

BIATHLON

New, aggressive EBU strategy behind early deal for International Biathlon Union rights

By Robin Jellis

The European Broadcasting Union's new, more hard-nosed and aggressive strategy was the main factor behind its renewal of International Biathlon Union rights this week, *TV Sports Markets* understands.

The EBU, the consortium of Europe's public-service broadcasters, renewed IBU rights for four seasons, from 2018-19 to 2021-22. The deal will be worth just over €90m (\$102m), or €22.5m per season.

This is an increase of about 28.5 per cent on the value of the EBU's current four-season deal with the IBU, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, worth just over €70m, or €17.5m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:11).

On top of its rights fee the EBU will continue to cover production costs of about €20m, or €5m per season.

In total, the EBU will contribute about €110m. IBU president Anders Besseberg told *TV Sports Markets* this week that this made the IBU the EBU's most valuable property outside top football events.

It is understood the early renewal – with more than two seasons remaining on the current deal – was triggered by the EBU's desire to be more aggressive in the sports-rights market.

It follows an eight-year deal for Union Cycliste Internationale rights agreed jointly with the IMG agency last month (*TV Sports Markets* 20:8).

One source close to the union said: "This is part of the new strategy of the EBU – that it goes early and it goes aggressively."

Continued on page 3 ►

AGENCIES

Big questions for new MP & Silva owners

By Frank Dunne

This week's takeover of the MP & Silva agency by Chinese investors Everbright Securities and Baofeng Technology will provide the agency with a platform for expansion to close the gap on its bigger rivals, WME/IMG and Wanda/Infront. But the question being asked across the industry is: whose vision will be driving that growth?

The management structure of the new company is yet to be finalised but it seems certain that the two founders and major shareholders, Riccardo Silva and Andrea

Radrizzani, will remain at the helm of the company for at least five years (see panel, page 5).

It had been widely expected that Radrizzani would sell his stake completely to focus on his Eleven Sports Network pay-television channels and other projects. However, it is understood that the new owners expect him to be fully involved in company strategy.

Radrizzani stepped back from executive operations two years ago but remained a

Continued on page 4 ►

CONTENTS

- 1 Early renewal of IBU rights shows EBU's new-found aggression
- 1 MP & Silva's new Chinese owners face decision over future vision
- 2 Fastrack 1: Uefa suffers in Spain; Turkish league seeks English advice; Fiba lands record deal in China
- 5 DFL expectant with domestic bids for the Bundesliga due next week
League's European process on hold
- 7 UFC grinding out new UK deal
- 8 PPTV gets football rights from beIN
- 8 New format drives netball revenue
- 9 South American football values grow in sub-Saharan Africa
- 10 ICC nets deals in the UK and Russia
- 11 Fastrack 2: K Plus gets EPL rights; Fox snatches US Open in Asia; Sport TV buys share of Euro 2016
- 13 Sports Clips

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FASTRACK 1

NEWS IN BRIEF

Uefa suffers as Euros value drops significantly in Spain

Uefa's much-reduced deal for Euro 2016 rights in Spain reflects an advertising market yet to recover from the financial crash of the late 2000s.

The deal, with commercial broadcaster Mediaset, was agreed last week – less than a month before the tournament begins. It was brokered by CAA Eleven, Uefa's sales agent for its national team competitions.

Mediaset is understood to be paying €28m (\$32m) for rights to 23 live matches – one from each match day, including all Spain matches. Mediaset will exploit the rights on its Telecinco and Cuatro channels.

Uefa has two weeks before the tournament begins to strike a deal for pay-television rights. The package would cover rights to all matches, 28 of which would be exclusive. Experts believe Uefa is seeking about €10m for the rights.

If no acceptable offer is received, Uefa could choose to exploit the rights via its Uefa.tv channel on video-sharing website YouTube. It has used Uefa.tv previously to stream live coverage of its Youth League club competition.

Even if a deal is agreed, Uefa will earn considerably less from the Spanish market than it did for Euro 2012, when Mediaset paid about €70m for rights to all matches (*TV Sports Markets* 16:7).

When it tendered Euro 2016 rights in the country late last year, Uefa hoped to at least match or improve slightly on the 2012 fee, largely because the tournament has increased from 31 to 51 matches (*TV Sports Markets* 20:6).

It received bids from Mediaset, rival commercial broadcaster Atresmedia, and public-service broadcaster TVE, but did not award the rights as none was deemed sufficient. Discussions with the broadcasters continued directly thereafter, with Uefa reducing its expectations over time.

Several local experts said allowing

negotiations to run so long had been a mistake, as the broadcasters' valuations fell in line with the time they had to sell advertising inventory.

One added that Spain's advertising market was 50 or 60 per cent the size of its 2008 peak, which seriously reduced commercial broadcasters' ability to pay a large rights fee. ■

Turkey looks to English experience

The revamp of Turkish professional football agreed earlier this month, which will give Süper Lig clubs control over their media-rights sales, has been guided by sports consultancy Opto Advisers.

The consultancy is made up of three executives who were heavily involved in English football.

Peter Kenyon, former chief executive of Chelsea and Manchester United, is handling all aspects relating to club finances and strategy. Nic Coward, the Premier League's former general secretary, is advising on all aspects of governance. Phil Lines, the league's former head of international media rights, is advising on a remodelling of the sales process.

The changes, which are due to take place from the 2017-18 season, require a change in law. They are expected to come before parliament in the autumn. The proposals are said to have broad political support, including that of president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Earlier this month, the national football federation – Türkiye Futbol Federasyonu – ceded control of media rights to the Turkish Union of Clubs, which has created a new umbrella body, Süperlig AS, to handle rights sales.

The changes are an attempt to increase revenues and help clubs deal with major debt problems. The league said it wanted to be one of the four richest in the world by 2020.

The revamp is causing some concern in the broadcasting industry that it will push up the price of the rights. Pay-television broadcaster Digiturk paid

\$361.25m (€319m) for live Süper Lig rights in 2015-16 – a fee which will increase in line with inflation in 2016-17 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:1).

As one television executive put it this week: "I don't think this is a solution to the debt problem. The clubs will have more money and have no caution against existing problems like debts, bankruptcy and Financial Fair Play violations. The risk is that there will be even more debt."

The TFF and the clubs have discussed changes for more than a year. Opto was brought in to advise last year. ■

Fiba lands bumper deal in China

The International Basketball Federation's (Fiba) deal with Chinese digital company Tencent is thought to be its largest ever on a per-annum basis.

Last week's deal will run for nine years, from 2017 to 2025. Sources put the value of the deal at \$10m (€8.8m) per year. It covers digital rights to all Fiba national team events. There is particular value in the Basketball World Cup of 2019, to be hosted in China.

The rights were sold by Fiba Media, the joint venture between Fiba and digital media specialists the 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).

A tender for the rights in China closed on May 6. Tencent faced competition from rival digital companies LeSports and PPTV.

China is the second country in which Fiba has sold its rights in a new cycle, following a deal with Sky Italia earlier this month (*TV Sports Markets* 20:8).

The length of the Tencent deal, and the timing of the Chinese tender, were based on the rights-holder seeking to lock in a deal while the country's digital market is at a high point.

Fiba can still sell linear broadcast rights in China. Fiba's four-year deal with state broadcaster CCTV ends this year. It is very likely to renew its deal. ■

BIATHLON

New EBU strategy motivated by failure to land Olympics

Continued from page 1 ►

Historically, the EBU has consulted all its members to establish how much each was willing to pay for a property before preparing a bid – this was often a lengthy process, with one insider claiming talks could go on for up to 12 weeks.

The EBU will now consult with three or four of its biggest guarantors for a property before bidding, and will estimate the value it could extract from other markets. If an EBU offer is successful, the consortium will seek fees from its members in smaller markets. In this circumstance, if the EBU member is not willing to pay or is only willing to put forward a low offer, the EBU will sell rights to another local broadcaster.

It has taken more than a year to change the EBU's rights acquisition rules and regulations. The EBU's executive board is said to have ratified the change a few months ago, ahead of its UCI deal.

The change in strategy is understood to have been driven by Stefan Kürten (director of sports and business), Julien Ternisien (head of sports rights – summer sports) and Ingolfur Hannesson (head of sports rights – winter and indoor sports).

One former head of sport at an EBU member said that until now, one of the union's difficulties was that members often had “two bites of the cherry” when it came to acquiring rights.

They could first bid as part of the EBU, and then often had a second chance to acquire rights if an agency was reselling a property, such as when the Lagardère-owned Sportfive agency was selling rights to the 2014 and 2016 Olympic Games.

