

CYCLING

Exposure and investment steer UCI away from Infront and back to historic partner

By Frank Dunne

Union Cycliste Internationale president Brian Cookson said it sold its rights to the European Broadcasting Union as the EBU was “the best player in the market to place our events on free-to-air broadcasters across Europe”.

The UCI, cycling’s global governing body, sold its worldwide rights to a joint venture between the EBU – the consortium of public-service broadcasters – and the IMG agency in an eight-year deal, from 2017 to 2024.

For the last four years, from 2013 to 2016, UCI rights have been distributed by the Infront Sports & Media agency in a deal based on a minimum guarantee of €2.8m (\$3.2m) per year plus a share of revenues (*TV Sports Markets* 18:21).

In the new deal, the EBU/IMG rights fee is thought to be between €4m and €5m per year. There is understood to have been little difference in the value of the offers from EBU/IMG and Infront, which sought a renewal.

However, the EBU and IMG have also committed to investing heavily in the production of the UCI’s events.

The EBU and IMG will be jointly responsible for the production of the UCI’s flagship events, the Road World Championships and the Track World Championships. The cost of producing a single Road World Championships is thought to be about €1.5m.

Infront works with different host

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FOOTBALL

Esporte breaks Globo's Série A monopoly

By Richard Welbirg

All but one of Brazil’s 20 Série A clubs has taken a side in the battle over domestic football rights between Esporte Interativo and media company Globo.

Free-to-air and pay-television broadcaster Esporte Interativo, owned by US media company Turner, has succeeded in breaking Globo’s monopoly over top-tier Série A rights in the country, but will face tricky negotiations and legal battles in the years to come.

Brazilian clubs sell their Série A media rights individually. Of the current Série A clubs, only Palmeiras is yet to agree a deal

with either broadcaster for its pay-television rights from 2019 onward.

In February, Esporte Interativo made an offer to clubs for their Série A pay-television rights over six years, from 2019 to 2024 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:4).


Its offer was for an annual total fee of about BRL27.5m (€6.8m/\$7.8m) per signatory club in Série A. Half of this total will be shared equally among the clubs, 25 per cent based on television ratings, and 25 per cent based on league position.

Fifteen clubs have since agreed to

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Česká Televize pays more for 2018 and 2020 Games

Czech public-service broadcaster Česká Televize acquired rights to the 2018 and 2020 Olympic Games from Discovery Communications this week, paying 48 per cent more than the value of the 2014 and 2016 Games in the country.

Česká Televize sublicensed rights covering the Czech Republic from US media group Discovery in a two-Games deal worth about €4m (\$4.6m).

This is up from the value of the 2014 and 2016 Games in the Czech Republic – these were acquired by Česká Televize and commercial and pay-television broadcaster Nova for about €2.7m from the Sportfive agency. Česká Televize pays the greater share of the two.

Discovery has substantially increased the rights fee in the country while also retaining pay-television coverage for its sports broadcaster Eurosport – to be shown on its Eurosport 1 and 2 channels – and digital rights, which will be exploited on Eurosport Player.

Česká Televize will be able to show coverage on one channel – ČT Sport. It will not be able to show more than 200 hours from the winter Games in 2018 or 300 hours from the summer Games in 2020 – both 100 hours more than the minimum free-to-air coverage imposed for each Games by the International Olympic Committee.

Discovery is understood to have spoken to all interested broadcasters in the country but did not hold a tender process. Česká Televize was always the most likely buyer as it was determined to retain rights it has held since 1956. Czech interest in the Olympics is driven by the winter Games due to the local popularity of ice hockey.

This sublicensing deal is different in construction to agreements in Finland and the Netherlands, where Discovery retained exclusivity over certain disciplines – rather than over platforms (*TV Sports Markets* 20:6; 20:7).

Only rights for the 2018 and 2020

Games were discussed – Discovery preferred not to sell rights to the 2022 and 2024 Games so far in advance.

Discovery is understood to be close to a fifth Olympics sublicensing deal, in Croatia with public-service broadcaster HRT. This would follow the deals with public-service broadcasters in the UK (BBC), the Netherlands (NOS), Finland (YLE) and the Czech Republic.

Last June, Discovery acquired rights to the Games from 2018 to 2024 across Europe in a deal with the IOC worth €1.3bn (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13). ■

beIN key to volleyball Lega growth

The MP & Silva agency is thought to have paid an increase of just under 35 per cent to renew its global rights deal with Italy's top men's volleyball league, Lega Pallavolo Serie A.

MP & Silva's new four-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, will be worth about €1m (\$1.15m) per season for global rights, excluding Italy. Its current four-season deal from 2012-13 to 2015-16, for the same set of rights, is worth about €750,000 per season.

The agency is thought to earn a substantial proportion of its income from a deal with beIN Media Group, covering the territories where it runs its beIN Sports channels. The US, Canada, the Middle East and North Africa, and France are among the territories where interest in the league is strongest.

The league's managing director, Massimo Righi, told *TV Sports Markets* this week that the agency had substantially increased the league's visibility around the world, with deals in more than 60 territories. League matches are now broadcast in all continents other than Oceania, he said.

Righi said the agency worked closely with the league to ensure the right balance between revenue and exposure, and in some territories the agency had agreed deals for smaller rights fees which guaranteed greater exposure.

The league renewed without a formal tender process. Righi said the league

had been contacted by several other agencies, with whom it held informal discussions, but that its clubs were satisfied with what MP & Silva had delivered and were happy to renew. For the current deal, the agency beat strong competition from the IEC in Sports agency (*TV Sports Markets* 16:15).

The league's domestic rights are held by state broadcaster Rai in a two-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2016-17. It is currently in negotiations with Rai for a further two-season renewal. ■

TVP snaps up Euro 2016

Polish public-service broadcaster TVP has acquired a share of Euro 2016 rights from Polsat in what local experts believe is an excellent deal for the latter.

TVP will pay just over PLN35m (€8m/\$9.2m) for non-exclusive free-to-air rights to at least 11 matches, including both semi-finals, the final and all Poland matches. TVP could show more matches should Poland progress to the second-round or quarter-final.

Competitive Polish national team football matches must be shown free-to-air in accordance with the country's listed events legislation. Polsat will show 24 matches free-to-air, including all of Poland's matches.

Polsat is paying about €32m for a package including European Qualifiers from 2014-15 to 2017-18 and Euro 2016 in a deal with CAA Eleven, Uefa's sales agent for its national team rights (*TV Sports Markets* 17:23). While values weren't allocated to each property, experts believe the value of Euro 2016 to be about €18m, meaning Polsat has recovered about 44 per cent of its outlay on the tournament.

In 2009, TVP paid €28m for Euro 2012. This was viewed as a 'political price' as Poland co-hosted the tournament alongside Ukraine. Polsat paid about €15m for Euro 2008.

TVP failed to acquire Euro 2016 and European Qualifier rights when CAA Eleven offered them to the market in 2013, citing budget restrictions. ■

CYCLING

Cookson: EBU the best player on the market for free-to-air

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broadcasters for different events. Sources at several European broadcasters said the standard of production and direction has been variable. The 2015 Road World Championships in Richmond, US, came in for particularly heavy criticism. Free-to-air broadcaster NBC was the host broadcaster for the event.

Cookson said EBU/IMG production commitments were an important factor in choosing their offer. “This will ensure consistent, state-of-the-art production that can only please our fan base,” he said.

EBU digs deep

The deal represents another example of the EBU winning back a high-profile property it had lost to an agency or privately-owned broadcasters, such as football’s World Cup and European Championships – albeit not on a complete pan-European basis – and the International Association of Athletics Federations’ World Athletics Championships.

