

TVSportsMarkets

www.sportbusiness.com/tv-sports-markets

Inside this issue

FOOTBALL: Political situation in Mena helps opportunistic Uefa to massive increase	3
OLYMPIC GAMES: Discovery plugs revenue gap with German sublicensing deal	6
SNOOKER: Rigour the surprise winner in China as World Snooker looks long term	9
ICE HOCKEY: KHL looks to lessen reliance on handouts with commercial growth	12
FOOTBALL: French federation earns 33% increase from incumbent broadcasters	15
TV RUSSIA: Telesport could reshape the Russian market with OTT play	18
TV TURKEY: Football fees fall in Turkey as Silva struggles with Bundesliga	21
AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL grows revenue in China with exclusive Tencent deal	23
BOXING: Mayweather vs. McGregor to break revenue records, say IMG	25
US COLLEGE SPORT: Big Ten secures big increase despite agreeing shorter-term deals	27
TENNIS: Amazon to take ATP tennis rights in the UK from Sky	29
FOOTBALL: ANFP earns national-team fee increase from Chilevisión	31
FOOTBALL: MP & Silva agrees deals with PPTV and Tencent after LeSports collapse	33
FOOTBALL: CBF opts for newly-established Synergy in first agency agreement	34
Deals round-up	36
Industry news in brief	43

Editorial



Robin Jellis

Editor
+44 20 7265 4139
+44 7846 822175
robin@tvsportsmarkets.com
@robinjellis



Callum McCarthy

Reporter
+44 20 7265 4244
+44 7462 149895
callum@tvsportsmarkets.com
@clmmcrthy



David Cook

Reporter
+44 20 7265 4109
+44 7402 085693
david.cook@tvsportsmarkets.com
@dmacook



Mónica Villar

Reporter
+44 20 7265 4107
+44 7758 294892
monica@tvsportsmarkets.com
@moni_villar



Frank Dunne

Chief Sports Writer
+39 051 523 815
+39 349 584 6423
frank@tvsportsmarkets.com
@frankdunnetvsm

Analysts



Gino Di Castri

Analyst
+44 20 7265 4246
+44 7792 662816
gino.dicastro@sportbusiness.com
@gdicastro



David Svenson

Analyst
+44 20 7265 4245
+44 7540 343332
david.svenson@sportbusiness.com
@David2241

Account Management



Paul Santos

Head of Business Development
+44 20 7265 4183
+44 7931 390502
paul.santos@sportbusiness.com
@onesantos



Scott Longhurst

Account Manager
+44 20 7265 4184
+44 7500 904656
scott.longhurst@sportbusiness.com



Patrick Odling

Account Manager
+44 20 7265 4103
+44 7921 140713
patrick.odling@sportbusiness.com
@patrickodling



Max Frew

Account Executive
+44 20 7265 4178
+44 7493 7793374
max.frew@sportbusiness.com

Important Terms and Conditions

All rights in this newsletter are reserved. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of TV Sports Markets. For full terms and conditions of use, please visit: <http://www.sportbusiness.com>.

TV Sports Markets, trading address: 7th Floor, 133 Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QA

TV Sports Markets, registered address: 4th Floor, Park House, 116 Park Street, London, W1K 6AF

© TV Sports Markets Ltd 2017

FOOTBALL

Political situation helps Uefa secure monster increase in Mena

By Robin Jellis

Uefa has almost trebled the value of its Champions League and Europa League media rights in the Middle East and North Africa, following a renewal with Qatar-based beIN Media Group.

The new three-season deal, from 2018-19 to 2020-21, is understood to be worth more than \$250m (€211.6m) per season. Sources close to beIN, however, say the fee is lower than this.

Regardless, the new deal is substantially more valuable than the current deal, in which beIN pays just over \$90m per season over three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:16).

A tender was issued by European football's governing body Uefa on June 30, with bids due by July 17. The sales process was handled by Team Marketing, Uefa's sales agent for its club competition rights.