Olympic defeat

The EBU change in strategy is understood to have been motivated in part by the union's failure to acquire Olympic Games rights in June. US media group Discovery Communications won the rights to four Games between 2018 and 2024 across

Europe for €1.3bn in a deal with the International Olympic Committee. The EBU had bid €1.09bn (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13; 19:20).

The same source added that the loss of the Olympics was a “watershed moment”. He said: “Not getting the Olympics was a shock to the system but it might have been what was required. The EBU is a slow-moving organisation. Losing the Olympics will have helped those who wanted reform of the EBU.”

Nordic public-service broadcasters are understood to have suffered more than most. As well as losing out on the Olympics rights they are facing stronger competition from the SBS commercial channels, owned by Discovery.

Discovery has made a strong start to sublicensing the Olympic Games in Europe following four deals with public-service broadcasters in: the UK with the BBC, the Netherlands with NOS, Finland with YLE and the Czech Republic with Česká Televize (*TV Sports Markets* 20:8).

One expert said: “In agreeing deals with Discovery for the Olympics, EBU members have been willing to pay more and in some cases not for all rights – if that continues then the EBU, on behalf of its members, is dead.”

It is understood that a change in strategy had been under discussion before losing out on the Olympics rights. One current head of sport at an EBU member said the unwillingness of Italian state broadcaster Rai to bid for sports rights due to its own internal politics had meant EBU broadcasters had missed out on some sports properties in the past.

EBU/IBU negotiations

The EBU agreed the IBU renewal in a period of exclusive renegotiation. Talks began in January, with a deal agreed in principle in April.

The Infront Sports & Media agency is understood to have enquired about the possibility of acquiring the IBU's rights in recent weeks, only to discover it was already in advanced talks with the EBU.

Infront last month renewed its deal for marketing rights with the IBU for four seasons, from 2018-19 to 2021-22, for about €10m, or €2.5m per season. This is understood to be a slight increase on the

value of its current four-season deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, worth about €8m, or €2m per season.

Marketing rights are worth far less than the media rights as national organising committees retain a lot of inventory.

Besseberg told *TV Sports Markets* the IBU had renewed its media-rights deal with the EBU due to the guaranteed wide free-to-air exposure the consortium could provide, especially in key biathlon markets across Europe.

He added: “If you sell the rights to an agency then they cannot guarantee exactly what television channels you will be shown on or how many hours of coverage you will get in different territories because they then have to sell the rights on.”

Besseberg said the contract was agreed on by the sport's 10 biggest national federations, with all concluding “it would be the best deal for biathlon”.

The new deal is understood to include a similar period of exclusive renegotiation.

IBU rights

The EBU deal is for the entire portfolio of IBU rights and is worldwide in scope.

Each season the contract covers one World Championships (although not in Olympic years), nine World Cups, eight IBU Cup events, one Open European Championships, Junior Cup events, the Youth/Junior World Championships, European Open Championships and Junior Open European Championships. In total, the deal covers 300 to 400 hours each season – of this, more than 100 hours is premium content.

Big markets for the rights are Germany, the Nordics and Russia. German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF are expected to guarantee between 40 and 45 per cent of the fee – a similar proportion to their contributions in the current deal. These three markets provide 70 to 75 per cent of the total EBU rights fee.

Discovery-owned sports broadcaster Eurosport is currently in talks with the EBU about being included in the new IBU deal. It currently has non-exclusive rights across all of Europe and Asia – it values its coverage in markets such as France, Germany and Poland – but as of late 2014 has lost its automatic access to

EBU content (*TV Sports Markets* 18:22).

The IBU package is attractive to broadcasters due to advertiser interest, the large volume of content and the sport's ability to attract large television audiences. Norwegian public-service broadcaster NRK had an audience share of about 85 per cent for this year's World Championships in Oslo.

The latest deal represents another strong increase from the EBU. The consortium held IBU rights from 2010-11 to 2013-14 in a deal worth about €45m, or €11.25m per season.

The EBU has consistently increased fees from cycle to cycle. The 2006-07 to 2009-10 deal was worth €28m, or €7m per season; up substantially on the 2002-03 to 2005-06 deal worth €10m, or €2.5m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 17:3). ■

AGENCIES

Who will drive MP & Silva expansion after Chinese takeover?

Continued from page 1 ►

shareholder and board member. It is widely believed that he withdrew from much of the day-to-day management because of a difference in strategic vision between himself and Silva, with the former wanting to diversify and the latter wanting to continue building the business around sports-rights distribution.

As one senior executive from a rival agency put it this week: "What really matters is who the active leadership will be and how that will impact management. The new owners clearly value these two guys and will rely on them to know the underlying business. But how active will Riccardo be? How active will Andrea be? Who will call the shots?"

The answer to those questions will go a long way to determining which growth opportunities are prioritised. Options include:

- becoming a full service agency, competing with agencies like IMG, Infront and Lagardère Sports
- building the core sports-rights portfolio by acquiring more properties

- creating assets, such as the planned Champions League of the Americas, or acquiring assets through joint ventures and partnerships

- expanding operations in China, entering the sports streaming market, and launching an IPO

- developing in niche areas like virtual reality and technology products.

'One-stop shop'

The bedrock of MP & Silva's business is likely to remain rights trading for the short to medium term, but the investment will gradually see the agency expand into other segments. MP & Silva has over 70 rights-holder clients and in 12 years has built a business with turnover of over \$600m (€531m) and ebitda of over \$60m in the year to June 2015.

Radrizzani told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "MP & Silva has only been focused on media rights, and is still the strongest in this. Now we will look to diversify.

"IMG and Infront have offered an integrated service to the client – a wide range of services. We need to be innovative and different but to take the same route. The winning strategy is to integrate the business and become a one-stop shop for rights-holders."

He said the future for relationships with rights-holders lay in developing areas like data, analytics and customer relationship management which enables partners to fully realise the potential of their fan base.

Rivals and independent observers say the agency faces two big challenges here. First, in some market segments they are starting virtually from scratch, a long way behind IMG, Infront and Lagardère, and also behind CAA Sports, the Perform Group, Wasserman Media Group, Sportradar and even new entrants such as WPP-backed ESP Properties.

Second, in the last 18 months the agency has lost people highly respected in the areas it will be hoping to expand into. These include sponsorship experts like Rene Valencia and Ahmed Schaefer, and digital experts like Mark Gorski and Sameer Pabari.

China questions

Baofeng describes itself as China's biggest online video game-playing platform. Its

stated intention is to build a "global online entertainment ecosystem with 100m daily active users".

Its sports division Baofeng Sports is expected – among other things – to move into the sports streaming market, where it will be in competition with LeSports, PPTV, Sina and Tencent. *TV Sports Markets* understands the company acquired non-exclusive live Chinese Super League rights in China last month.

In the medium and long term, having access to the huge portfolio of rights held by MP & Silva will be an advantage. The bulk of that portfolio is off limits for two years, due to a three-year agreement signed last July in which the agency sold its rights exclusively to LeSports. Not all of the portfolio is included, but the agency's flagship properties, like Italy's Serie A, are in the deal.

From an agency perspective, being tied to a single player in the market would be far from ideal. It would prevent the agency from playing operators off against each other to secure the highest rights fee.

Some rights-holders may also object to their property going to a nascent service with a small audience. The agency usually acquires rights through buyout deals which give it the freedom to exploit rights how it chooses, but the agency values good relationships with its partners and is unlikely to want to antagonise them.

Local sources expect Everbright and Baofeng to build MP & Silva up over the next two to three years with a view to launching an IPO in China.

Prior to last summer's stock market crash in China this was a route to spectacular growth for technology companies. Baofeng itself enjoyed growth of 4200 per cent in less than two months when it launched an IPO in March last year, valuing it at over \$5bn.

Rights issues

The market for premium sports rights has become concentrated around a small number of big players over the last decade, on the selling side – where agencies like MP & Silva, IMG and Infront have become increasingly powerful – and the buying side. The new deal ensures MP & Silva has the resources to stay in an increasingly high-stakes game.

Experts say the agency's relationship with Qatar's beIN Media Group is vital to them maintaining their market share. The perception in the industry is that this relationship is not as strong as it was two or three years ago. Radrizzani played this down, however.

Radrizzani said in the early days of beIN's move into sports and the agency's development, all deals were handled personally by the two companies' four senior executives: Silva and Radrizzani on one side, and Nasser Al-Khelaifi and Yousef Al-Obaidly on the other. "Now we both have big organisations the relationship is spread across many more people but at the top level we still have a great relationship," he said.

One senior broadcast executive said beIN still viewed Italy as a potential growth market and that having a strong relationship with MP & Silva would make the launch of its beIN Sports channels in the market much easier.