The EBU is also close to a deal for international rights to Swiss skiing federation events, excluding Switzerland – rights which are currently distributed by Infront (see separate story, page 7).

One cycling rights expert argued that EBU broadcasters were effectively paying a strategic fee for the UCI rights if they were paying fees at which an agency like Infront did not feel it could make a profit. “This is a statement by the EBU after it has lost some important rights in recent years,” he said.

However, EBU sources say the level of rights fee and the commitment to production costs represent a fair rate in current market conditions. One pointed out that, unlike agencies, public-service broadcasters do not need to make a margin on their deals.

The loss is a blow to Infront, which has been trying to build up its cycling

UCI rights acquired by EBU/IMG

The Union Cycliste Internationale deal with the European Broadcasting Union and the IMG agency runs for eight years, from 2017 to 2024.

It includes: the Road World Championships; the Track World Championships; the mountain bike, cyclo-cross, BMX and urban cycling world championships; the Track Cycling World Cup; and the Cyclo-cross World Cup.

portfolio. In the 2013-2016 cycle, the agency has secured an increase of 160 per cent in overall broadcast hours of UCI events, and a 100-per-cent increase in the number of hours of live coverage.

However, Infront sold rights to pay-television broadcasters in several key cycling markets and the UCI was keen to return to free-to-air channels in as many European markets as possible.

Carve-outs

There are two major territories in the EBU deal where consortium members did not join the bid: Norway and Germany.

In Norway, EBU member TV2 had already agreed a direct deal with the UCI to acquire rights to the 2017 Road World Championships because they are being hosted locally, in Bergen, and TV2 did not want to risk missing out on the rights. It is likely the commercial and pay-television broadcaster will sublicense the remainder of the rights, from 2018 to 2024, from the EBU at a later date.

In Germany, EBU members ARD and ZDF did not join the bid. The two public-service broadcasters pulled out of cycling coverage after the 2011 Tour de France due to concerns over doping.

ARD tentatively returned to cycling last year, acquiring rights to the Tour de France from race organiser Amaury Sport Organisation for two years, 2015 and 2016, for just under €2.5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:1).

But so far it has not committed to the UCI deal. It is understood that ARD is using the Tour as a test case to decide whether to expand its cycling coverage.

IMG will distribute the rights outside

Europe. About 70 per cent of the value in the UCI portfolio is in Europe but Cookson said the IMG role was still a significant factor in the award.

“IMG’s strength and network will help us to target new markets and reach a broader fan base,” he said.

Long-term deal

The UCI originally offered its rights for four years but in the second stage of negotiations asked if bidders wanted to make a proposal for eight years. It is thought IMG lobbied the governing body to consider a longer term.

Agreeing such a long-term deal for UCI rights adds to the level of risk the EBU and IMG are taking. As one rights expert put it, “doing an eight-year deal means you have no idea where the future world championships are going to be held,” he said. “If you end up with two in Asia during one of the cycles, that will really hit audiences in Europe.”

However, long-term deals are increasingly popular with rights-holders, broadcasters and agencies, wherever they do not create antitrust issues, as they allow all parties to build value. ■

FOOTBALL

Globo's monopoly broken but Esporte faces challenges

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Esporte Interativo’s terms, of which seven are currently playing in Série A (see table, page 4).

However, two Série A clubs – Figueirense and Santa Cruz – have also signed deals with Globo, which made a counter-offer for the clubs’ rights over the same period.

Santa Cruz claims it signed only a non-binding pre-contract with Esporte Interativo; Figueirense says its board never approved the broadcaster’s offer. Esporte Interativo is understood to be confident in contesting both claims, which are likely to lead to legal action.

Globo has agreed deals for all media rights of 16 clubs, 11 of which currently

| Brazilian clubs' pay-television rights-holders, 2019 to 2024 | | |
|--|---|--|
| | Globo | Esporte Interativo |
| Série A | América, Atlético Mineiro, Botafogo, Chapecoense, Corinthians, Cruzeiro, Flamengo, Fluminense, Grêmio, São Paulo, Sport Recife, Vitória | Atlético Paranaense, Coritiba, Figueirense ¹ , Internacional, Ponte Preta, Santa Cruz ¹ , Santos |
| Série B | Avaiá, Goiás, Londrina, Náutico, Vasco da Gama | Bahia, Ceará, Criciúma, Joinville, Paraná, Paysandu, Sampaio Corrêa |
| Série C | | Fortaleza |

Source: *TV Sports Markets* ¹ Disputed

play in Série A. Its offer was equivalent to a total of BRL1.1bn per year – BRL600m for free-to-air and BRL500m for pay-television rights – between 20 Série A clubs. Its spend will be lower as some clubs have signed with Esporte Interativo.

A 17th club, São Paulo, accepted an offer for pay-television rights only.

Globo proposes to split 40 per cent of its total fee equally between the Série A clubs, 30 per cent equally between the 16 clubs which avoid relegation and 30 per cent based on television audiences.

Both broadcasters have offered clubs signing-on fees on top of rights fees in order to persuade them to agree deals. The largest was BRL120m, paid by Globo to Flamengo – BRL70m was paid up front; the remainder will be paid in instalments of BRL30m and BRL20m.

Signing-on fees are extremely valuable for Brazilian clubs, many of which struggle to remain financially viable.

Esporte Interativo is the first challenger to Globo's dominance since the latter saw off competition from commercial channel Record in 2011. Then, Globo went around the Clube dos 13, the organisation which then represented the top 20 clubs, to negotiate with the clubs directly.

Rights-sharing?

Brazilian law requires a broadcaster hold rights to the home and away teams in order to show a match.

Similar legislation in Spain – where LaLiga was until recently the most high-profile league in which clubs sold their rights individually – resulted in a series of rights-sharing deals between broadcasters, albeit characterised by brinkmanship, legal claims and counter-claims (*TV Sports Markets* 16:15).

Local experts say it is inevitable that

Globo and Esporte Interativo will reach some form of rights-sharing agreement, but there is no time pressure to do so as new deals with clubs do not start until the 2019 season.

TV Sports Markets understands there has been no contact between Globo and Esporte Interativo as yet on the matter.

Globo will be in a position to dictate terms in any agreement. It holds rights to the two best-supported clubs (Corinthians and Flamengo) and four of the top five (including São Paulo and Vasco da Gama).

Today's monopoly

Globo currently holds all club media rights until 2018. It shows three matches per Série A round free-to-air, two matches per round via the SporTV channels of its pay-television broadcaster Globosat, and all matches on its Premiere FC pay-per-view channel.

In the 2016 season it will distribute at least BRL1.4bn to the 20 Série A clubs. This consists of BRL840m in club deals of various magnitudes, BRL60m based on each club's finishing position, and a BRL500m minimum guarantee of revenue from Premiere FC.

Globo's fees increase yearly depending on inflation, which has been over nine per cent year-on-year each month since July.

Globo has three-year deals with 18 Brazilian clubs, from 2015 to 2018, while smaller clubs are offered single-season deals upon promotion to Série A.

Seven clubs – Atlético Mineiro, Botafogo, Corinthians, Cruzeiro, Sport Recife, Vasco da Gama and Vitória – extended deals for their Série A rights late last year for two more years, covering 2019 and 2020. Six have agreed to Globo's updated offer, overwriting the extension.

The seventh is expected to be a formality.

Globo will also hold rights to the second tier Série B over five years, from 2018 to 2022, for about BRL170m per year. These rights are sold collectively by the Brazilian football confederation, the Confederação Brasileira de Futebol.

Unsold rights

The clubs which signed deals with Esporte Interativo are yet to sell their free-to-air or pay-per-view rights, though Globo is the only realistic buyer.