Uefa chose to tender its rights at this time to take advantage of the political situation in Mena. As part of the economic blockade of Qatar, which began on June 5, access to beIN Sports channels has been restricted on some platforms in the region. Renewing Uefa rights will act as a strong bargaining chip to secure continued distribution in Mena.

beIN – the dominant broadcaster of sport in Mena – was also threatened by a potential new competitor, with reports suggesting the Saudi Arabian government planned to roll out a sports broadcasting operation, PBS Sports, with a view to supplanting beIN in the region. No such roll-out has occurred, and no bid was made to Uefa for its rights.

The only rival offer beIN faced was a joint bid from Abu Dhabi Media – owner of pay-television broadcaster Abu Dhabi Sports – and pay-television broadcaster OSN. The Abu Dhabi Sports channels have been carried on OSN's platform since 2014.

The two are understood to have offered slightly less than double the current value of the rights in a new cycle. ADM is thought to have been financing the offer.

Uefa awarded the rights to beIN after one round of bidding as the broadcaster's bid was far larger.

The scale of the increase is significantly bigger than the six-per-cent uplift Uefa achieved when it last sold its rights in the region. Then, beIN paid about \$85m per season in the 2012-13 to 2014-15 cycle.

The new Mena deal is the latest in a series of large rights-fee increases for Uefa in the 2018-2021 cycle. With deals in place for both of its competitions in each of the big five European markets (except the Europa League in Germany), Mena, Japan and the US, the governing body is well on course to meet its target of earning €3.2bn per season from media and marketing rights over the cycle (*TV Sports Markets* 20:22).

Timing of tender process

The launch of Uefa's tender was an opportunistic move to take advantage of the uncertainty in Mena and secure the biggest possible rights fee.

TV Sports Markets understands ADM and OSN approached Uefa directly and encouraged the body to launch an early tender process in the region, as they felt they could take advantage of a distracted and potentially weakened beIN.

Uefa is understood to have initially planned to sell its club competition rights in Mena early in the global sales process, but its focus switched to the big five European markets where there was strong competition. In the 2015-2018 cycle, the first deal Uefa struck was in Mena.

Following the launch of the blockade on Qatar, and the approach from ADM/OSN, Uefa chose to launch its tender in the region.

A source close to the governing body said: "We thought it could be a perfect storm. We thought we probably wouldn't get an opportunity like that again."

The fee in the new cycle is understood to have been well above what the source described as a "modest" projection made by Uefa for Mena in the new cycle.

One local expert said ADM and OSN had been encouraged to bid after Uefa opted against selling its club competition rights to beIN in France, where it instead agreed an exclusive deal with pay-television broadcaster SFR Sport worth €350m per season for the new cycle (*TV Sports Markets* 21:8). Rights in France are shared between beIN and pay-television rival Canal Plus in the current cycle.

BeIN bidding rationale

BeIN's bid is understood to have included an offer to initiate conversations between Uefa and the Qatar Airways airline over a possible sponsorship deal. Both beIN and Qatar Airways are funded by the Qatari state.

Uefa has not previously had an airline partner for its Champions League or Europa League competitions, but is currently seeking one.

As part of the offer, beIN also committed to heavy spending on production as well as promotion and marketing of Uefa events. BeIN thought the latter would be particularly appealing to Uefa given the competitions' viewership is dropping as they move increasingly to pay-television.

BeIN is understood to have been prepared to pay such a big increase for three main reasons.

First, due to competition in the market, both perceived (PBS Sports) and real (ADM and OSN).

Second, it strongly values premium football content which drives subscribers. The Champions League and Europa League, along with the English Premier League, are the most prestigious properties in its portfolio.

Third, it was determined to send a message to the market that its relationships with significant rights-holders had not been negatively affected by the economic blockade.

One rights expert said the increase was predominantly driven by the political situation. He said: “BeIN would never have made that offer if there was not serious political pressure.”

Diplomatic situation in Mena

The sports media-rights industry has been closely monitoring the situation in Mena following the launch of the blockade. BeIN has invested billions of dollars into the industry via its broadcast operations in Mena, France, Spain, Turkey, the US, Canada and across Asia.

The short-term impact on access to the beIN Sports channels in the region is understood to have been limited, with Saudi Arabia only able to restrict access on certain IPTV platforms.