A project which could drive growth for the agency is Silva's plan to create a Champions League of the Americas, with clubs from both continents. Silva believes the planned 64-team competition would generate about \$500m per year in media and sponsorship rights – about five times the current combined value of the continental club tournaments.

One area where the company may lose

MP & Silva sale details

Financial services company Everbright Securities – which is owned by the state-backed China Everbright fund – and Shanghai-listed Baofeng Technology this week acquired 65 per cent of MP & Silva through a newly-created investment vehicle, Shanghai Jin Xin.

The deal values the agency at \$1.1bn. Everbright will have the larger stake of the two partners.

The remaining 35 per cent is split across the agency founders and senior management. Riccardo Silva will hold 15 per cent, down from just over 45. Andrea Radrizzani will hold 14.5 per cent, down from just over 41 per cent.

Senior management held just over 13 per cent before the deal, of which third founder Carlo Pozzali held 7.5 per cent. The management stake has been reduced to 5.5 per cent, of which Pozzali holds just over two per cent.

ground is its grip on the international rights to Serie A. It pays €185.7m per season for the rights from 2015-16 to 2017-18, and makes a margin of about 15 per cent (*TV Sports Markets* 19:19).

It is widely believed that the league will not sell a single global package of rights in

the next cycle but will have a mixed strategy, with direct sales in key markets and the rest of the world split into regional blocks. However, the agency is now big enough to absorb the loss of part or all of the property.

Long process

The sale process for MP & Silva began in 2014. It is understood a deal was close to completion for Radrizzani's stake in November that year with Boston fund ABRY Partners, but after several months of talks the deal fell through. US sources cited complications during the due-diligence process and sources close to the agency blamed differences about the valuation of the company.

MP & Silva returned to the market with UBS as financial adviser and received 13 bids last September. These were narrowed down to a shortlist of four this February. The other three were Chinese funds Hontai Oriental and Suning, and UK-based private equity group Permira. The agency identified Everbright/Baofeng by March and entered into completion talks.

All four bids were very close in value. The Everbright/Baofeng bid was chosen because it offered the most effective route to growth, through the combination of a state-backed fund and an industrial partner which was already strong in technology and entertainment. ■

FOOTBALL

DFL waits with bated breath over domestic media-rights tender

By Robin Jellis

The battle for domestic media rights to Germany's Bundesliga will be over within a fortnight, with most experts surveyed by *TV Sports Markets* expecting the league to increase its revenues to more than €1bn (\$1.1bn) per season.

First-round bids are due on May 30, with second-round bids due on June 6. A decision is expected to be announced on June 9. The league said it will announce new domestic deals ahead of this

summer's European Championship, which starts on June 10.

The league earns an average of €626.2m per season from all domestic rights in its current four-season cycle, from 2013-14 to 2016-17 (see table, page 7).

Pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland currently holds all live rights to the Bundesliga and second tier Bundesliga 2 for an average of €485.7m per season.

Rights in the new cycle will be sold for four seasons, from 2017-18 to 2020-21. The league issued the tender on April 12.

The rights are sold by DFL Sports Enterprises, the commercial arm of the German professional football league, the Deutsche Fußball Liga.

It has made available: eight packages of live rights to both tiers, six of highlights

rights, and two of clips rights. The bulk of revenue will come from the first five packages – covering live rights to the top tier Bundesliga.

All live rights will this time be sold on a platform-neutral basis. In the current and previous cycles, rights were sold based on delivery mechanism.

Also new this time is the no single buyer rule, which has been imposed on the league by the German competition authority, the Bundeskartellamt.

If one buyer wins all live rights to the top tier this will trigger the sale of an OTT package, which is comprised of three live matches per week: one on Saturdays at 3.30pm and two on Sundays, at 3.30pm and 6pm.

The league has established a reserve price for all packages. If the highest bid

Europe tender on hold as focus switches to Germany

With the German Bundesliga in the midst of selling its domestic media rights, *TV Sports Markets* understands its sale of rights across Europe has been put on hold.

The league tendered its rights across Europe in February with first-round bids due on April 6. Second-round bids were due by April 27, but no deals have yet been agreed. Rights in a new cycle will cover the four seasons from 2017-18 to 2020-21 – the same period as the league's new domestic cycle.

Since tendering these rights the league's focus has switched to the domestic sales process. The league is expected to announce deals in Europe once these rights have been awarded.

In 2015-16 and 2016-17 the Bundesliga earns close to €60m (\$68m) per season from its deals in Europe. The league expects to at least double this at the lower end of its projections, and to quadruple this at the upper end (*TV Sports Markets* 20:2).

Several media-rights experts contacted by *TV Sports Markets* believe the upper-end target to be unrealistic. One said: "It's well produced, it's good quality, the stadiums are full, it's a good league – there's no doubt about it. But it's very top heavy. Bayern Munich are winning it, dominating it, and it doesn't have anything like the stars that the Premier League and LaLiga have."

The league is thought to have revised its initial projections, but is still aiming for up to €150m per season.

In the first round, bidders could make offers for all rights. Industry insiders say the Infront Sports & Media agency

offered about €100m per season for rights across all of Europe, but this was denied by a source close to the league.

In the second round, the league split its rights into nine packages. Bidders could make offers for standalone territories as well as packages, and could also bid for combinations of packages.

The MP & Silva agency is thought to be close to a deal for package C, containing rights to the Baltic and Nordic countries.

International sports broadcaster Eurosport – which currently holds Bundesliga rights in 22 territories in the Nordics and across Central and Eastern Europe in a deal worth about €25m per season – is not bidding aggressively to retain its rights.

It feels the property is not profitable at current levels and is unlikely to renew in the Baltics, Nordics, Romania or Turkey. But it remains in talks over the other territories in which it has rights.

Channel syndicator Fox Networks Group, formerly known as International Channels, has lodged a bid for rights in Italy and the Netherlands.

The league is not expected to sell rights in Austria and Switzerland as part of the European sales process – these are expected to be sold in the domestic auction. The league is understood to have included these in the European tender to establish their market value.

Rights in these two territories are currently held by German pay-television broadcaster Sky Deutschland as part of its domestic deal. ■

[www. For a breakdown of the league's European packages, visit our website.](#)

for each package reaches or exceeds the reserve price, and is at least 20 per cent higher than the closest offer, the rights will be awarded. If neither occurs after two rounds of bidding, the league's board will decide which offer to accept.

Likely bidders for the live rights are Sky, telco Deutsche Telekom, digital media specialists the Perform Group and sports broadcaster Eurosport. Analyst reports

have speculated that media group Liberty Global and telco Vodafone may bid.

Local experts say there are two likely outcomes. 1) Sky acquires all live rights, triggering the sale of the OTT package. 2) Sky bids aggressively for four of the five live rights packages, leaving one. In this scenario the league would not sell the OTT package as the no-single-buyer clause would have been met.

The second outcome is thought more likely, as Sky would not want to relinquish exclusivity of three matches out of nine each game week. It would still show matches on its linear channels, but would lose coverage on Sky Go, its OTT service.

Package D, which includes only 30 matches per season and clashes with the free-to-air highlights show at 6.30pm on Saturdays, is seen as the package Sky would be most willing to forgo.

Bundesliga rights are vital to Sky's business in Germany. Its only other top football rights are the Uefa Champions League and DFB-Pokal, the German cup. Sky Deutschland currently has about 4.5m subscribers.

Perform – which will launch an OTT platform in Germany, Austria and Switzerland this summer – has acquired strong football content, notably England's Premier League, Spain's LaLiga, Italy's Serie A and France's Ligue 1 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15; 19:23).

However, Perform's biggest investment up to now has been €11m per season for the Premier League: it would be a surprise if it paid the amount required to win domestic Bundesliga live rights.

There is limited incentive for the telcos to bid for Bundesliga rights as they already have carriage of Sky's channels. The only reason they would bid for rights is if the cost of wholesaling Sky's channels threatened to become too high.

Unlike its sister in the UK, Sky in Germany doesn't offer broadband and telephony products. It was the incursion of Sky UK into these services that forced telco BT to enter the sports-rights market in June 2012, when it acquired rights to 38 live English Premier League matches per season (*TV Sports Markets* 16:11).

Packages

Of the five live rights packages, package B, which includes "conference" rights, is understood to be the most successful in terms of audience ratings.

The conference rights allow a broadcaster to report from all Saturday matches kicking off at 3.30pm and show near-live highlights. A league source said this programme earned a higher average audience than the combined average audience of all live matches.

As a result, this package, and package C – which contains rights to 176 top-tier matches per season – are expected to be the most valuable.

