay-television channel BoxNation secured exclusive live rights to British world heavyweight champion Tyson Fury's world title rematch against Ukrainian Wladimir Klitschko on July 9 (page 9).
- **Canoeing:** Canadian public-service broadcaster CBC acquired rights for the 2016 International Canoe Federation's Canoe Sprint World Cup. CBC will broadcast live coverage of events in: Duisburg, Germany; Račice, Czech Republic; and Montemor-o-Velho, Portugal.

SINCE LAST TIME

- French media group Vivendi sealed a deal to acquire the Mediaset Premium pay-television operation of media company Mediaset, one of the leading sports broadcasters in Italy. Vivendi will acquire Mediaset's 89-per-cent stake in Mediaset Premium and the remaining 11-per-cent stake held by Spanish telco Telefónica. Vivendi and Mediaset will swap 3.5-per-cent stakes in each other. Vivendi will not be able to increase its stake in Mediaset beyond five per cent for three years. The deal values Mediaset Premium at €800m (\$912m).
- Italy's antitrust authority, l'Autorità Garante del Mercato e della Concorrenza, issued fines totalling €66m (\$75m) in the case surrounding the 2014 sale of rights to Serie A, the top division of domestic football. Mediaset Premium was fined €51.419m. The regulator issued its sanctions having already notified Lega Serie A, the Infront Sports & Media agency, Mediaset Premium and pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia that their actions during the sales process constituted a breach of European competition law. Sky was ordered to pay €4m, the Lega was fined €1.9m and Infront, its media rights adviser, was handed a €9m fine (page 1).
- French telco Numericable-SFR unveiled a convergence plan under which it will acquire parent company Altice's 49-per-cent stake in media company NextRadioTV. The deal, which is subject to regulatory approval, values NextRadioTV at €741m (\$846m). Numericable-SFR will also launch five new sport channels produced by NextRadioTV.
- Sports and betting-related services company Sportradar struck a deal to acquire the shares and core business of Sportsman Media Holding. The agreement is subject to approval from the Austrian antitrust authorities, with the deal expected to close no later than June (page 6).
- Tom Wheeler, the chairman of the US Federal Communications Commission, recommended that the regulator should approve the proposed merger of Charter Communications and fellow pay-television operator Time Warner Cable. The Department of Justice also gave the green light to the deal but, along with the FCC, imposed a number of conditions, including that Charter will be prohibited from entering into or enforcing any agreement with a broadcaster that forbids or limits their distribution of content to an online video provider.
- US telco Verizon is the leading contender to acquire internet company Yahoo's online business following a first round of bidding, according to reports. Yahoo is reported to have received offers from interested parties including Verizon, private equity firm TPG and YP Holdings, the digital-advertising business of what was formerly called yellowpages.com. Yahoo hopes to conclude the sale by June.
- The Walt Disney media company is reportedly in advanced talks to acquire an equity stake in BAM Tech, the video technology business of MLB Advanced Media, the interactive media and internet company of Major League Baseball. MLBAM, which is jointly owned by MLB's 30 teams, runs the North American league's web video subscription service and has been seeking to spin BAM Tech off into a separate company.
- The future of the 'Football for All' scheme, which reserves domestic football coverage in Argentina for free-to-air television, is uncertain after the Argentinian Football Association suggested