A source close to beIN said: “Long term, this deal absolutely cements beIN’s position as the home of sport in the Middle East. And it demonstrates the commitment of Qatar, which hasn’t wavered.” ♦

OLYMPIC GAMES

ARD/ZDF finalise four-Games deal with Discovery in Germany

By Robin Jellis

Last month's Olympic Games sublicensing deal in Germany with ARD and ZDF has plugged a large gap in Discovery Communications' revenue projections.

The deal covers the next four Games: the winter Games in 2018 and 2022 and the summer Games in 2020 and 2024. Public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF will pay a combined fee of about €250m (\$295m) in rights fee and production commitment. The news a deal would likely be struck was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 21:13.

TV Sports Markets understands the fee will split roughly €110m for the first two Games and €140m for the latter two Games. This is largely because the 2024 edition is very likely to be held in Paris – a better time zone for German viewers.

Not having a deal in Germany would have left a big gap in sublicensing revenue projections for US media company Discovery, which in June 2015 acquired Olympic Games rights in 50 European territories. Discovery's four-Games deal with the International Olympic Committee, from 2018 to 2024, is worth a total of €1.3bn (*TV Sports Markets* 19:13).

Peter Hutton, chief executive of sports broadcaster Eurosport – owned by Discovery – told *TV Sports Markets* this week the deal had come as a relief. “It's a massive deal for us, both in terms of the finances and in terms of delivering on our promise to the IOC to increase the reach of the Olympics across media platforms.”

In November 2016, Discovery broke off negotiations with ARD/ZDF after the public-service broadcasters failed to match its asking price. In talks for the 2018 and 2020 Games, ARD/ZDF offered €100m against Discovery's request of €150m. At the last meeting of the three parties the difference had narrowed to an offer of just over €120m and a request of about €130m (*TV Sports Markets* 20:21).

ARD/ZDF returned to the negotiating table about six weeks ago. Its change in stance came following ZDF's failure to renew Uefa Champions League rights in Germany (*TV Sports Markets* 21:11).

Some big deals still to come

Discovery is aiming to recover about 70 per cent of its investment in Olympics rights from sublicensing deals, and from other forms of revenue in territories where it will show the rights exclusively.

Discovery has now struck sublicensing deals with 20 of the biggest free-to-air broadcasters in Europe. The most important territories in which a deal for the 2018 Games is yet to be struck are Spain, Italy, Portugal, Turkey and Israel. Discovery hopes to agree deals in these territories before the end of the year.

Hutton said: “I think it’s fair to say we are on target. There are some big ones to go. We have to do Italy and Spain, and 2022 and 2024 in France. We are ahead of where we hoped we would be at this stage.

“There are a lot of variables to work on and there is a lot of work still to do, but in sublicensing numbers and free-to-air projections we are ahead.”

Exclusive Eurosport content

Under the German sublicensing deal, Discovery will retain about 30 per cent of all Olympic Games content exclusively for its Eurosport platforms. It will also retain non-exclusive rights to all content shown by ARD/ZDF.

ARD/ZDF will have access to one linear channel feed which will switch between live events; it will also simulcast this feed online. Coverage will alternate between ARD and ZDF on a daily basis. ARD/ZDF will also have access to three live feeds of specific events throughout the 2018 Games.

For 2018, Discovery has retained exclusive rights to snowboarding, short track speed skating, figure skating and ice hockey events, although ice hockey finals and German ice hockey matches will be available non-exclusively on ARD and ZDF.

Eurosport will show free-to-air coverage on its Eurosport 1 channel, which will be a dedicated Olympic channel during the Games.

TV Sports Markets understands ARD/ZDF will be able to choose which events they have access to via additional feeds for the three other Games.

The sublicensing deal is subject to final approval by the broadcasting councils in Germany, although local experts expect the deal to go through.

Amazon distribution deal

Confirmation of the ARD/ZDF sublicensing deal was swiftly followed by news Discovery had agreed a distribution deal in Germany and Austria with internet company Amazon.

The distribution agreement came after a decision at Discovery’s New York headquarters to show its Bundesliga football rights in Germany and Austria exclusively via its OTT service, Eurosport Player.

In June 2016, Discovery acquired a package of 40 live Bundesliga matches per season in a four-season deal, from 2017-18 to 2020-21, worth about €85m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 20:11).