Other rights

There is expected to be competition between the major free-to-air broadcasters for the highlights rights.

These are currently held by public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF, but they are likely to face competition from commercial broadcaster RTL, which snatched European Qualifier rights from ARD in July 2013 in a €110m deal (*TV Sports Markets* 17:13).

Incumbent clips rights-holder Axel Springer is expected to bid to retain its

rights; it may face competition from Perform and internet company Amazon.

Live rights to the Bundesliga 2 are expected to generate interest from

Eurosport, Perform and sports broadcaster Sport1. Sky is not expected to bid aggressively for these rights and will instead prioritise rights to the top tier. ■

German Bundesliga, domestic media-rights deals, 2013-14 to 2016-17		
Broadcaster	Average per-season fee (€)	Rights
Sky Deutschland	485.7	All 306 matches per season live from both tiers, plus highlights
ARD	106	Bundesliga highlights at 6.30pm on Saturdays and 9.45pm on Sundays
ZDF	22	Highlights from both tiers at 11pm on Saturdays
Sport1	7	Live Bundesliga 2 matches on Mondays at 8.15pm. Highlights of Bundesliga 2 matches at 10.30pm on Fridays and 7.30pm on Sundays
Axel Springer	5.5	Highlight clips rights, sold on a pay-per-view basis one hour after matches until midnight, and free thereafter
TOTAL	626.2m	

Source: *TV Sports Markets Rights Tracker*

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

UFC and BT stall as Premier Sports waits in the wings

By Callum McCarthy

Negotiations between mixed martial arts promotion the Ultimate Fighting Championship and BT Sport over a renewal of their deal have stalled in recent weeks, leaving the door open to other broadcasters.

The UFC is looking for about £10m (€12.7m/\$14.4m) per year from BT, which currently pays £3.1m per year in a three-year deal from August 2013 to August 2016, covering the UK and Ireland. The deal is thought to expire on August 3. Sources close to the promotion say the destination of the rights will be decided in the next week.

BT is said to be reluctant to offer an increase as most UFC events are held in difficult time-zones and attract relatively low audiences.

However, BT is understood to be willing to increase its fee to about £6m per year to retain the world's number one MMA property, which acts as a valuable marketing tool for the broadcaster.

If the UFC walks away from its current partner its options are thought to be limited. A source close to the UFC

insisted serious discussions had taken place with pay-television broadcaster Sky. However, *TV Sports Markets* understands the broadcaster is not interested in acquiring the rights.

One source close to the broadcaster said Sky feels MMA “isn't aligned with their values”, while another said Sky will not acquire the property.

UFC alternatives

As a result, the UFC is left with two alternatives to a renewal with BT.

First, pay-television channel Premier Sports. Sources close to the broadcaster deny it has made an offer but informed market sources say it has submitted a bid to the UFC. The channel has broadcast UFC events before – in 2011 – and the UFC has a good relationship with the broadcaster.

Second, showing all events on its UFC Fight Pass OTT service. The promotion is understood to be floating this option to extract more money from BT.

“It's something the UFC can do, but not something they want to do,” said one source close to the negotiations.

Both options carry a risk for the UFC, which sees the UK as one of its main growth markets. Subscriber numbers for Premier Sports and Fight Pass are much lower than that of BT Sport channels, and a switch would significantly reduce the promotion's reach.

Should the UFC follow either route it

would need to invest heavily in marketing to keep interest high, something BT currently does at its own expense.

Dangerous game

Regarding its current deal, BT is said to be unhappy with the promotion's sales of Europe-based events to Sky-owned digital-terrestrial channel Pick TV. These events have also been available on Fight Pass, which has broadcast Europe-based events non-exclusively in the UK and Ireland since 2014.

The UFC is expected to relent on this strategy, and will include all European events in a new UK and Ireland deal to help reach its asking price.

Events carved out for Fight Pass are not included in BT's current deal, which forced the broadcaster to bid for each event individually with varying success.

The UFC decided to air its Fight Night London: Silva v Bisping event exclusively on Fight Pass in the UK after BT balked at the promotion's asking price for the event. It was the most important event the UFC has held in the UK.

Industry experts believe the UFC's decision to put such an event on Fight Pass was a step too far, too soon. One said the UFC had missed an opportunity to bring MMA to 'casual' British fans as opposed to its loyal core audience. BT could have shown the event on its BT Sport Showcase channel, which is available free-to-air. ■

FOOTBALL

PPTV builds out portfolio with beIN sublicensing deal

By Richard Welbirg

Thai digital-terrestrial broadcaster PPTV has boosted its sports portfolio by sublicensing a slate of football rights from beIN Media Group.

PPTV, which is operated by Bangkok Media and Broadcasting, will pay a total of \$71m (€62m) to beIN for rights every season to:

- 26 English Premier League matches
- 38 Italian Serie A matches
- 38 Spanish LaLiga matches
- 17 Uefa Champions League matches
- 15 Uefa Europa League matches
- the Uefa Super Cup.

The deal also includes free-to-air rights to the 2016 edition of the International Champions Cup pre-season competition and the 2016 Fifa Club World Cup. The agreement will run for the duration of beIN's deals with each of the various rights-holders.

beIN is paying \$60m per season for Uefa club competition rights in Thailand in the three seasons from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:8).

Its rights to Spain's LaLiga are part of a €50m-per-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, which covers Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, as well as Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

Serie A rights are included in a €9m-per-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, covering Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand (*TV Sports Markets* 19:19).

Late last year beIN acquired Premier League rights in Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, paying just under \$97m per season. This is eight per cent less than the \$105m per season pay-television operator CTH paid from 2013-14 to 2015-16 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:20).

The Premier League is the key property for PPTV, as it is the most popular league in a country where football is the most-watched sport.

In the 2015-16 season PPTV sublicensed 26 matches from CTH. The league limits the number of matches which can be shown free-to-air to 26 per season for piracy reasons.

It is common for the Premier League rights-holder in Thailand to sublicense some matches to help refinance its investment.

CTH sublicensed rights to free-to-air broadcasters MCOT Channel 9 in 2013-14, Channel 3 in 2014-15 and PPTV last season. Only the PPTV deal

is thought to have been of significant value.

That deal was reported by *The Nation* newspaper to be worth THB200m (€5m/\$5.6m), although one Thai broadcast executive told *TV Sports Markets* the figure was twice as high.

PPTV portfolio

Free-to-air television has become very competitive in Thailand following the introduction of digital-terrestrial channels via the auction of 24 licences in December 2014. Sports rights are important for PPTV to maintain its audience share.

PPTV also sublicenses rights to 102 live German Bundesliga matches per season from global channel syndicator Fox Networks Group in a two-season deal, covering 2015-16 and 2016-17. The agreement is thought to be worth between \$1.5m and \$2m per season.

Fox holds Bundesliga rights in Thailand as part of an 80-territory deal with the league's commercial arm, DFL Sports Enterprises, worth €62m per season over five seasons, from 2015-16 to 2019-20 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:16).

Fox agreed its deal with PPTV in order to recoup a decent chunk of its allocation for the rights in Thailand, and to develop the public profile of the property with a view to broadcasting it exclusively in the final three seasons of its deal. ■

NETBALL

New format broadens reach and revenue for Netball Australia

By Richard Welbirg

Deals for Australia's new top-tier netball competition signify a strong commitment from broadcasters to women's sport and could signal a step-change in revenue earned by Netball Australia.

The Netball Premier League will begin in 2017 and will be comprised of eight Australian teams. It replaces the ANZ Championship, a tournament which is made up of five Australian teams and

five from New Zealand.

Netball Australia, the sport's national governing body, has awarded its rights to a joint bid from commercial broadcaster Nine and telco Telstra, for five years from 2017 to 2021.

The deal includes rights to matches of the Australian national team, the Diamonds, which must be shown on free-to-air television because of the country's anti-siphoning regulations.

For the first time, Netball Australia will not have to cover production costs, which are estimated to reach between A\$3m (€1.9m/\$2.2m) and A\$3.5m per year in the new cycle. These will be shared by Nine and Telstra.

Telstra will pay a rights fee of about

A\$500,000 per year for all four games from each regular-season round via its Telstra TV OTT platform – which was in 43,000 homes as of February – and the Netball Live subscription app.

Netball Australia will also receive a share of revenue from broadcast sponsorship and advertising. This inventory will be sold jointly by Netball Australia and Nine.

Nine will show two live games as a Saturday night double-header on its digital-terrestrial channel, 9Gem. Telstra's coverage will also carry the advertising sold by Nine and Netball Australia.