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 7 to 27

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

Giro d'Italia, The Open, Eishockey Liga, Nascar, Olympic Games and more

- **Curling:** The World Curling Federation extended partnerships with the USA Curling Association national governing body and the Champions Curling Tour series. The NBCSN pay-television channel, operated by US media company NBCUniversal, will continue to broadcast *Curling Night in America* in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 seasons.
- **Cycling:** Dutch public-service broadcaster NOS secured a rights deal for the 2016 Giro d'Italia, which begins in the Netherlands on May 6. NOS will provide highlights of 10 stages and live coverage of 11, including the opening individual time trial in the Dutch city of Apeldoorn and the following two stages.
- **Drone Racing:** Sports broadcaster ESPN agreed a global rights distribution deal with the International Drone Racing Association. ESPN will stream live coverage of the 2016 World Drone Racing Championships and US National Drone Racing Championship via its ESPN3 digital service. A one-hour programme will be broadcast on ESPN after each event.
- **Flying Disc:** US pay-television broadcaster CBS Sports Network will provide coverage of the 2016 World Ultimate Championships in London following a deal with the World Flying Disc Federation. A two-hour programme will air twice on June 25.
- **Golf:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland extended its deal for Open Championship rights in Germany and Austria.
- **Horse Racing:** Australian pay-television broadcaster Sky Racing agreed a rights deal with Tasracing, the sport's governing body in the state of Tasmania. The deal for global rights will run for 10 years, from 2016 to 2025.
- **Ice Hockey:** Austria's Eishockey Liga agreed rights deals with pay-television broadcaster Sky Österreich and Servus TV, the German commercial broadcaster owned by energy drinks brand Red Bull. Sky agreed a five-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2020-21, and will broadcast more than 50 games per season as the league's exclusive pay-television partner. Servus agreed a three-season extension to its partnership, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, with an option to add two seasons to the deal. As the Liga's exclusive free-to-air partner it will broadcast over 40 live games per season.
- **Ice Hockey:** Russian sports media platform Match TV acquired rights for the NHL's 2016 Stanley Cup playoffs.
- **Ice Hockey:** Czech telco O2 sealed rights agreements with two of the country's Extraliga clubs, Sparta Praha and Bílí Tygři Liberec. The deals will run for five seasons, from 2018-19 to 2022-23, and cover all home games.
- **Judo:** French digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 acquired rights for the 2016 European Judo Championships.
- **Martial Arts:** International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network signed a multi-year deal with combat sports promoter Fighting Spirit for rights in Belgium and Poland. Eleven will have exclusive rights to the M-1 Challenge and Enfusion Live: The World Championships of Kickboxing in Poland through to the end of 2017. The agreement in Belgium will cover events until the end of September 2016.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** Filipino media company ABS-CBN acquired rights for the One Championship series.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** UFC Fight Pass, the online subscription service operated by the Ultimate Fighting Championship, struck a multi-year deal for coverage of the Combate Americas series.
- **Motorcycling:** Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports acquired rights in the US to the domestic MotoAmerica series. BeIN Sports will broadcast live and delayed coverage of the 2016 season.
- **Motorcycling:** L'Équipe 21 reached an agreement with international broadcaster Eurosport for rights in France to the International Motorcycling Federation's Endurance World Championship. The two-year deal will cover the 2016 and 2017 campaigns.
- **Motorsport:** Polish pay-television broadcaster Motowizja acquired exclusive rights for the Sprint Cup, the leading competition of the Nascar North American stock car-racing series, in a three-year deal from 2016 to 2018.
- **Motorsport:** Eurosport Events, the promoter of the World Touring Car Championship, agreed one-race rights deals in Hungary, Morocco and Slovakia. Hungarian public-service broadcaster MTV's M4 Sport channel acquired rights for the WTCC event at the Hungaroring in Budapest; Central European Media Enterprises' free-to-air channel, Dajto, snapped up rights for the Race of Slovakia in its home market; and the Race of Morocco will be broadcast by state-owned free-to-air channel 2M.
- **Motorsport:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 agreed a two-year rights deal, from 2016 to 2017, with the DTM German touring cars series. The agreement, sealed with DTM rights-holder and promoter ITR, covers Germany, Austria and Switzerland.
- **Motorsport:** L'Équipe 21 acquired rights for the International Motorsport Federation World Endurance Championship. The channel will show most of the first two rounds of the 2016 championship live, before the remaining six rounds are broadcast in full.
- **Olympic Games:** Finnish public-service broadcaster YLE struck a deal to acquire rights for the 2018 and 2020 Olympic Games in a sublicensing deal with US media company Discovery Communications (page 8).
- **Poker:** The Sina Sports division of Chinese internet operator Sina struck a multi-year deal to show coverage of the Global Poker League. Sina Sports will show more than 400 hours of action per year via a poker channel on its platform.