Local sources said the clubs were considering selling their remaining rights collectively in order to extract the maximum fee from the media company.

It is likely Globo would seek to sign deals with these clubs on lower terms to reflect its reduced exclusivity. As the only buyer, it will be able to exert considerable pressure on individual clubs. ■

BASKETBALL

Sky's Fiba deal part of wider plan to revive sport in Italy

By Frank Dunne

Sky Italia's deal for International Basketball Federation (Fiba) national team rights this month is part of a broader plan to help revive the fortunes of the sport in Italy.

Pay-television broadcaster Sky became the first broadcaster to acquire Fiba's new rights package in a six-year deal, from 2016 to 2021, based on the expanded national team calendar unveiled last year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:18).

The deal also includes rights to the July qualifying tournaments for the Rio Olympic Games, one of which will be held in Turin (see panel, page 5).

Sky is thought to have paid about €6m (\$6.9m) in total for the rights across the six years. Almost all of the value of the contract is in the men's events.

The rights were sold by Fiba Media, the joint venture of Fiba and digital media specialists Perform Group. In February, Perform agreed a €500m, 17-year deal to produce and distribute Fiba content from

2017 to 2033 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:3).

Matteo Mammi – Sky’s director of sports, outside productions and operations – told *TV Sports Markets* the broadcaster had identified an opportunity to be part of rebuilding the sport in Italy.

“Basketball has great growth potential because it has fallen below where it had been over a decade or so ago,” he said. “This is the moment for us to revive its fortunes, to come in and help it grow. Our national team is getting stronger and we could be entering a positive cycle.”

He said Sky would work closely with the Italian basketball federation, the Federazione Italiana Pallacanestro, and the Italian National Olympic Committee (Coni), to develop the sport at a grassroots level – working with schools and on infrastructure projects like play areas – and helping both bodies create digital platforms for the sport.

“We want to be the catalysts of the development of a new era in Italian basketball. Securing the portfolio of rights was the first step of a much bigger project,” Mammi said.

The deal means Sky now has the rights in Italy to all major basketball properties. It holds rights to the NBA, the NCAA, the Euroleague, and Italy’s top domestic league, Serie A1.

One expert said that being seen as the ‘home of basketball’ in Italy would help Sky when rights to important properties, like the NBA, are up for renewal.

Other factors

There were several other reasons why Sky bid for the Fiba package.

First, it enjoyed record basketball ratings for EuroBasket 2015, in which Italy reached the quarter-finals. It paid between €600,000 and €700,000 for the rights in a one-off deal (*TV Sports Markets* 18:23).

Second, Sky sees the revamped Fiba package as a better investment for a pay-television broadcaster than was the case in the past, before the creation of the new two-year qualification cycle.

“The new format provides continuity, greater frequency and a greater volume of content,” Mammi said. “To have this rich structure of qualifying games is important for a pay-TV operator.”

The Fiba package also provides Sky with a rare opportunity to acquire exclusivity over a national team sport. “Basketball is the most important team sport after football, which is completely listed at national team level, so this was a good opportunity,” Mammi said.

The only Italian basketball matches covered by listed-events legislation are the semi-final and final of the World Cup, if Italy is playing. If Italy were to get that far in 2019, Sky would show matches on its free-to-air channel, TV8.

However, with Italy currently ranked 35th in the world, there is no guarantee it will qualify for the World Cup, which would hit viewing figures badly.

Italy did not qualify for the 2014 World Cup. As a consequence, none of the major broadcasters – state broadcaster Rai, Sky and commercial and pay-television operator Mediaset – was interested in the rights. The tournament ended up being broadcast by digital-terrestrial sports channel Sportitalia, which paid about €100,000 in rights and production costs (*TV Sports Markets* 18:15).

Mammi accepted there was a risk that Italy may not qualify for the EuroBasket or the World Cup finals, but said this was the kind of risk broadcasters lived with for most acquisitions. The total investment over the six years was also modest compared to Sky’s investments in football, he said.

Football is the main driver of subscriptions to the Sky Sports channels, followed by Formula One and MotoGP. Basketball is among the third-tier sports for the platform but Sky believes the rights can help it add subscribers.

Sky will not have absolute exclusivity over the World Cup in Italy. All matches from the competition will also be shown live on Fiba’s livebasketball.tv streaming service. However, with coverage being in English only, and costing €6.99 per month to access, Sky does not expect the service to erode its audiences.

Rai outflanked

To win the rights, Sky had to see off a very aggressive bid from Rai. Rai’s head of sports rights, Pier Francesco Forleo, was determined to win the rights after the broadcaster came in for heavy criticism

Fiba rights acquired by Sky Italia

Men’s events

- Rio Olympic Games qualifiers: Italy, Serbia, and the Philippines, July 4-10
- EuroBasket 2017: Finland, Israel, Romania and Turkey, August 31 to September 17
- European qualifiers for 2019 World Cup, November 2017 to February 2019
- 2019 World Cup: China, August 31 to September 15
- Qualifiers for EuroBasket 2021: November 2019 to February 2021
- EuroBasket 2021: August/September
- 2021 Americup, Asia Cup, and AfroBasket Cup

Women’s events

- EuroBasket Women 2017: Czech Republic, June 16-25
- 2018 Women’s World Cup: Spain, September
- EuroBasket Women 2019: June
- EuroBasket Women 2021: June

from Italian basketball fans after missing out on a EuroBasket tournament in which the national team performed well.

Rai is understood to have pushed Sky hard both on price and promotional commitments, backed up by the advantage of being able to reach bigger audiences. However, it is understood that in a second round of bids there was a big difference between the two offers.

Rai’s determination to acquire the rights was one of the reasons Fiba chose to sell its new package in Italy first, despite the fact it is not a hugely valuable basketball market.

The other was that Sky had expressed an interest in acquiring rights to the Olympic qualifiers, but said it would be more interested if the rights were available as part of a multi-year package.

Rights to the 2016 Olympic qualifier matches are not covered by the Perform deal but were included in the same tender process. The inclusion of the qualifier rights did not require any amendment to the Fiba/Perform contract. All contracts are signed by Fiba. ■

SNOOKER

World Snooker signs renewals with two key TV partners

By Richard Welbirg

Stronger ratings, new events and the offer of exclusivity helped World Snooker agree a contract extension with Eurosport last month at a significantly increased fee.

The international pay-television broadcaster struck two deals with the sport's global governing body, both for 10 seasons from 2016-17 to 2025-26. Across the two deals, Eurosport will pay an average of between €4m (\$4.6m) and €4.5m per season across the 10 seasons, an increase of more than 100 per cent.

The first deal is a renewal of Eurosport's existing agreement for pan-European rights to World Snooker events. Rights to the World Championship, the Masters, and the UK Championship – the three most prestigious events – will remain non-exclusive in the UK.

Eurosport's existing five-season deal, from 2011-12 to 2015-16, is worth €2m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 15:14). The new deal will start at €2.1m in the first season and rise incrementally each season.

But the bulk of the total increase comes from the second deal, covering exclusive rights in the UK to the Home Nations Series, which will begin in the 2016-17 season. The series has been created by adding new events in England, Ireland and Scotland to the existing Welsh Open. Eurosport's deal will start at €1.7m in 2016-17, rising incrementally each season.

World Snooker made clear it would agree a 10-season deal, rather than the traditional five, if Eurosport – owned by US media group Discovery Communications – met its asking price.

World Snooker chairman Barry Hearn told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "You have to put the blame on Discovery. They are a different type of player than we've been used to dealing with. Eurosport of old never wanted to get into too long a commitment. Discovery say: we like it, we want it for longer – like in the US, and I

BBC also extends Scottish football and marathon deals

UK public-service broadcaster the BBC has renewed deals with World Snooker (see main story), the Scottish Professional Football League, and the London Marathon over the past month.