Marne Fechner, deputy chief executive at Netball Australia, told *TV Sports Markets* this week that Nine and Telstra's

was “commercially the best offer and provided the best platform”, adding it was “important for the sport that it had a longer term deal – security in longevity”.

Income jump

The structure of the new deals will mark an immediate jump in income for Netball Australia.

In its existing deals with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports and commercial broadcaster Ten, it makes no profit from its media rights.

Fox, which broadcasts all games live, pays about A\$725,000 per year towards Netball Australia’s production costs. Ten pays no fee for its one live game each round. Netball Australia’s current production costs are about A\$2m per year.

Fechner said: “The broadcast platform was great but didn’t return true value to the sport. While there are advantages in producing your own content that’s not our area of expertise.”

A larger potential upside of the deal lies in Netball Australia’s revenue share with Nine. Its success will depend on the sponsorship and advertising it can attract.

Nine’s interest has been driven by managing director Amanda Laing, who has made women’s sport a priority.

Netball is a major sport in Australia – more people aged 14 and above play netball regularly than Aussie rules

football, cricket or rugby – but that has not translated into viewer numbers.

For Nine the new deal is a gamble on the growing popularity of women’s sport.

One source close to the deal said ratings of 80,000 per match would be a success at the beginning of the contract, rising to 100,000 per match as the competition establishes itself.

Average ratings on Fox were in the region of 25,000 to 30,000 per match, according to one expert. But last year’s ANZ Championship final is thought to have attracted about 200,000 viewers across One and Fox.

One broadcast executive warned that “people can get a bit blinded” by the sport’s participation level, and overlook weak ratings.

Out with the old

Internal contradictions caused the downfall of the ANZ Championship, which has existed since 2008.

The tournament was sustained by the income from pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand, but was dominated by Australian teams. Matches between New Zealand clubs failed to drive ratings in Australia and vice versa. Ratings were falling in both countries.

In talks over the future of the championship, Netball New Zealand sought to retain more of the income from its domestic market; Netball Australia

wanted to increase the proportion of Australian teams making up the league. The parties could not agree.

Netball Australia approached the market with proposals for the new competition after the Netball World Cup, held in Sydney last August. In addition to Nine and Telstra, there was interest from Fox and commercial broadcaster Seven.

New Zealand

Netball in New Zealand has been more lucrative than in Australia because of the popularity of the New Zealand national team, the Silver Ferns. Netball has historically been one of the country’s ‘big four’ sports along with cricket, rugby union and rugby league.

Netball New Zealand will launch its own new Elite Domestic League in 2017, a triple round robin featuring the country’s existing five teams plus one other.

It has extended its long-term deal with Sky for a further five years, from 2017 to 2021. The deal is thought to be worth about NZ\$2.5m (€1.5m/\$1.7m) per year on top of production costs, and includes rights to Silver Ferns matches.

Netball Australia, Netball New Zealand and the broadcasters will discuss the possibility of a new Champions League-style competition, rights to which would be folded into existing broadcast deals for both leagues. ■

FOOTBALL

South American competitions get increases in Africa

By Callum McCarthy

This month’s deals for South American football rights followed a trend in the sub-Saharan African sports rights market in 2016 – Kwesé Sports and StarTimes acquired second-tier properties, Fox Sports were outbid and SuperSport let go of a poorly-performing property.

Pay-television broadcaster Kwesé, which is to begin broadcasting in August, acquired rights to the Copa Libertadores

and Copa Sudamericana club competitions for about \$400,000 (€353,000) per year in a two-year deal covering 2017 and 2018. The two were sold as a single package.

Kwesé acquired the rights from pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Latin America, who had bought the rights from South American football’s governing body Conmebol from 2016 to 2018 after the body cancelled its deal with T&T Marketing.

The deal represents an increase in value of about 130 per cent on the previous deal with Fox Sports Africa, which is thought to have paid an average of \$175,000 per year in a two-year deal for 2015 and 2016.

Elsewhere, pay-television operator StarTimes acquired English-language

Copa América Centenario rights from the IMG agency, paying just over \$400,000 for the national team tournament. The Centenario will feature national teams from both North and South America for the first time.

This is a large increase on pay-television broadcaster SuperSport’s deal for the 2015 edition, worth about \$150,000. It is thought that SuperSport paid slightly more than \$100,000 for the 2011 edition.

Pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus Afrique has acquired French-language rights in the region. These are far less valuable than the English-language rights.

Fox struggles

Fox Sports Africa was beaten to Copa Libertadores and Copa Sudamericana

rights after its sister broadcaster accepted a larger offer from Kwesé. Fox is thought to have bid about \$250,000 per year for the rights.

Both the African and Latin American branches of Fox Sports are owned by channel syndicator Fox Networks Group. When FNG owns rights in territories where a Fox Sports channel is present, it usually offers the rights to that branch for a price slightly below market value in private negotiations.

A source close to FNG said it will only sell rights to another broadcaster should an offer be significantly higher than Fox's. FNG is thought to have been surprised by Fox Sports Africa's lack of aggression.

Fox Sports Africa, and its predecessor Setanta Africa, has held Copa Libertadores and Sudamericana rights since 2011. Its first deal, covering 2011 and 2012, was worth about \$75,000 per year. Its deal covering 2013 and 2014 was

worth \$150,000 per year.

The broadcaster has been outbid for a number of properties over the past 12 months including rights to Spain's LaLiga, the Copa del Rey and MotoGP (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15; 19:22; 20:2). Its main acquisition executive, Cristian Cerimele, also recently left to join Kwesé.

However, industry experts say Fox is the only sports broadcaster in sub-Saharan Africa concerned about the profitability of each of its individual deals. SuperSport and StarTimes both use sports rights as loss leaders for their pay-television operations.

Copa América

There are three main reasons why the value of Copa América rights increased by close to 170 per cent.

First, competition from one other bidder. Second, vastly-improved English-language production with better

commentators and tailored coverage.

Third, the increased number of matches in the Centenario edition compared with 2015, from 26 to 32.

StarTimes's purchase of the rights continues its football rights strategy: marketing its wider pay-television operation on the back of relatively low-cost properties with internationally-recognised players.

In the StarTimes portfolio the property will join: Uefa European Qualifiers from 2014-15 to 2017-18; a number of Fifa youth and women's tournaments until the end of 2019; the Fifa Club World Cup in 2016; and Chinese Super League rights in 2016 and 2017, with an option for 2018 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:15; 19:12; 19:22; 20:5).

The latter three properties were acquired for a total of either \$2.5m or \$2.8m, depending on whether StarTimes continues its CSL deal in 2018. ■

FOOTBALL

New UK and Russia deals help grow global ICC values

By Callum McCarthy

The International Champions Cup increased rights fees for its 2016 edition in new deals in the UK and Russia last week.

The UK will remain the pre-season competition's most valuable territory: deals with pay-television broadcaster Sky and the club channels of Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester United will be worth a combined total of about \$2.5m (€2.2m).

One informed source said Sky's contribution would be about £750,000 (€954,000/\$1.1m) for rights to all matches, including production costs to two matches held in the UK. Total production costs for the four matches held in the UK will be about \$500,000.

All ICC deals are agreed by Catalyst Media, the tournament operator.

The UK value is thought to have jumped significantly from 2015 due to the

addition of three English clubs – Leicester City, Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur – none of which have linear club channels with rights to the tournament. Matches of these clubs will be exclusive to Sky.

The club channels of Chelsea and Liverpool will continue to share live rights of their matches in the ICC. Manchester United's matches will appear exclusively live on its club channel MUTV, but delayed rights to its matches will be available to Sky for the first time.

These reasons, along with the presence of a Manchester United v Manchester City fixture, increased the value of the rights to Sky, which is thought to have been mostly responsible for the increase.

Russia

A deal with Russian pay-television broadcaster Match TV for the 2016 edition will be worth about \$50,000, an increase on the value of a deal for 2015 with state broadcaster VGTRK, worth a nominal fee. Match TV faced no competition for the rights.

Sources close to negotiations say Catalyst had been trying to complete a deal with Match TV – and its predecessor

NTV Plus – for three years, but that it showed little to no interest in the property.

Catalyst is thought to have been keen to complete a deal with Match TV in order to build a relationship with the Gazprom Media-owned broadcaster.

Total revenues

Total revenue for the 2016 edition will be 30 to 35 per cent higher than in 2015. The increase is understood to have largely been driven by the UK deals and 20 additional regional deals in China.

Overall media-rights income for 2016 is expected to be between \$17.5m (€15.5m) and \$18.5m, depending on deals yet to be completed. The 2015 edition generated about \$13.5m in media-rights sales.

This is slightly lower than what *TV Sports Markets* has previously reported (*TV Sports Markets* 20:7).