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MEDIA RIGHTS 4

Rugby League World Cup, Ski Classics, Wimbledon, WTA Tour and more

- **Racquet Sport:** Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE acquired rights for the World Padel Tour. Teledporte will show coverage of the events in Valencia, Barcelona and the Masters Final in Madrid as well as other events in Monaco and Argentina.
- **Rugby League:** Australian commercial broadcaster Seven acquired rights for the 2017 Rugby League World Cup (page 2).
- **Rugby Union:** Chinese e-commerce company Alibaba agreed a 10-year rights and development deal, from 2016 to 2025, with the World Rugby governing body. Alibaba's Alisports division will show exclusive coverage of World Rugby events.
- **Rugby Union:** The Professional Rugby Organisation, operator of the new US Pro Rugby league, agreed a pay-television partnership with One World Sports and a worldwide digital streaming deal with US media company AOL.
- **Rugby Union:** The Brazilian Confederation of Rugby agreed a deal with commercial broadcaster RedeTV for live coverage of two Brazil national team games, against Uruguay and Chile, during the Torneo Sul-Americano de Rugby XV tournament.
- **Skiing:** Norwegian public-service broadcaster NRK acquired rights to the Ski Classics long-distance series for five seasons, from 2016-17 to 2020-21.
- **Sports Climbing:** Japanese public-service broadcaster NHK acquired rights for the International Federation of Sport Climbing's 2016 season. NHK brokered the deal with Synca Creations, the IFSC's agency in Japan, with assistance from the Broadreach Media agency.
- **Tennis:** Pan-European sports broadcaster Eurosport agreed a deal with the All England Lawn Tennis Club for exclusive Wimbledon rights in Russia over four years, from 2016 to 2019.
- **Tennis:** O2 Sport acquired rights in the Czech Republic for the Women's Tennis Association Tour for three years, from 2017 to 2019. O2 TV will show coverage of 54 WTA tournaments, including the Prague Open, which is staged in the Czech capital every year, and the WTA Finals end-of-season event.
- **US College Sport:** Outfront Media Sports, the US marketing and media company previously known as CBS Collegiate Sports Properties, extended its multimedia rights deal with the athletics division of Louisiana State University for 10 years, from 2016-17 to 2025-26. Fox Sports College Properties, a division of Fox-owned Home Team Sports, will manage the television, digital and social media rights.
- **US College Sport:** Commercial broadcaster CBS and pay-television broadcaster Turner Broadcasting System extended multi-platform rights for the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Division I men's championship, also known as March Madness. Live coverage of the Final Four national semi-finals and championship will continue to alternate between CBS and Turner each year. Turner will continue to manage the March Madness Live and ncaa.com digital platforms (page 8).
- **US College Sport:** The Fox Sports division of US network Fox signed a multimedia rights deal with the athletics division of Michigan State University. The contract will run for 15 years, from the 2016-17 to 2030-31 academic years, and is worth a guaranteed sum of more than \$150m (€132m).
- **Volleyball:** The MP & Silva agency renewed its rights partnership with the Italian Volleyball League for four seasons, from 2016-17 to 2019-20. MP & Silva will continue to serve as the exclusive distributor of rights outside Italy to the Lega Pallavolo Serie A, the country's top-tier club competition.
- **Volleyball:** US pay-television broadcaster Turner Sports agreed a multi-year rights deal for the National Collegiate Athletic Association's new Beach Volleyball Championship. Turner Sports will broadcast live coverage of this year's event on the truTV television channel as well as via Turner's TV Everywhere platforms.

that the arrangement with the government could be curtailed. AFA president Luis Segura said after a meeting of 12 clubs that the association would be interested in sealing an agreement with the government, which has the rights to the domestic league, to end the deal before its expiry in 2019. The government, which distributes rights to free-to-air broadcasters, is reportedly keen to hold a tender process for the rights it holds. The AFA would be interested in buying back the rights.

- US media company Discovery Communications acquired a minority stake in Rugby Pass, an online sports platform available in 23 Asian countries. As reported in *TV Sports Markets 20:5*, it is understood to be a 23.5-per-cent stake.
- The WME-IMG agency secured further \$55m (€48.2m) investment through a partnership with mutual fund giant Fidelity Management and Research.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- US college Arizona State University reached a confidential settlement on its long-running dispute with the IMG College agency over the multimedia rights contract that previously existed between the two parties. In October 2014, ASU terminated its multimedia rights deal with IMG College and claimed more than \$5m (€4.4m) in damages from the agency for failing to meet contractual obligations.
- Telcos Vodafone and Orange, and pay-television operator Telecable, which operates in the Asturias region of Spain, agreed carriage deals in the country for the beIN Sports LaLiga channel. The agreements were reached with the Mediapro agency, which distributes the pay-television channel, and will run for three seasons, from 2016-17 to 2018-19.