Last week, the BBC's Scottish arm announced a four-season extension to its non-exclusive highlights rights deal with the SPFL, from 2016-17 to 2019-20, worth an average of £2.65m (€3.4m/\$3.9m) per season. It will pay £2.5m in 2016-17, rising £100,000 year-on-year to £2.8m in 2019-20.

Its current three-season deal is worth an average of £1.33m per season from 2013-14 to 2015-16: £1.3m per season in 2013-14 and 2014-15, and £1.4m in 2015-16.

The SPFL pushed hard for an increase from the BBC, with chairman Ralph Topping saying in April that the broadcaster needed "to show a commitment to the national game in Scotland". Holding at least some

think it's coming over the pond."

For the broadcaster, the property offers 1,400 hours of content each season with decent and consistent ratings; ratings that have increased in recent years. Eurosport's average European audiences for the 2016 World Championship increased by 18 per cent compared to the 2015 edition. It is a fairly strong property in Germany, Poland, Portugal and Romania.

And adding the Home Nations rights gives Discovery an exclusive UK property it is likely to exploit, at least in part, on digital-terrestrial channel Quest.

The deals were agreed late last year during an exclusive three-month negotiating period in Eurosport's existing contract. World Snooker was advised on its deals by the IMG agency.

IMG has a commission-based "lifetime deal" with World Snooker, to distribute the worldwide media rights of all World Snooker events, as well as to enhance event development and sponsorship rights (*TV Sports Markets* 15:5).

Commenting on the deal to *TV Sports Markets*, the agency's head of sales EMEA & global business development worldwide, Adam Kelly, said: "We built

Scottish domestic rights is important to the BBC's public-service remit.

The SPFL has agreed a four-season deal so it will end in the same year as the league's live rights deals with pay-television broadcasters BT Sport and Sky (*TV Sports Markets* 19:17; 20:1).

It covers the top four divisions of Scottish football – the Premiership, the Championship, League One and League Two. The BBC will continue to show highlights on its *Sportscene* sports news programme and on the BBC Sport website.

The BBC also extended its deal last month for exclusive rights to the London Marathon by three years, from 2019 to 2021. Its previous deal ran for six years, from 2013 to 2018. The BBC's rights fee is thought to be broadly flat at about £500,000 per year.

The BBC covers production costs of between £300,000 and £500,000 per edition on top of its rights fee. ■

up a really strong relationship with Eurosport around snooker. They worked closely with us and the rights-holder to build the sport and develop it."

BBC renews UK rights

Last week World Snooker announced it had also extended its long-running deal with UK public-service broadcaster the BBC. The renewal was agreed directly between the two parties in January.

The BBC's deal, which covers non-exclusive rights to the World Championship, the Masters and the UK Championship, has been extended to cover the 2017-18 and 2018-19 seasons.

The broadcaster's fee is unchanged on the approximately £3.3m (€4.2m/\$4.8m) per season it pays in its current three-season deal, from 2014-15 to 2016-17. It paid £3m per season in its previous three-season deal, from 2011-12 to 2013-14.

World Snooker's relationship with the BBC is of such importance there was no question it would look elsewhere. The BBC covers production costs of between £2m and £3m per season on top of its rights fee, while the exposure it gives

snooker is vital in generating interest and increasing the property's sponsorship value.

Hearn said: "On the BBC we get massive free-to-air exposure, which gives us not only global credibility but accrues considerable value from a sponsorship perspective."

The shorter term of the renewal was because of uncertainty whether the World Championships would continue to be hosted in Sheffield, as World Snooker's agreement with the city council was set to expire following the 2017 event.

But World Snooker last week confirmed a new 10-season deal with the council, ensuring the World Championships will be played in the city until at least 2027. One source close to the deal said it was likely the BBC would look to extend its deal further in the near future. ■

SKIING

EBU to claim Swiss rights as domestic market heats up

By Robin Jellis

The European Broadcasting Union is in the process of finalising a long-form contract for international rights to Swiss skiing federation events, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

The EBU, the consortium of public-service broadcasters, is understood to have agreed a six-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2021-22, worth about CHF7m (€6.4m/\$7.3m) per season.

The deal will be global, excluding Switzerland, and covers all World Cup events which take place in Switzerland.

The federation, Swiss-Ski, currently has a five-season deal with Swiss public-service broadcaster SRG for both domestic and international rights. That deal, from 2011-12 to 2015-16, is worth CHF5m per season. The majority of the value is in the international rights.

SRG currently retains domestic rights for use on its own channels and passes on the international rights to the Infront Sports & Media agency. In return it gets access in Switzerland to much of Infront's

sizeable portfolio of winter sports rights.

This time, Swiss-Ski is selling its domestic and international rights separately as it feels it is not currently earning market value for them. The federation is being advised on the sale of its rights by the Profile Partners agency.

The EBU beat a strong bid from Infront to acquire the international rights. A short-form contract is currently in place.

Acquiring Swiss-Ski rights is a signal of intent from the EBU, which for years has lost ground in winter sports to Infront.

The agency had become the de facto home of international skiing rights, agreeing deals with all major skiing federations other than the Austrian federation, the Österreichischer Skiverband. These rights are held by the EBU in a four-season deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, worth just under €8.5m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:1; 18:3).

Events operated by the Austrian and Swiss skiing federations are considered the most prestigious in Europe, followed by those organised by the German and Norwegian skiing federations.

The deal represents renewed aggression from the EBU, which last month agreed a deal for Union Cycliste Internationale rights (see separate story, page 1).

In March, it also extended a deal with the United World Wrestling governing body. That deal is for four years, from 2017 to 2020, and is worth about €50,000 per year. This is up slightly on the current four-year deal, from 2013 to 2016, worth about €45,000 per year. The rights are popular with EBU members in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Domestic negotiations

SRG is in advanced negotiations with Swiss-Ski over a deal for the federation's domestic rights, and is the likeliest buyer. Swiss-Ski is understood to be expecting slightly more than CHF1m per season.

SRG is unlikely to face much competition for the rights for two reasons.

First, it has invested vast sums to establish underground cabling infrastructure to enable it to produce live coverage. No other Swiss broadcaster has such facilities, which are required to produce coverage to a high standard.

The public-service broadcaster

currently covers production costs of between CHF1.5m and CHF2m per season on top of its rights fee.

Second, telco Swisscom – which runs Swiss pay-television broadcaster Teleclub – told Swiss-Ski in January 2014 it would not bid. It works closely with SRG on some rights deals and on technical distribution, and did not want to compete directly against SRG for the rights.

Football and ice hockey

As well as the Swiss-Ski rights, two of the most important and valuable domestic sports properties are currently on the market: the Swiss Football League and the Swiss Ice Hockey Federation.

SFL media and sponsorship rights are currently held by Swisscom in a five-season deal, from 2012-13 to 2016-17, worth a total of CHF32m per season. This is split about CHF15m per season for media rights and CHF17m per season for sponsorship rights.

Swisscom has a sublicensing deal with SRG for rights to one live match per week from the top tier – 36 per season in total – plus highlights.

SFL rights from 2017-18 onward were tendered on April 25, with bids due by May 20. The league expects to finalise a new deal before this summer's European Championship, which begins on June 10.

In the new tender, media and sponsorship rights have been separated. Media rights will be sold first because it is understood brands want to know the level of free-to-air exposure they will get before agreeing a sponsorship deal.

SIHF rights are currently held jointly by SRG and Swisscom in a five-season deal, from 2012-13 to 2016-17, worth about CHF18m per season.