The ICC's sponsorship income for 2016 will be slightly below last year's total for media-rights sales – lower than previously expected – as negotiations in China did not go as well as hoped. Catalyst had hoped the additional reach provided by the regional deals would considerably boost its sponsorship income. ■

FASTRACK 2

NEWS IN BRIEF

First Premier League deal in Vietnam for MP & Silva

The MP & Silva agency has recouped about 60 per cent of its investment in English Premier League rights in Vietnam from a deal with pay-television broadcaster K Plus, and will agree further deals in the coming weeks.

K Plus, a joint venture between state-owned broadcaster VTV and French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus, will pay MP & Silva about \$16m (€14m) per season in a three-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. The deal covers rights to all 380 matches. K Plus will show three matches from each round exclusively.

In November, MP & Silva struck a three-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, worth about \$43.3m per season for rights in Vietnam and five other territories: Chinese Taipei, Mongolia, the Pacific Islands, South Korea and Vietnam. Its allocation for Vietnam was just over \$26m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:21).

The agency is expected to agree further deals with pay-television broadcasters for non-exclusive rights to seven matches from each round.

Attempts by the Thai Ministry of Communications and Information to encourage broadcasters to negotiate jointly – in order to keep consumer costs down – were a failure.

After MP & Silva was awarded the rights a negotiating committee was established, led by the Vietnam Association of Pay TV (VNPAYTV). Multiple broadcasters joined the committee, including K Plus, and committed not to enter individual negotiations for the rights.

VNPAYTV told the VietnamNet.vn website in early April it would not pay more than 20 per cent more than broadcasters did in the existing cycle.

But *TV Sports Markets* understands the committee never met MP & Silva. K Plus peeled away to negotiate with the agency.

In the 2013-14 to 2015-16 cycle, K Plus acquired two packages of Premier League rights from the IMG agency. K Plus held exclusive rights to Saturday lunchtime and all Sunday matches. All other matches were non-exclusive.

A third package, covering non-exclusive rights to the remaining Saturday matches, Monday and selected midweek matches, was sold to pay-television operator VTVcab.

IMG paid about \$12.5m per season for rights in Vietnam. It is thought to have earned close to \$14m per season from selling them on. ■

Fox snatches US Open

Fox Networks Group significantly increased the value of US Open rights across Asia as the syndicator's regional broadcast arm sought to complete its coverage of the tennis grand slams.

Fox will pay \$6.5m (€5.7m) per year in a five-year deal, from 2017 to 2021, for exclusive rights in 17 Asian countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Chinese Taipei, East Timor, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Laos, Macau, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam.

Its fee is more than double the US Tennis Association's current earnings from the region. Rights over the four years from 2013 to 2016 are held by international sports broadcaster Eurosport in a deal worth about \$1.5m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:5).

The deal is non-exclusive in at least Singapore and Thailand, where the USTA struck agreements with pay-television operators StarHub and TrueVisions respectively. In total, it is thought to have earned about \$3m per year from the region. The USTA is advised on its deals by the IMG agency.

Eurosport had an exclusive negotiating period with the USTA/IMG earlier this year, covering its deals for Asia and Europe. *TV Sports Markets* understands it has renewed its European deal, but would not meet the

asking price for Asia.

The US Open is one of Eurosport's highest-profile properties in the region, but the broadcaster felt it could not pay the fee demanded for a two-week event in a difficult time zone.

Fox was prepared to pay more for pan-Asian exclusivity and as the deal completes its suite of the grand slams. ■

Sport TV picks up Euro 2016 rights

Portuguese state broadcaster RTP has recouped about 30 per cent of its investment in Euro 2016 media rights by sublicensing a package of rights to pay-television broadcaster Sport TV.

Sport TV will pay about €2.5m (\$2.8m) for all 51 Euro 2016 matches – about seven per cent less than the €2.7m it paid to RTP and commercial broadcasters TVI and SIC for rights to all 31 matches at Euro 2012.

Of the 51 matches at Euro 2016, 27 will be exclusive to Sport TV. RTP will retain 24 matches – which Sport TV will show non-exclusively – including knockout stages and Portugal matches.

Sport TV was the only bidder in direct talks with RTP. Competition in Portugal's sports rights market has decreased since telco Nos's acquisition of pay-television broadcaster BTV, whose entry into the market in 2013 caused significant rights-fee inflation.

RTP acquired all rights to Euro 2016 as part of a deal agreed by the European Broadcasting Union, the consortium of European public service broadcasters. That deal, covering 26 territories, was worth close to €120m (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13).

RTP was one of the main guarantors of the EBU bid, contributing just under €10m. This was up from the €7m RTP, TVI and SIC paid as part of the EBU deal for Euro 2012. The total was split equally between the three.

RTP also holds European Qualifier rights from 2014-15 to 2017-18 as part of a separate EBU deal worth €90m (*TV Sports Markets* 17:11). RTP is contributing about €7m to the fee. ■

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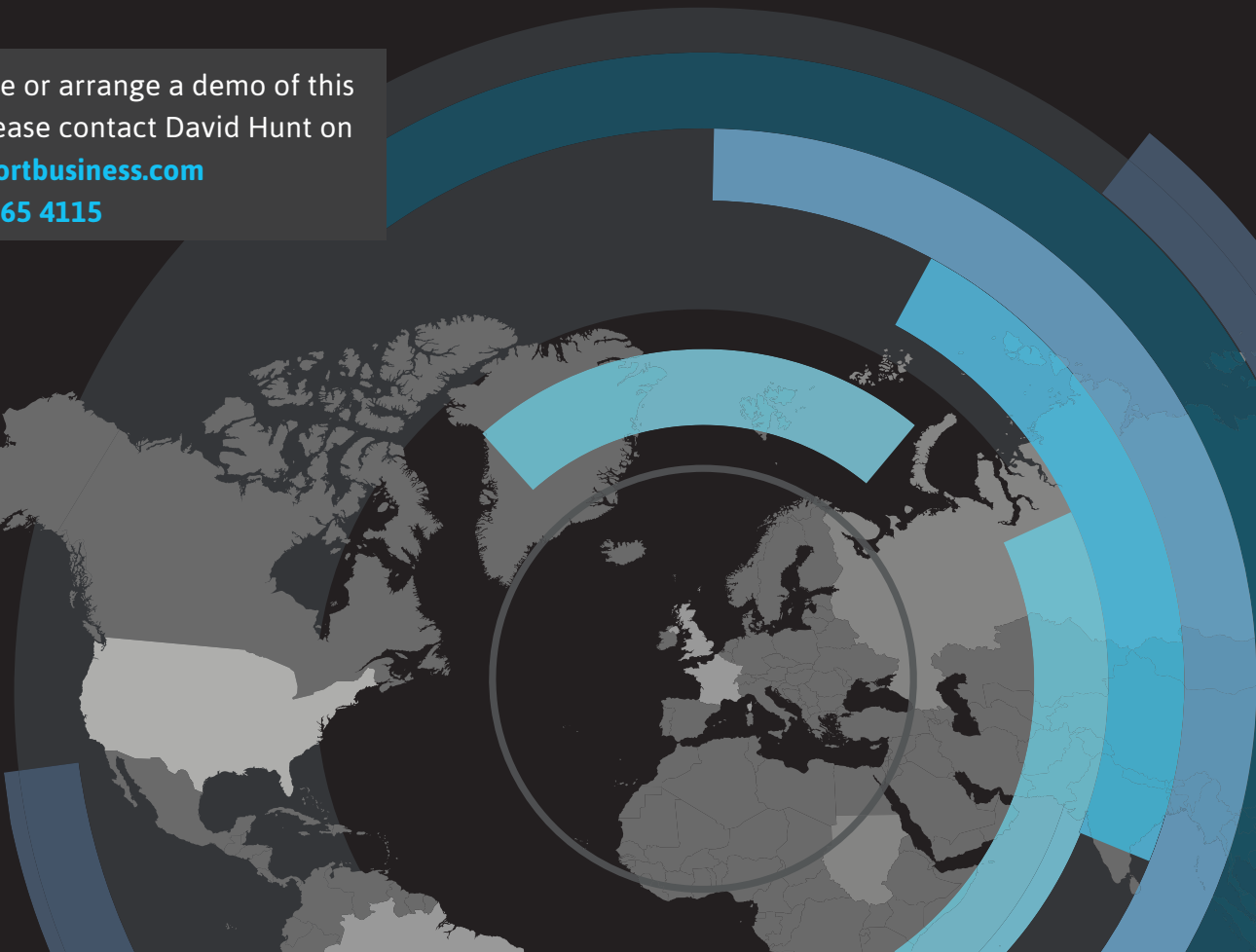
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SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 12 to 25