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- Spanish commercial broadcaster Mediaset was granted permission to broadcast clips of Uefa Champions League football games after the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia, the country's competition regulator, ruled that matches were of "public interest to society". The ruling follows a complaint lodged by Mediaset against fellow commercial broadcaster Atresmedia, which has free-to-air Champions League rights in Spain.
- The German Football League struck a deal to make its archive video available on the Amazon Digital Video store in the country.
- The IMG agency agreed a deal with UK public-service broadcaster the BBC to produce its golf coverage in 2016. IMG will produce live coverage of the Women's British Open as well as a two-hour daily highlights programme from the Open Championship, the PGA Championship, the Scottish Open and the Ryder Cup.
- The Damallsvenskan, the top division of women's club football in Sweden, launched a new online video platform in partnership with sports-rights agency Spring Media. Damallsvenskan.tv will stream live coverage of all 132 matches during the 2016 season, as well as highlights, interviews and archive footage.
- Modern Times Group, the multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster that owns leading esports company ESL, will launch an esports channel in May. The channel, entitled eSportsTV, will be available in the Nordic and Baltic regions through MTG's Viasat pay-television platform.
- Malaysian pay-television broadcaster Astro will launch a dedicated esports channel, Every Good Game, in June. It will be available at no extra cost to Astro and Astro on the Go subscribers.
- International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network agreed a carriage deal for its Eleven and Eleven Sports channels with Polsat in Poland.
- Russian online sports platform Sports.ru struck a deal to launch the North American National Basketball Association's official Russia-focused website. The new site will be hosted in a dedicated section of Sports.ru and the Sports.ru mobile app. It will feature a range of multimedia content including videos, highlights, localised editorial and real-time statistics.
- Le Sports, which is operated by Chinese internet company LeEco, launched a subscription service for its media platform in mainland China, following a similar initiative in Hong Kong. The VIP membership scheme offers an all-in-one subscription package for CNY590 (€81/\$91) per year, or CNY59 per month.
- The Mediapro agency agreed a carriage deal for its Canal F1 Latin America channel with telco Telefónica for the Chilean, Colombian and Venezuelan markets. Telefónica will carry the channel on its pay-television platform, Movistar TV.
- Pay-television operator StarHub agreed a carriage deal with Eleven Sports Network in Singapore.
- Fox and the Big Ten have agreed basic terms on a six-year deal, from 2017 until 2022, worth up to \$250m (€220m) per year. The deal will cover about 25 American football matches and 50 men's basketball games per year.
- The Ligue Nationale de Rugby, the operator of the Top 14, opened a tender process for domestic rights to the top division of French rugby union for four seasons, from 2019-20 to 2022-23.
- Paolo Vasile, chief executive of Spanish commercial broadcaster Mediaset, criticised the CAA Eleven agency for holding a less-than-transparent sales process for rights to the Uefa Euro 2016 national team football tournament. Vasile called for a public auction of the rights. Spain remains the only major market where a deal is not in place for the tournament. Mediaset and commercial rival Atresmedia are interested in securing free-to-air rights, but have not been prepared to meet the asking price.
- The German Football League (DFL) is seeking to secure between €1.1bn (\$1.23bn) and €1.5bn per season from the new cycle of rights to the Bundesliga – up from an average of €748m per season for the current cycle from 2013-14 to 2016-17. The tender includes rights in Germany for all Bundesliga and 2. Bundesliga matches, the Supercup and the relegation play-offs. Eight live rights packages and nine non-live packages are being offered, with rights-holders for the first time having the opportunity to exploit their rights across all platforms. For the first time, a Monday evening free-to-air highlights package is on offer. An additional five matches per season on Sundays and five further matches per season on Mondays are available, with one 2. Bundesliga match being moved from a Friday to a Saturday. The tender was launched following a ruling by Germany's federal cartel office, the Bundeskartellamt, to enforce a 'no single buyer' rule. According to the DFL, if a single entity is awarded all live Bundesliga rights, an OTT package will be made available for platform-exclusive use via internet and mobile distribution channels.
- The Swiss Football League launched a sales process for the rights to the Super League and Challenge League, the top two divisions in the country. The cycle will start with the 2017-18 season.
- The BBC criticised "unhelpful" comments from Scottish Professional Football League chairman Ralph Topping, who questioned the UK public-service broadcaster's commitment to the domestic game amid talks over a new rights deal. The BBC's highlights contract with the SPFL, which oversees the top-tier Premiership along with the Championship and Leagues One and Two, is in its final season. BBC Scotland currently pays £1.4m (€1.8m/\$2m) per season, but Topping said the broadcaster needs to increase its offer to between £3m and £4m per season from 2016-17.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- Eurosport Events, the promoter of the World Touring Car Championship, launched a new WTCC Premium TV application after testing the platform during the season-opening races. Available to users through mobile apps and online, WTCC Premium TV offers live coverage of all on-track action, special features such as a rewind function and live pause, no geo-blocking and archive footage from the last two WTCC seasons. Users can