Rights from 2017-18 onward were tendered on May 2, with bids said to be due by May 27. The federation aims to agree a deal for at least four seasons.

Both the SFL and the SIHF are being advised on the sale of their media rights by Profile. Local experts anticipate strong competition between Teleclub and cable operator UPC Cablecom, which is expected to move into sports rights.

Roger Feiner, former director of sport at Teleclub, moved to UPC in October last year as vice president of content

strategy. The move is seen by insiders as a signal of intent from UPC to bid for premium sports rights in the country.

UPC is also said to be bidding for the rights to the German Bundesliga in Switzerland for four seasons, from 2017-18 to 2020-21. ■

RUSSIA

Eurosport rising from the ashes of tough Russian market

By Callum McCarthy

Eurosport continued its gradual rise from a basic-tier to a premium pay-television broadcaster this month in Russia, following deals for National Hockey League and Wimbledon tennis rights.

The deals suggest rights-holders may have a broadcast alternative to Gazprom Media, which has benefited from the consolidation of the Russian sports-rights market since November 2015. Since then, Gazprom Media-owned free-to-air and pay-television broadcaster Match TV has been the only consistent buyer of sports rights in the country (see box).

Eurosport's acquisition of NHL rights, in a three-season deal from 2016-17 to 2018-19, is worth just over \$500,000 (€435,000) per season.

The deal was agreed with the IMG agency, which acquired the NHL's global rights excluding Canada, the US and the Nordics last October. IMG's deal is worth just under \$5m per season, from 2016-17 to 2020-21 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:18).

It is the first time since 2011-12 that the NHL regular season will be shown in Russia, when state broadcaster VGTRK struck a one-season deal for the regular season and playoffs. Match TV earlier this year agreed a one-off deal to broadcast the NHL playoffs during the 2015-16 season – the first time they will be broadcast since VGTRK's deal.

Eurosport's three-year deal for Wimbledon rights, from 2016 to 2018, is worth just under \$300,000 per year plus a 50:50 share of advertising revenue with Wimbledon's organiser, the All England Lawn Tennis Club. The AELTC was

Eurosport's strategy to satisfy Russian media regulation

International sports broadcaster Eurosport has in recent months adapted its strategy in the Russian market after government moves to regulate foreign ownership and influence over the country's mass media market.

A law entitled 'On Mass Media' dictates that any media outlet must be at least 80-per-cent owned by a Russian entity, and that a pay-television broadcaster's content must be at least 75 per cent funded by a Russian entity in order to show advertising.

Eurosport's parent company, media group Discovery Communications, sold 80 per cent of its Russian business to

the National Media Group, a privately-owned Russian media holding, last September. Together they formed Media Alliance, a joint venture which runs Discovery's channels in Russia.

This has allowed Eurosport to continue selling advertising space on its channels, which a non-Russian entity would not have been able to do.

With a firmer foothold in the Russian market, Eurosport is expected to localise its coverage by hiring Russian presenters and journalists. The broadcaster is also expanding its Russian sales team in an attempt to increase its advertising revenue. ■

advised on the deal by IMG.

The cash fee earned by the AELTC in Russia will drop by 40 per cent compared to its previous one-year deal with Match TV in 2015, worth \$500,000. That deal did not include a revenue share.

Local experts believe both deals to be astute acquisitions by Eurosport. Its purchase of Wimbledon rights completes its set of tennis grand slams in Russia, while ice hockey is one of the country's most popular sports, alongside football.

But while Eurosport's activity may give the impression of a resurgent market, the broadcaster faced little competition for either property.

NHL

The NHL has had a frosty relationship with the Russian government and its media outlets in recent years, for two main reasons.

First, the NHL is by far the best ice hockey league in the world, luring Russian stars and prospects away from Russia's domestic league, the Kontinental Hockey League.

Second, KHL president Dmitry Chernyshenko is also chairman of Gazprom Media, the majority state-owned parent company of Match TV. The broadcaster is thought to have declined to buy NHL rights as it fears an erosion of the KHL's television audience. The KHL is only available via its own subscription channel, which is exclusively distributed to pay-television platforms by Gazprom

Media from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

Match TV's deal for this year's playoffs was only agreed due to the limited overlap between the NHL and KHL playoffs, and the emergence of Russian stars such as Vladimir Tarasenko and Nikita Kucherov. The NHL playoffs began on April 14 and will end in June, while the KHL playoffs ended on April 19.

Wimbledon

The AELTC strongly prefers long-term media-rights deals in an attempt to create closer relationships with broadcasters.

With Match TV, the AELTC was not able to create a close relationship. Russian interest is key to a sports property gaining primetime slots on free-to-air television, and the poor showing of Russian players at last year's tournament severely limited these opportunities. Of the 11 male and female Russian players at last year's tournament only one – Maria Sharapova – progressed from the second round.

Sharapova, Russia's most famous sportswoman, is highly likely to be banned during this year's Wimbledon due to testing positive for a banned substance.

Without Russian players progressing in the tournament, Match TV is far less likely to show matches live in primetime – or at all – depending on its schedule.

The decreased interest from Match TV and the opportunity to sign with an experienced tennis broadcaster in Eurosport meant the AELTC was willing to accept a lower upfront fee. ■

TABLE TENNIS

ITTF opts for Seca to make the most of Chinese boom

By Richard Welbirg

The International Table Tennis Federation awarded its rights in China to sports marketing company Seca as it believes it is the best partner to ease ITTF content into the Chinese digital market.

The deal with Seca is for digital rights to major ITTF events and covers mainland China over four years, from 2017 to 2020. Seca will pay a minimum guarantee of just over \$2m (€1.7m) per year – any revenue earned above the guarantee will be shared.

This is the first time the ITTF has had a digital-only deal in China. The federation has retained the ability to sell its linear broadcaster rights separately.

Seca's contract was agreed last month and was brokered by the ITTF's in-house marketing agency, TMS International.

TMS did not tender the rights, but held conversations with players in the market, including digital platforms such as LeSports and PPTV. It is likely the federation could have earned more from a direct deal with a platform, but there were ancillary benefits to agreeing a deal with an intermediary.

For one, a direct deal with a digital platform would leave TMS – a small team – to sell sponsorship rights alone in the market. Seca will support the ITTF's marketing and activation over the course of its deal for the digital rights.

TV Sports Markets understands the deal contains an extension clause, but also gives the ITTF the ability to walk away from the contract if it isn't working.

The ITTF will sign off all deals. One source told *TV Sports Markets* that Seca is close to a deal with digital streaming platform PPTV.

Seca is owned by private equity firm China Media Capital, which also owns the China Sports Media agency – CSM notably holds rights to the domestic football top tier, the Chinese Super League (*TV Sports Markets* 19:19).

Although CMC's companies are run independently with each having their own specific focus, they do not compete against one another. While CSM focuses on football, Seca's focus is on combat sports, skating and table tennis. It is also involved in event and talent management.

ITTF rights in China are currently held by state broadcaster CCTV in a four-year deal, from 2013 to 2016, worth \$1m per year. The federation also has deals with regional broadcasters Hunan Broadcasting System and Guangdong TV, each worth about \$100,000 per year (*TV Sports Markets* 18:4).

These deals were struck with the TSA agency, which distributed ITTF rights worldwide from 2011 to 2015, paying a minimum guarantee of \$2.4m per year. The TSA partnership was intended to run until 2016 but was ended one year early.