But Discovery had struggled to secure carriage of the Bundesliga content on Sky, Germany's leading pay-television platform.

Hutton said the decision to house the Bundesliga exclusively on Eurosport Player was made as it attempts to establish a successful digital product. "It was a clear statement to US investors and federations that we are taking D2C (direct-to-consumer) seriously, and that we are not going to just rely on our old pay-TV revenue streams," he said.

Under the distribution deal, Amazon Prime subscribers have live and on-demand access to Eurosport Player through the Amazon Channels streaming service for €4.99 per month on top of a regular Amazon subscription.

The deal will last for the same four seasons Discovery holds Bundesliga rights. Amazon is understood to be paying Discovery a minimum guarantee of more than €10m per season, plus a revenue share.

Amazon also has a distribution deal with Discovery for the Eurosport channels in the UK. Eurosport is available to Amazon Prime subscribers for £6.99 (€7.63/\$9.02) per month on top of a regular Amazon subscription.

The Discovery/Amazon carriage deal in Germany and Austria came after a breakdown in talks over a distribution deal between Discovery and Sky. A new carriage deal between the two was agreed at the end of January, but did not include access to Discovery's Bundesliga coverage.

Following the protracted, and at times antagonistic, talks between Discovery and Sky earlier this year, Sky only offered a revenue-share agreement for access to Discovery's coverage of the Bundesliga. ♦

SNOOKER

World Snooker gets huge growth in China from digital rights deal

By David Cook

Rigour Media's 10-year deal for digital rights in China to World Snooker events marks the media group's first significant move into streaming live sport.

Rigour, which will pay a minimum guarantee of \$5m (€4.5m) per year, from July 2017 to July 2027, will show events on its Superstar Online streaming platform and has the option to sublicense rights to other platforms.

Any profit Rigour makes on the rights will be shared with World Snooker, including profit generated from sublicensing of e-gaming, e-community and social media rights, which are all included in the deal. Rigour does not currently have any sublicensing deals in place and is not obliged to agree any.

Superstar Online will stream all World Snooker events, including the World Championship and several ranking events held in China (there will be five in China in 2017). The platform was initially just an app for iOS and Android devices, but has now launched a website. It carries snooker and billiards-related news and on-demand content, as well as live billiards events.

Local sources are surprised Rigour has acquired the rights. Founded in 2008, Rigour's main business functions are providing sports-related technology and training equipment.

World Snooker chairman Barry Hearn told *TV Sports Markets*: "There is a massive market out there. We know we are one of the top three sports in China and that gives us access to a huge potential market."

First nationwide digital deal

The rights were tendered in February 2016. The deal with Rigour is the first time World Snooker has sold its Chinese digital rights directly to a platform. These rights were previously sold to platforms by local event organisers. It is also the first nationwide World Snooker digital rights deal in the country.

Linear rights in China are held by state broadcaster CCTV in a 10-year deal worth about \$1m per year, running for the same period as the Rigour deal.

CCTV's deal includes the right to stream the events it shows on linear television, but it cannot offer any other online services such as on-demand viewing or highlights. The number of hours CCTV can stream from each event is restricted, whereas Rigour can stream tournaments in their entirety.

When asked why World Snooker has agreed 10-year deals, Hearn said: “There’s a reason why you do each-way bets on a horse race. Am I happy to add money to my bottom line and do I honestly believe that money may look insignificant when factoring in profit share? I do believe that is the case.”

Strong digital interest

There is thought to have been interest in the rights from eight other parties, with streaming platform iQiyi and sports management and marketing company Seca the biggest rivals to Rigour.

Seca was only interested in picking up media rights and would have used its Zhibo TV streaming platform to show content. Seca pulled out of the process when the value of the deal went beyond what it was prepared to pay.

Hearn said: “They [Rigour] weren’t necessarily the highest bidder, but they were the bidder that we thought had more potential for us. We look for commitment to the sport.

“Ten years is a long deal, but we are protected by the upside in participation. We cover both bases on the financials. Could we have got more money from more established media companies? We didn’t feel they were as supportive of the sport.”