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The Fox Sports division of US network Fox is reportedly close to acquiring rights for the collegiate sports championships of the Big Ten Conference. According to the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper,

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- also choose to view live action from 10 on-board cameras. WTCC Premium TV is being made available for €14.95 (\$17) for a weekend or €99.95 for the season.
- Sports media and technology company deltatre was selected by ATP Media, the broadcast arm of men's tennis organisation the ATP World Tour, to redesign and relaunch its direct-to-consumer live streaming service. The new-look TennisTV will launch in January 2017. Deltatre will use its interactive video player, Diva, to support TennisTV's live and on-demand coverage of matches.
 - The NFL American football league will not stream live coverage of its three games in London next season.
 - Communications technology company Ericsson launched a new software system, Piero Augmented Reality, giving broadcasters the ability to overlay 3D graphics in real-time during live studio productions and sports events.
 - UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport is considering streaming live coverage of the final of the 2015-16 Uefa Champions League football tournament on video-sharing platform YouTube, according to the *Daily Mail* newspaper.
 - The European Broadcasting Union consortium of free-to-air broadcasters confirmed strong participation from its members in covering 2018's inaugural multi-sport European Championships. Twenty-three EBU members will show the Championships, including the BBC in the UK, ARD/ZDF in Germany, France Télévisions in France, Rai in Italy and TVE in Spain.
 - Romanian public-service broadcaster Televiziunea Română (TVR) lost its European Broadcasting Union membership privileges after failing to pay debts totalling CHF16m (€14.5m/\$16.4m). TVR no longer has access to the Sports News Exchanges, an EBU member service, and also lost the right to broadcast sporting events whose rights are held by the consortium. The Romanian government, which is legally obliged to underwrite TVR's debt, failed to meet a final deadline of April 21 to reach a deal.
 - The International Cricket Council's channel on video-sharing website YouTube, as well as videos posted on the governing body's Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat accounts, generated more than 320m views during the 2016 World Twenty20 national team tournament in India – a new record for an ICC event.
 - Public-service broadcaster France Télévisions will cover this year's Tour de France cycling event in its entirety for the first time.
 - German production company Wige Media posted a five-per-cent rise in revenues to €63.3m (\$71.2m) for 2015. According to Wige, turnover in 2016 is likely to grow by more than 10 per cent. The company expects earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation to more than double to €4m in 2016.
 - The ADAC GT Masters entered into a partnership with smart television services provider NetRange to provide global coverage of the motor-racing series via a new application for internet-connected televisions. The app, which will feature live action and highlights, will also provide coverage of the ADAC Formula 4 development series. The partnership between ADAC, the German Automobile Club, and NetRange was brokered by Wige Media.
 - A recent virtual reality initiative between Barcelona and social media platform Facebook will mark the beginning of a longer partnership between the two parties, according to the Spanish Liga football club's commercial director, Francesco Calvo.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- Eurosport UK managing director David Kerr will leave the sports broadcaster in the coming months, *TV Sports Markets* understands. Kerr has been managing director of Eurosport UK, the UK arm of the international sports broadcaster, since October 2010. • International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network appointed Krzysztof Świergiel and Simone Kang to senior positions. Świergiel will be the new managing director in Poland while Simone Kang will be general manager of operations in Chinese Taipei. Świergiel joined from the Lagardère Sports Poland arm of the Lagardère Sports agency. Kang previously served as editor-in-chief of production at pay-television channel Fox Sports Taiwan. • Nitin Kukreja will serve as pay-television broadcaster Star India's chief executive of sports after a dedicated division was created following an organisational restructure. Uday Shankar will serve as Star India's chairman and chief executive.

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