The ITTF carved out China, Chinese Taipei, Japan and Singapore when agreeing a deal with the Lagardère Sports agency in March. That five-year deal, from 2016 to 2020, is worth about \$750,000 (€670,000) per year for rights to all ITTF events outside these four territories (*TV Sports Markets* 20:6). ■

MOTORSPORT

Competition dearth hits F1 values in Austria and Russia

By Callum McCarthy

The price of Formula One media rights has fallen and stayed flat in recent deals for Austria and Russia respectively, reflecting the lack of competition for the property in both markets.

Austrian public-service broadcaster ORF renewed its rights last month in a three-year deal, from 2017 to 2019, worth about \$12m (€10.4m) per year. This is a decrease of about 33 per cent on the value of its current deal, which covers 2015 and 2016, worth about \$18m per season.

The deal was agreed after much internal deliberation from ORF. Like many European public-service broadcasters, ORF's sports budget has fallen markedly and it has been considering dropping

coverage of Formula One for over a decade. Among its reasons, the high cost of the rights and lower audience figures are the most prominent, local experts say.

With no pay-television rights to be sold in Austria – these rights are held by Sky Deutschland as part of a wider deal which also covers Germany and Switzerland – ORF was the only serious bidder (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

One informed source said commercial broadcaster Puls 4, a subsidiary of German media company ProSiebenSat.1, was also interested in the rights. It is not known whether Puls 4 submitted a bid.

ORF will continue to broadcast all races live, as well as qualifying and Friday practice sessions, on its main terrestrial ORF Eins channel.

In Russia, free-to-air and pay-television broadcaster Match TV – owned by Gazprom Media, a subsidiary of state-owned energy group Gazprom – acquired rights for 2016 shortly before the start of the season, agreeing a deal worth about \$2m. This is about the same value as a free-to-air deal with state broadcaster VGTRK which covered the 2015 season.

There was no real alternative for the rights as Eurosport was not considered by Formula One Management, the championship's commercial rights-holder, due to its pay-television status and comparatively limited reach.

The rights have remained at about the same value since 2010, when VGTRK was in the final year of a three-year deal. This is despite the lack of competition in Russia's free-to-air market and the ruble's rapid depreciation against the dollar in 2014 and 2015. Local sources say there are two reasons behind this.

First, local interest in Russian drivers Vitaly Petrov (who drove in Formula One from 2010 to 2012) and Daniil Kvyat (who has been active since 2014).

Second, the introduction of the Russian grand prix in 2014, which boosted interest and investment in the sport.

Match TV is investing heavily in Formula One production, sending its own camera crews to all 21 races in 2016. It is also broadcasting qualifying and races live on its free-to-air channel Match TV, while practices are broadcast on its pay-television Match Arena channel. ■

TVSportsMarkets RIGHTSTRACKER

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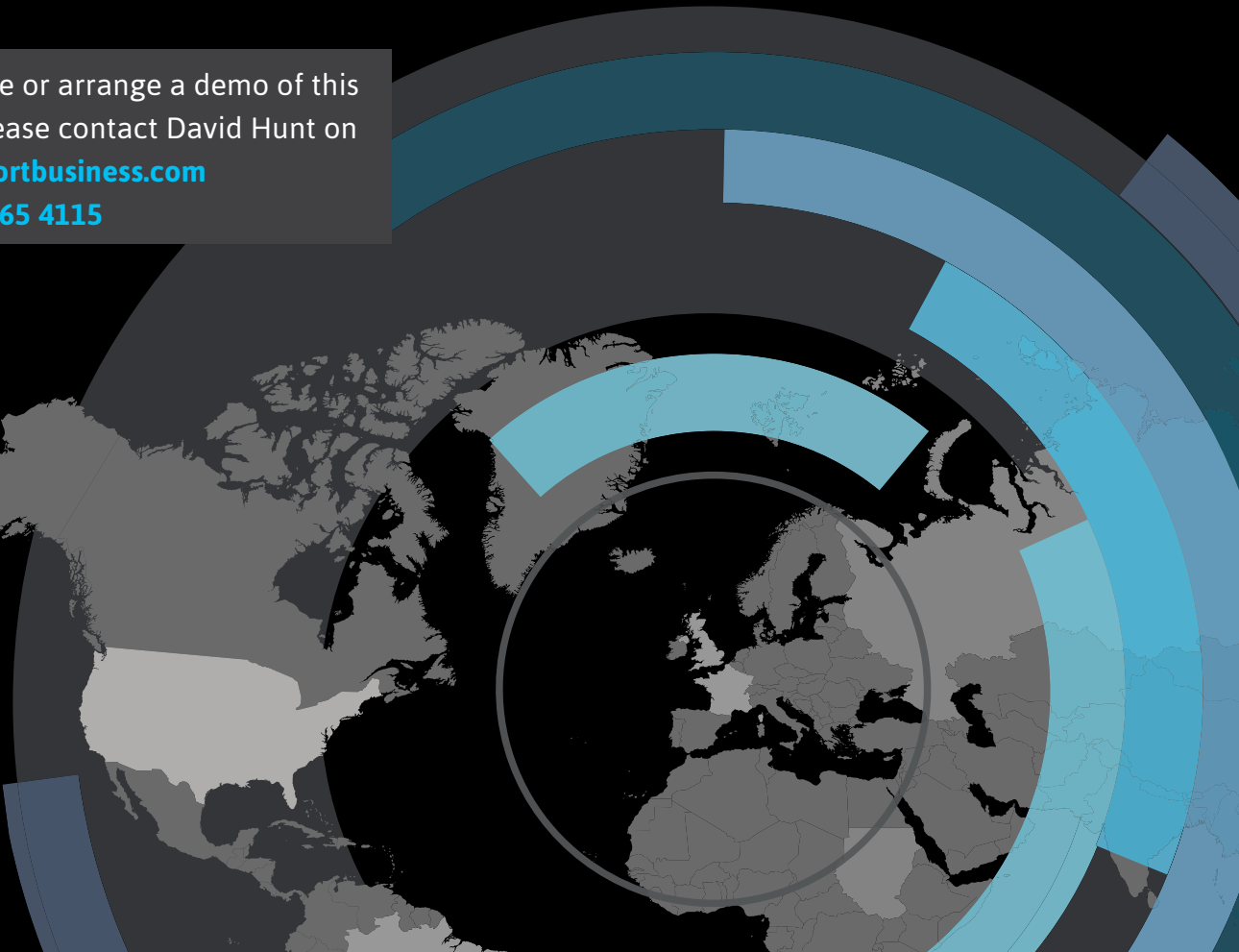
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 28 to May 11

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: Euro 2016, DFB-Pokal, Copa América Centenario, CSL and more

- **Football:** Portuguese pay-television broadcaster Sport TV acquired rights for the Uefa Euro 2016 national team tournament in a sublicensing deal with public-service broadcaster RTP. Sport TV will broadcast all 51 games during the tournament, 27 of which will be exclusive. RTP retained free-to-air rights for 24 matches, including the opening game, all of the knockout matches and fixtures featuring Portugal's national team. RTP will launch a 4K channel in order to show up to eight games in ultra-HD.
- **Football:** Hong Kong telco PCCW acquired non-exclusive rights for Euro 2016 in a deal with the MP & Silva agency. PCCW will show all 51 matches on its Now TV pay-television service.
- **Football:** Sport1 agreed a deal with SportA, the sports-rights agency of German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF, granting the sports broadcaster rights to online video highlights of Euro 2016.
- **Football:** The German Football Association confirmed a three-season extension to its rights deal with pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland for the DFB-Pokal club knockout competition, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. The deal was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 20:3.
- **Football:** German commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1 acquired rights for the Copa América Centenario national team tournament. The Kabel Eins channel will broadcast 12 games from the opening rounds before Sat.1 takes over with coverage of seven games from the quarter-finals onwards. All 32 games will be streamed live via the Ran.de platform.
- **Football:** Russian sports media platform Match TV acquired rights to the 2016 Copa América Centenario.
- **Football:** The Scottish Professional Football League agreed a four-season extension to its highlights deal with the BBC Scotland division of the UK public-service broadcaster, from 2016-17 to 2019-20 (page 6).
- **Football:** The MyChinaChannel and Orientivity media companies jointly acquired rights in Singapore for the Chinese Super League for the remainder of the 2015-16 season and the whole of the 2016-17 campaign. They partnered with telco StarHub to show matches on its SuperSports channels.
- **Football:** Italian digital-terrestrial sports channel Sportitalia bought rights for the 2016 Campeonato Brasileiro Série A, the top division in Brazil.
- **Football:** Spanish commercial broadcaster Atresmedia acquired rights for the 2016 Uefa European U-17 Championship national team tournament. It will exploit the rights on its Mega channel.
- **Football:** International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network acquired exclusive rights in Poland for the 2016 International Champions Cup pre-season club tournament.