MEDIA RIGHTS 1

Football: Euro 2016, Copa América Centenario, Coupe de France and more

- **Football:** Spanish commercial broadcaster Mediaset acquired rights to 23 matches from the Uefa Euro 2016 national team tournament (page 2).
- **Football:** LeSports HK, which is operated by Chinese internet company LeEco, acquired non-exclusive rights in Hong Kong for Euro 2016. LeSports will stream live coverage of all 51 games via the LeSports app, available on smart televisions and smartphones.
- **Football:** The IMG agency acquired global in-flight and in-ship rights for Euro 2016. Live coverage of every match will be shown on IMG's Sport 24 and Sport 24 Extra channels, with the latter launching on June 1.
- **Football:** Sony Pictures Networks India acquired exclusive rights for the Copa América Centenario. The deal covers Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Sony
- ESPN and Sony ESPN HD channels will show live coverage and highlights, while Sony Liv will stream all matches.
- **Football:** Paraguayan pay-television broadcasters Unicanal and Tigo Sports acquired rights for this year's Copa América Centenario national team tournament in a deal with IMG.
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster Premier Sports acquired rights for all 32 games at the Copa América Centenario.
- **Football:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 retained rights for the Coupe de France club knockout competition in a three-season deal, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, with the French football federation. Sport1 will show live coverage of at least 19 games per season via the Sport1 and Sport1 Plus channels and online.
- **Football:** According to outgoing Norwegian football federation general secretary Kjetil Siem, Norwegian commercial and pay-television broadcaster TV2 has acquired rights for Norway national team matches over the next four seasons, from 2018-19 to 2021-22.
- **Football:** Malawian broadcaster Beta Television secured a three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018, for rights to the domestic top-tier Super League worth MWK266m (€334,000/\$379,000) per year.
- **Football:** UK pay-television broadcaster Sky acquired exclusive rights for the 2016 edition of the International Champions Cup pre-season club competition. Sky will show up to 17 games live (page 10).
- **Football:** Russian sports media platform Match TV acquired rights for the 2016 International Champions Cup (page 10).

SINCE LAST TIME

- Shanghai Jin Xin, an investment fund created by Chinese financial services company Everbright and online entertainment and technology provider Baofeng, struck a deal to acquire a 65-per-cent stake in the MP & Silva agency (page 1).
- France's competition authority, l'Autorité de la Concurrence, will delay its ruling into the carriage deal signed between Canal Plus and rival pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports until the first half of June. In February, Canal Plus sealed a five-year deal, from 2016 to 2020, to become the exclusive carriage partner in France for beIN Sports' channels. A ruling had been expected by the end of May, but the regulator will conduct a "market test based on new evidence" provided by Canal Plus.
- Switzerland's Competition Commission fined telco Swisscom CHF71.8m (€64m/\$72.5m) for abusing its dominant position in live sports broadcasting on pay-television. Swisscom vowed to lodge an appeal against the ruling with the Federal Administrative Court and, if necessary, the Federal Supreme Court. Last July, the regulator said Swisscom must provide all television platforms in Switzerland with equivalent sports programming from its Teleclub channel under non-discriminatory conditions.
- Media company Liberty Global completed a deal to acquire Caribbean telco Cable & Wireless Communications, which operates pay-television broadcaster Flow Sports, in a deal valued at about \$7.4bn (€6.6bn).

MEDIA INTERNATIONAL

- America's National Football League renewed a multi-year partnership with YouTube that will bring additional content from the league's official channel to the video-sharing platform. The NFL's channel offers game previews, in-game highlights, post-game recaps and clips, and other content from NFL Media properties.
- The International Olympic Committee signed up as the first client of Playmaker Media, a new video-streaming technology support service launched by the NBC Sports Digital division of US media group NBCUniversal. Playmaker Media will provide live-streaming video support for the IOC's Olympic Channel, which is expected to launch later this year.
- Digital media specialists the Perform Group agreed a deal with Chinese internet company Beijing Baidu Netcom Science and Technology to launch its goal.com football news and video website in the country.
- The National Basketball Association linked up with media and technology company BroadbandTV ahead of the launch of NBA Playmakers later this year. This is a new video-sharing platform that will be hosted on YouTube and other platforms.
- International sports broadcaster Eurosport entered into a partnership with US pay-television broadcaster Tennis Channel ahead of this year's French Open tennis tournament. Tennis Channel is granting Eurosport access to additional content such as

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 12 to 25**MEDIA RIGHTS 2****Fiba, NBA, Lega Basket, IBU, English cricket, Tour of California and more**

- **Athletics:** The Deutscher Leichtathletik-Verband, the sport's governing body in Germany, agreed a four-and-a-half-year extension, from 2016 to the end of 2020, to its deals with public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF. The agreement was brokered by the DLV's marketing division, Deutsche Leichtathletik-Marketing, and SportA, the sports-rights agency that represents ARD and ZDF. The deal includes the German Athletics Championships.
- **Basketball:** The International Basketball Federation (Fiba) agreed a nine-year digital rights deal, from 2017 to 2025, with Chinese internet company Tencent. Tencent will also host the fiba.com website in China (page 2).
- **Basketball:** The MP & Silva agency extended a worldwide rights deal with Lega Basket, the top division in Italy, for two seasons, from 2016-17 to 2017-18. The deal excludes Italy.
- **Basketball:** Mexican media company Televisa acquired National Basketball Association rights in a deal which will begin with coverage of the 2015-16 Finals and run for a further two seasons, from 2016-17 to 2017-18. The rights will be exploited on the Televisa Deportes pay-television channel as well as other Televisa platforms, including the televisadeportes.com website. Televisa plans to show at least one game per month on free-to-air television.
- **Biathlon:** The European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters extended its media-rights deal with the International Biathlon Union for four seasons, from 2018-19 to 2021-22 (page 1).
- **Boxing:** LeSports, which is operated by Chinese internet company LeEco, sealed a deal with the IBF China division of the International Boxing Federation. LeSports will show live coverage of all IBF China professional tournament bouts over five years, from 2016 to 2020. LeSports will seek to develop a pay-per-view model with IBF China.
- **Cricket:** Australian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports secured a four-year rights deal, from 2016 to 2019, with the England and Wales Cricket Board. Fox Sports will show all home England Test matches, excluding Ashes series against Australia, which remain on the latter's list of sporting events reserved for free-to-air television.
- **Cycling:** The NBC Sports Group division of US media group NBCUniversal extended an exclusive multi-platform rights deal for the Tour of California for three years, from 2017 to 2019. NBC will broadcast coverage via its primary NBC channel, pay-television channel NBCSN and the NBC Sports Live Extra streaming service. NBC agreed the deal with AEG, the race's operator.
- **Esports:** Social video platform Twitch struck a deal to stream coverage of the new ELeague competition in the US. The agreement with US media company Turner and the WME/IMG agency, which operate the tournament, includes live and on-demand coverage. Twitch will stream six games per day during the six-week regular-season schedule.
- **Horse Racing:** NBC Sports Group acquired exclusive US rights to Royal Ascot in a multi-year deal, starting in 2017. Live coverage will be shown on pay-television channel NBCSN and live streaming service NBC Sports Live Extra.

new camera angles, highlights and archive footage. Eurosport is making its own content, footage, and camera viewpoints available to Tennis Channel.