Rigour has an existing relationship with the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association, as it is a training and technology partner of academies in Beijing run by the WPBSA and Chinese Billiards and Snooker Association. The WPBSA has a 26-per-cent stake in World Snooker. Hearn stressed this did not give Rigour an advantage when bidding for the rights.

Subscription model a possibility

Superstar Online will stream matches for free, at least in the immediate future. A subscription fee could be introduced at a later stage.

Hearn said: “You’re always aiming for that stage down the road where in a few years you’ve got enough following to add something extra to it, but start charging \$1 or \$2 a month [instead of a higher price]. That sort of level is where we’re aiming to be in three or four years’ time.

“How quickly can you get to 10m members? In China, the answer is fairly quickly. If we get it right, I don’t see how we can’t get a minimum of 1m subscribers – it could be 10m. We just don’t know, because it’s never been done before. We’ll suck it and see.”

A source close to Rigour said its plan is to offer free membership for the first one or two years of its deal before looking to charge a fee. While viewers currently need to create an account to watch more than three minutes of content, all Superstar Online content is currently free.

World Snooker is not considering selling a separate digital highlights package, so Rigour’s level of exclusivity will not be eroded.

However, Rigour has not ruled out the possibility of sublicensing highlights rights. It can also sublicense clips and archive rights. ◆



For the full interview with Barry Hearn, visit
www.sportbusiness.com

ICE HOCKEY

Lagardère renews KHL rights as league seeks commercial change

By Callum McCarthy

The Kontinental Hockey League's new international rights deal with the Lagardère Sports agency marks the beginning of a six-season plan to expand the league across Europe and restructure its revenue streams.

Lagardère is understood to be paying a total of about €4.5m (\$5.3m) per season across two four-season deals – one for the KHL's media rights outside Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus; and one for the league's betting rights in the same territories – from 2017-18 to 2020-21.

The league's previous deal with the Ufa Sports agency – now part of Lagardère – ran for three seasons from 2014-15 to 2016-17. A source close to the new deal said it represented a “good increase” on its predecessor.

It is the first time the KHL's international rights have been tendered successfully, and the first time media and betting rights have been sold separately.

Sergey Dobrokhvalov, vice-president of marketing and communications for the KHL, told *TV Sports Markets*: “In 2015 we organised a tender for TV and commercial rights but in the end it did not take place. This year, we changed our approach and offered TV rights on a separate basis. As a result, the tender allowed us to evaluate the real interest of international companies in the product we create.”

Gauging interest outside the KHL's core international markets will help the league decide which clubs in other European ice hockey leagues it should target for future participation in the KHL – a key part of the league's plan to become commercially sustainable.

“By the 2020-21 season, we plan to adopt up to four new non-Russian clubs into the league,” Dobrokhvalov said. “Hence in three years' time, the KHL might consist of about 14 or 15 of the best Russian teams and about 10 top teams from other countries.

“We are open to the inclusion of strong non-Russian teams that could reinforce the league's sports level and bring additional commercial value.”

Change in reliance required

Since the 2008-09 season, the KHL and its clubs have relied on subsidies from government, state-owned companies and private investors. In 2016-17, 86 per cent of the combined budget of the league and clubs – about RUB43bn (€615m/\$726m) of a total budget of approximately RUB50bn – was from these subsidies.

Of the total RUB50bn budget, 52 per cent came from government and state-backed companies, 34 per cent from private companies and individuals, with only 14 per cent generated from sponsorship, media rights, ticketing and merchandising.

The reason for this reliance on government money originates from the league's reason for existence: to stem the tide of Russians leaving to play in North America's NHL, and to lure established Russian stars home.

Falling oil prices, economic sanctions and the depreciation of the rouble against the dollar has left local and central government struggling to continue funding the clubs, some of which have larger wage bills than NHL franchises. As a result, the KHL and its clubs are under growing pressure from government to increase their commercial income.

Dobrokhvalov concedes that increasing media-rights revenue alone will not solve the problem, but remains optimistic: "Even if this share in the clubs' revenues is not that considerable, a promising aspect is that we increase these sums from year to year. We hope that this positive trend will continue, thus allowing clubs to rebalance their income structure in favour of commercial sources."