SINCE LAST TIME

- The US Federal Communications Commission voted to approve the proposed \$78.7bn (€68bn) merger of Charter Communications and fellow pay-television operator Time Warner Cable. A condition of the merger is that Charter cannot charge online video streaming companies for improved delivery of content, or institute policies that would prevent online video providers from delivering content to consumers through Charter's networks.
- US sports broadcaster ESPN and telco Verizon reached a settlement in their lawsuit over the latter's 'Custom TV' programming package. ESPN sued Verizon in April 2015 after the telco moved ESPN's channels out of the basic package of its FiOS TV pay-television service. The structure was revised in February. Terms of the settlement were not disclosed.
- Taiwanese live-streaming application 17 secured a \$23m (€20m) investment from the LeSports Innovation Fund, an investment vehicle operated by LeSports, part of Chinese internet company LeEco.
- Hong Kong-based media content and publishing company Culturecom Holdings completed a deal to acquire Chinese

agency Super Sports Media. The takeover, which was announced in January, will be worth up to \$500m (€435m). Super Sports Media has exclusive rights in the country to football's English Premier League through to the end of the 2018-19 season.

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- The NBC Olympics division of US media company NBCUniversal agreed a content partnership with social media platform Snapchat for the 2016 summer Olympic Games and the US Olympic team trials. The partnership will include daily Snapchat 'Live Stories' and an NBC Rio Olympic Discover channel, which will be available throughout the Games. NBC Olympics will co-produce the NBC Rio Olympic Discover channel with media company BuzzFeed. The partners will share advertising revenues, according to the Bloomberg news agency.
- Australian pay-television operator Foxtel struck agreements with six English Premier League clubs, as a result of which it will add the official television channels of Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester United to its Sports Pack offering at no extra charge, and show programming blocks from the official channels of fellow Premier League clubs Arsenal, Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur. All games featuring the six clubs in the league and the FA Cup and League Cup knockout competitions will be shown

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 28 to May 11**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****American Football, Fiba events, boxing, BDO World Trophy and more**

- **American Football:** The NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers entered into a multi-year local rights partnership with WOFL-TV/Fox 35, a regional television channel operated by media company 21st Century Fox. Fox 35 will broadcast live coverage of the Buccaneers' pre-season games and a weekly 30-minute programme that will feature unique content produced by the team.
- **Basketball:** Italian pay-television broadcaster Sky Italia sealed an exclusive deal for national team events operated by Fiba, the sport's global governing body. The agreement will run for six years, from 2016 to 2021 (page 4).
- **Boxing:** US pay-television broadcaster Showtime signed a deal to broadcast coverage of fights featuring British heavyweight world champion boxer Anthony Joshua. Showtime struck the deal with Matchroom Boxing, Joshua's promoter. The multi-fight deal, which will be exclusive in the US, covers three fights. The first fight to be covered by the agreement will take place on June 25 when Joshua takes on American challenger Dominic Breazeale in London.
- **Boxing:** Media company CSI Sports, the owner of international pay-television channel Fight Sports, acquired exclusive live rights for the Saúl Álvarez v Amir Khan fight on May 7. The deal covered more than 40 markets across the world, including Asia, the Baltic territories, Germany, Italy, the Nordic region and Spain. The deal included a series of programmes featuring the boxers' previous fights and six episodes following their preparations for the fight.
- **Darts:** UK free-to-air digital entertainment channel Dave secured a deal to broadcast the 2016 British Darts Organisation's World Trophy event. Dave will broadcast 10 hours of live coverage every day during the tournament.
- **Equestrian:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC renewed a domestic rights agreement for the Badminton Horse Trials for four years, from 2017 to 2020. The BBC will show live coverage of the Sunday events and digital red button coverage of cross-country events on Saturdays.
- **Esports:** German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland struck a deal to show the finale of the 2015-16 season of the Virtuellen Bundesliga, which is operated by the German Football League. The sky.de website will stream live coverage of the quarter-finals on May 14 before television coverage of the semi-finals and final is broadcast on May 15.

on a delayed basis. There will also be exclusive access to the clubs' pre-season games, player and management interviews and press conferences.

- US camera manufacturer GoPro extended its partnership with Velon, the umbrella group of professional cycling teams, for two years, 2016 and 2017. GoPro's Hero4 Session cameras will be used to capture on-bike and behind-the-scenes footage of each of Velon's 11 teams. GoPro will show the content on its digital and social media platforms.
- US OTT service FuboTV agreed a carriage deal with North American sports broadcaster One World Sports.
- US production company Pilgrim Media Group entered into a partnership with esports tournament organiser ESL to create and distribute original video content.
- The Vice Sports division of media company Vice Media agreed a deal to produce an exclusive short-form series for US sports broadcaster ESPN. The content will be available on ESPN's television, digital and mobile platforms as well as on Vice platforms. Selected Vice Sports series, including original episodes of *The Clubhouse*, will run across ESPN's linear and digital channels. Documentaries from ESPN Films' *30 for 30* series will also be distributed on the new Viceland television channel.
- Pay-television broadcaster Star India unveiled plans to launch a new sports service on its over-the-top platform, Hotstar. The subscription service is set to launch in the coming months, according to James Murdoch, chief executive of media company 21st Century Fox, which owns Star India.
- Indian pay-television broadcaster Neo Sports agreed a carriage deal with pay-television provider Tata Sky.
- Ukrainian cable-television operator Volia agreed a deal with international sports broadcaster Eurosport to carry the Eurosport 1, Eurosport 2 and Eurosport 1 HD channels.
- The European Broadcasting Union held "constructive" talks with Romanian government officials over the future of Televiziunea Română (TVR) following the suspension of the public-service broadcaster's EBU membership privileges. The broadcaster lost its privileges after failing to pay debts totalling CHF16m (€14.5m/\$16.7m), leaving TVR without access to EBU member service Sports News Exchange. The broadcaster also lost the right to broadcast sporting events whose rights are held by the consortium.
- Moldovan public-service broadcaster Teleradio-Moldova launched a new television channel to accommodate an increase in sports coverage. The channel, entitled Moldova 2, began broadcasting on May 3.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- Coverage of the Uefa Euro 2016 national team football tournament in Spain remains in limbo after commercial broadcaster Mediaset rejected the opportunity to acquire the