- The Sina Sports division of Chinese internet operator Sina secured a strategic partnership with the operators of the French Open tennis tournament. Sina Sports will launch a dedicated event page on its digital platform where fans in China will be able to access video highlights, player interviews, live scoreboards and other Chinese-language content.
- International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network agreed a multi-year partnership with digital video technology company NeuLion to launch a new digital sports service in Belgium, Chinese Taipei, Luxembourg, Poland and Singapore. The service will include a catch-up option which will allow viewers to watch any Eleven Sports broadcast from the previous 24 hours. A video-on-demand option will also be introduced, which will feature clips and short-form highlights.
- US media company Time launched a series of channels and digital platforms for its flagship magazine, Sports Illustrated, in a partnership with pan-Asian sports broadcaster ASN. The ASN and ASN2 pay-television sports channels rebranded as Sports Illustrated and Sports Illustrated 2. The channels are available via 20 pay-television operators in 12 countries across Asia.
- UK horse racing pay-television broadcaster Racing UK extended a streaming agreement with Perform for three years, from 2016 to 2018. Perform will support the delivery of live streams to online bookmakers.
- Telco TalkTalk sealed a deal to carry UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport on its TalkTalk TV platform. TalkTalk TV customers will be able to subscribe to BT Sport channels on a rolling monthly basis.
- Portuguese telcos Nos and Vodafone agreed a memorandum of understanding under which they will share sports rights. Other pay-television distributors in Portugal may join the agreement, according to Nos. The agreement will take effect from the 2016-17 Primeira Liga season.
- Viasat, the pay-television operator run by multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group, will launch a new ultra-HD channel ahead of the start of the 2016-17 football season. Viasat Ultra HD will be available via

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 12 to 25

MEDIA RIGHTS 3

IIHF World Championship, Top 14, WTA, US Open, Ski Classics and more

- **Ice Hockey:** Canadian pay-television sports broadcasters TSN and RDS acquired rights for the annual Ice Hockey World Championship in a six-year deal, from 2018 to 2023. The deal was agreed with the Infront Sports & Media agency, which brokered the deal on behalf of the International Ice Hockey Federation. As part of the agreement, TSN renewed rights for the 2016-17 season of the Champions Hockey League.
- **Ice Hockey:** Danish commercial broadcaster TV2 acquired rights for the Ice Hockey World Championship in a six-year deal, from 2018 to 2023, with Infront. TV2 will broadcast each of Denmark's games live on the TV2 Sport pay-television channel, along with the semi-finals and medal games. Additional games will be broadcast either on TV2 Sport or its OTT platform, TV2 Play. As part of the deal, TV2 extended a rights agreement for the 2016-17 season of the Champions Hockey League and the 2016-17 and 2017-18 editions of the Spengler Cup invitational tournament.
- **Ice Hockey:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 acquired rights for the Ice Hockey World Championship in a six-year deal, from 2018 to 2023, with Infront. Sport1 will show live free-to-air coverage of 30 games and additional games on pay-television. The deal also includes the 2016-17 and 2017-18 editions of the Spengler Cup.
- **Mixed Martial Arts:** Pay-television broadcaster Extreme Sports Channel sealed a rights deal in Europe, the Middle East and Africa to show coverage of events operated by the International MMA Federation.
- **Multi-sport:** International sports broadcaster ESPN agreed a new three-year deal, from 2017 to 2019, with the organisers of the Special Olympics.
- **Netball:** Netball Australia agreed five-year rights deals, from 2017 to 2021, with commercial broadcaster Nine and telco Telstra (page 8).
- **Netball:** Netball New Zealand sealed a five-year rights deal, from 2017 to 2021, with pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand (page 8).
- **Rugby Union:** French pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus retained rights for the country's top-tier Top 14 for four seasons, from 2019-20 to 2022-23. The Ligue Nationale de Rugby, the operator of the Top 14, awarded Canal Plus four packages of rights, covering exclusive coverage of all regular-season matches, pay-television coverage of the semi-finals and final, magazine programmes and the women's tournament. Canal Plus will pay €388m (\$438m), or €97m per season.
- **Skiing:** Finnish public-service broadcaster YLE acquired rights for the Ski Classics long-distance championship. The long-term deal, which will begin with the 2016-17 campaign, was agreed with the W sportsmedia agency.
- **Tennis:** Fox Sports acquired exclusive rights in Asia for the US Open in a five-year deal, from 2017 to 2021, with the US Tennis Association (page 11).
- **Tennis:** BeIN Media Group acquired rights for events operated by the Women's Tennis Association over five years, from 2017 to 2021. The deal covers live and delayed coverage of every WTA Tour tournament in Australia, Belgium, France and French overseas territories, Israel, Luxembourg, the Middle East and North Africa, Spain, Turkey and the US.
- **Tennis:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport renewed a rights deal with the Women's Tennis Association for three years, from 2017 to 2019. BT Sport will show live coverage of 52 events per year – up from 30 in the current agreement.
- **US College Sport:** US pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports acquired rights for Conference USA, starting with the 2016-17 campaign, according to the *Virginian-Pilot* newspaper.

satellite in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

- German-based pay-television channel Motorvision TV agreed a carriage deal with French telco Bouygues Telecom.
- The Basketball League of Serbia sealed a deal to launch a video-subscription platform in partnership with online services provider StreamAMG. The deal will run for five seasons, from 2016-17 to 2020-21. The KLS TV platform will provide live and on-demand coverage of all league games. A season pass will cost €39.95 (\$45.20) and a monthly pass €4.95.
- The Fight Channel Group agreed a carriage deal for its Fight Channel and Fight Channel World HD pay-television channels with Macedonian pay-television operator Blizoo.
- Israeli telco Cellcom Israel agreed a deal to carry the RGE media group's sports channels on its Cellcom TV pay-television service. RGE owns pay-television broadcaster the Sports Channel. Its channels include Sport 5, Sport 5 HD, Sport Plus 5, Sport Plus 5 Live, Sport Plus 5 Gold and Sport i5.
- Mexican Liga MX football club Guadalajara will form its own streaming platform, Chivas TV, after electing to end its long-running rights partnership with pay-television operator Televisa. Chivas TV will exploit the rights to the club's home games from the 2016 Apertura campaign of the Liga MX season, according to Mexican newspaper *El Universal*.
- The IMG agency was appointed to produce live coverage of the heavyweight boxing clash between British fighter David Haye and Kosovo-Albanian Arnold Gjergaj on May 21.
- Digital sports content provider QTV Sports signed a host broadcast partnership with organisers of the 2016 edition of football's Homeless World Cup in Glasgow. QTV will be responsible for broadcasting the event's 416 games live in HD.

SPORTS CLIPS: News from TVSM Daily from May 12 to 25

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

- The England and Wales Cricket Board is seeking talks with broadcasters at the end of the year with a view to agreeing a rights deal to run from 2020. The board will present its plans to the counties in September.
- UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport, which has exclusive live rights to England's top-tier rugby Premiership through to 2020-21, is considering sublicensing a package of up to 10 live matches to a free-to-air broadcaster during the 2017-18 season, according to the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper.
- Pay-television broadcaster Star India will submit a bid to show coverage of the 2016 Tamil Nadu Premier Twenty20 League cricket tournament in India, according to daily newspaper *The Hindu*. The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association, which will operate the competition, approved a request from another interested party to extend the deadline of bids from May 26 to the first week of June. The television, mobile and internet rights for the event were bundled together, with a base price of R70m (€900,000/\$1m).
- The Argentinian government launched a tender process for the 2017 season of the 'Football for All' scheme, which reserves domestic football coverage in Argentina for free-to-air television. According to Argentinian newspaper *La Nación*, the tender includes national, international and internet rights for the top-tier Primera División. The government set a deadline of July 7 for domestic bids and the end of June for international offers.

ALSO SINCE LAST TIME

- YouTube has no plans to bid for rights to major sporting events in the near future, according to Stephen Nuttall, the video-sharing website's senior director for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.
- International sports broadcaster Eurosport launched a virtual-reality mobile app to coincide with this year's French Open grand slam tennis tournament. The app is available in 54 countries across Europe.
- Pay-television broadcasters BT Sport and beIN Sports unveiled plans to stream live coverage, in the UK and Spain respectively, of

the 2016 finals of the Uefa Champions League and Europa League club football tournaments via video-sharing platform YouTube.

- The UK government will not alter the 'crown jewels' list of sporting events reserved for free-to-air television in the country, according to culture secretary John Whittingdale.
- Arsenal became the first club to break the £100m (€127m/\$144m) barrier in revenue disbursed by the English Premier League for a single season – earning just over £100.95m.
- LaLiga, the organising body of the top two divisions of Spanish football, will show several pre-season matches featuring Spanish clubs via its official channel on YouTube.
- LaLiga will stream live coverage of a domestic women's football match between Atlético Madrid and Athletic Bilbao on May 28 on social network Facebook.
- Liga ACB, the top division of basketball in Spain, streamed live coverage of a game between Real Madrid and Saski Baskonia via Facebook – the first time a sports league has undertaken such an initiative in the country.
- Italian pay-television broadcaster Mediaset Premium will launch the country's first ultra-HD sports channel with coverage of the 2016 final of the Uefa Champions League.
- Digital media company Veqta unveiled plans to launch an OTT sports service in India.
- Coverage of the new ELeague esports tournament, operated by US media company Turner and the WME/IMG agency, will be distributed to more than 80 countries. Coverage will be shown on Turner media platforms in Latin America and Asia.
- Pac-12 Networks, the media company operated by the Pac-12 US college sports conference, will organise and broadcast esports competitions between students, starting later this year.

INDUSTRY MOVES

- LeSports, which is operated by Chinese internet company LeEco, promoted Yu Hang to chief operating officer. • Claude Ruibal was appointed as the executive director of the Infront Sports & Media agency's new digital, production and sport solutions business unit.

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