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 28 to May 11

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

Olympic Games, NRL, World Snooker, Wimbledon, horse racing and more

- **Flying Disc:** Online streaming platform Livestream agreed a deal to show coverage of the World Flying Disc Federation's World Ultimate and Guts Championships. Livestream will offer multi-camera coverage of selected round-robin, quarter-final, semi-final and final matches. Coverage will be available for free via the WFDF's official page on the Facebook social network. Livestream will also archive video coverage of the tournament until April next year.
- **Horse Racing:** UK pay-television channel At The Races acquired exclusive rights for the 2016 Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes in the US. The Kentucky Derby took place on May 7. Coverage of the Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes will follow on May 21 and June 11, respectively.
- **Multi-Sport:** Canadian telco Bell acquired exclusive rights for the 2017 Invictus Games, featuring wounded, injured and ill active duty and veteran service members.
- **Olympic Games:** Czech public-service broadcaster Česká Televize acquired rights for the 2018 and 2020 winter and summer Games in a sublicensing deal with US media and entertainment company Discovery Communications (page 2).
- **Rugby League:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand sealed a five-season extension, from 2018 to 2022, to its rights deal with the Australian National Rugby League club competition. The deal includes national team matches between Australia and New Zealand.
- **Rugby Union:** The BBC Scotland division of public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights for the Scotland national team's two-match Test series against Japan.
- **Snooker:** The BBC extended a domestic rights deal for World Snooker rights by two seasons, 2017-18 and 2018-19 (page 6).
- **Snooker:** International sports broadcaster Eurosport signed a 10-season extension, from 2016-17 to 2025-26, for rights to World Snooker events across Europe. Its rights for the World Championship, the Masters and the UK Championship will be non-exclusive in the UK (page 6).
- **Tennis:** BeIN Media Group acquired rights for the Wimbledon Championships in the Middle East and North Africa.
- **US College Sport:** The JMI Sports agency agreed a multimedia rights deal with the athletics division of the University of Pennsylvania for 10 seasons, from 2016-17 to 2025-26.
- **Volleyball:** French digital-terrestrial television channel L'Équipe 21 acquired rights for the International Volleyball Federation's World Olympic Qualification Tournament – the final chance for the France men's national team to qualify for the Rio 2016 Games.

rights during its latest meeting with the CAA Eleven agency. Mediaset said that acquiring the rights at the figure quoted by CAA Eleven would "seriously damage the profitability of the company". Spain remains the only major European market without a rights deal in place for the tournament.

- CAA Eleven launched a tender in France for rights to several Uefa national team football properties. It includes European qualifiers for the Uefa Euro 2020 and 2022 Fifa World Cup tournaments, the 2018-19 and 2020-21 Nations League competitions and other international matches. According to French newspaper *L'Équipe*, the deadline for offers is May 30.
- The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, Thailand's broadcasting regulator, is seeking THB150m (€3.8m/\$4.4m) in additional funding to support a bid for the 2016 summer Olympic Games by a group of domestic broadcasters. The commission's broadcasting committee submitted a budget request to the board of the Broadcasting and Telecommunications Research and Development Fund for the Public Interest. The additional funding would enable all 22 commercial digital-terrestrial television stations in the country to broadcast free-to-air coverage.
- German media company Axel Springer will participate in the auction for the next cycle of rights to the top-tier domestic football Bundesliga, but will not seal a deal at an inflated price, according to chief executive Mathias Döpfner. The new rights cycle will cover four seasons, from 2017-18 to 2020-21. In the current cycle, Axel Springer holds the rights to show clips from matches on its websites, including the online edition of its *Bild* newspaper.
- Football Federation Australia will separate the sale of its rights to the top-tier A-League and the national team World Cup qualifiers in the next cycle, according to the *Herald Sun* newspaper. The current A-League deal will expire in 2017, but FFA is keen to push through a deal ahead of the start of next season.
- Cricket Australia opened a tender process in the US, Canada and the Caribbean for rights to a number of the country's national team and domestic league properties over the five-season period from 2016-17 to 2020-21. Package one comprises men's Twenty20 internationals, Big Bash League and Women's BBL games, women's internationals and Cricket Australia programming. Package two features men's Test matches, men's one-day internationals and Cricket Australia programming. Bids are due by 5pm GMT on May 16.
- Brazilian broadcaster Rede Bandeirantes will not renew its sublicensing rights deal with media company Globo for coverage of the Campeonato Brasileiro Série A, the top division of domestic football, for the 2016 season. The broadcaster blamed Brazil's "worsening economic crisis" for the decision.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from April 28 to May 11**ALSO SINCE LAST TIME**

- The NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal linked up with virtual reality technology company NextVR to present coverage of this year's Kentucky Derby US horse racing event on May 7. Content was displayed on a virtual video screen and through the NBC channel application on NextVR's portal.
- US media and entertainment Discovery Communications, the parent company of international sports broadcaster Eurosport, will impose cost-saving measures that could create between \$40m (€34.8m) and \$60m in severance and related expenses. According to Discovery chief executive David Zaslav, costs will be cut in areas that will not "nourish audiences or help us grow long term".
- The USA Track & Field national governing body switched its free online streaming service to a subscription-based model. Prices for the new +Plus service on USATF.tv will start from \$8.33 (€7.24) per month. Under the new subscription model, customers will have access to additional content and other RunnerSpace channels. The +Plus service will feature live coverage of all USATF track and field events, except those broadcast on pay-television channel NBCSN on Saturday afternoons.
- UK satellite platform Freesat will be able to offer pay-television sports channels via broadband connections after the BBC Trust, the UK public-service broadcaster's independent governing body, approved the move. Freesat is jointly owned by the BBC and UK commercial broadcaster ITV.
- BT Sport's coverage of Uefa club football competitions helped to increase daily audience figures by 45 per cent in the 12 months to the end of March, according to the UK pay-television broadcaster's parent company, telco BT. BT's revenues for the year increased by six per cent to £18.909bn (€24.1bn/\$27.7bn), with adjusted pre-tax profit up nine per cent to £3.473bn. BT Sport has exclusive live rights to the Champions League and Europa League competitions in a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- Racecourse Media Group, the holding company responsible for a range of media and data rights involving 34 of the UK's premier racecourses, distributed media rights payments totalling £80.2m (€102.8m/\$118.3m) to its members in 2015 – an eight-per-cent increase on 2014. RMG paid £29.2m to the racecourses, with the Turf TV broadcast operation contributing £51m. Total video streams of races during 2015 reached 66.3m, up from 51.8m.
- Spanish agency Mediapro sealed a five-year syndicated loan agreement worth a total of €306m (\$352.2m) with eight banks. The new agreement will allow Mediapro to restructure its funding, leading to the cancellation of a €155m syndicated loan signed a year ago, as well as a €98m derivative-based funding instrument.
- Spanish football club Real Madrid launched its official television channel, Real Madrid TV, on digital-terrestrial television in the country.
- Australian telco Optus unveiled its pricing strategy for its exclusive coverage of football's English Premier League in the 2016-17 season. New and existing Optus customers on home broadband, mobile broadband and post-paid mobile phone contracts can watch the Premier League from A\$15 (€10/\$11.50) per month. To watch every game fans will need to sign up to the Optus network, with a current broadband, mobile or Yes TV contract required to access the coverage. Optus customers on plans valued at A\$85 or more per month will be able to watch the league at no additional cost.
- Energy drinks brand Red Bull performed a U-turn by scrapping plans to close its commercial broadcaster, Servus TV. Red Bull announced on May 3 that the broadcaster would be shut down as it had "become economically unsustainable". Reports claimed a rethink over the establishment of a workers' council at the company may have led to the change of heart.
- Online video distribution and marketing company Rightster rebranded as Brave Bison. The name change will be part of a wider strategy that will transform the company from being a third-party technology vendor to a social video broadcaster.
- OC Sport, the operator of the Extreme Sailing Series, generated €49.5m (\$57m) in global media value for the 2015 campaign, in comparison with €44m in 2014, according to media evaluation agency Repucom.

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