By 2022-23, the league aims to reduce income from subsidies by almost 28 per cent, from RUB43bn per season to RUB31bn per season. The league has targeted a commercial revenue increase of about 71 per cent, from RUB7bn per season to RUB12bn per season.

Handful of strong markets

The KHL began in 2008-09, replacing the Russian Superleague as Russia's top-tier ice hockey league and incorporating teams from Latvia (Dinamo Riga), Kazakhstan (Barys Astana) and Belarus (Dinamo Minsk). The league has since added teams from China (Kunlun Red Star), Finland (Jokerit), Slovakia (Slovan Bratislava) and Ukraine (Donbass).

The league has also housed teams from the Czech Republic (Lev Praha) and Croatia (Medveščak Zagreb). However, Lev Praha disbanded in 2014-15, while Medveščak Zagreb left the league after 2016-17 to return to the Österreichische Eishockey Liga, Austria's top-tier league, for 2017-18 onward.

Dobrokhvalov says the KHL wants to improve its position as "the strongest and most commercially successful ice hockey league in the Eurasian space". But it will only be able to do so if it can increase interest in markets outside the Nordics, the Baltics, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. These markets are by far the most valuable territories in Lagardère's deal, with relatively low fees paid elsewhere.

Multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group has already agreed with Lagardère to renew its rights in two separate deals covering the Nordics and Baltics, from 2017-18 to 2020-21.

Experts believe these deals to be worth a total of about €1.5m per season, with more than 80 per cent of this thought to be for rights in the Nordics. One local expert said, before Jokerit joined the KHL, the rights were worth about €200,000 per season in the Nordics.

In the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, pay-television broadcaster AMC Networks International Central Europe has renewed its rights for the same four-season cycle, in a deal thought to be worth about €800,000 per season. This is a slight increase on the value of its previous three-season deal, from 2014-15 to 2016-17.

Pay-television broadcaster Sportklub has also renewed its rights in the Balkans from 2017-18 to 2020-21. The broadcaster paid about €150,000 per season in its previous deal, from 2014-15 to 2016-17, but local experts expect the value to have decreased slightly in the new cycle as Medveščak Zagreb has left the KHL.

Outside these territories, fees are much lower. Chinese state broadcaster CCTV paid no rights fee and contributed nothing to production in 2016-17, despite Kunlun Red Star participating in the league (*TV Sports Markets* 20:16). ◆



For the full interview with Sergey Dobrokhvalov, visit
www.sportbusiness.com

FOOTBALL

French federation renews with domestic partners for 33% more

By Robin Jellis

The French football federation increased the value of its domestic Coupe de France media rights by about 33 per cent in a joint renewal with France Télévisions and Eurosport.

Public-service broadcaster France Télévisions and sports broadcaster Eurosport will pay the Fédération Française de Football a combined fee of about €22m (\$26m) per season in a four-season deal, from 2018-19 to 2021-22.

France Télévisions will pay about €11.5m per season, while Eurosport will pay about €10.5m per season. The two will continue to cover production costs to matches on top of their rights fees.

In the current four-season cycle, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, the two broadcasters hold the same set of rights in a deal worth about €16.5m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:3). France Télévisions pays about €11.5m per season, while Eurosport pays about €5m per season.

The fee increase has been driven by Eurosport's desire to show more exclusive and locally-relevant content on its OTT service, Eurosport Player.

In the new deal, Eurosport will show all matches from the round of 32 to the final on its linear channels or via Eurosport Player – substantially more matches than it currently shows. It will also be able to simulcast matches shown by France Télévisions, which it cannot do in the current cycle.

France Télévisions will continue to show the same content as in its current deal. As such, its fee has remained steady. The broadcaster will show the final, one semi-final, one quarter-final, one match from the round of 16, one match from the round of 32, a multiplex from the round of 64, as well as a mixture of matches from the eighth round (round of 128) on its regional channel, France 3.

For the eighth round, the broadcaster shows one headline match, but it also shows matches of local teams in certain regions. It can show up to seven different matches across the country.

Other than the final – which will likely be broadcast on France 2 – all Coupe de France matches shown by the broadcaster are likely to air on France 3.

Local observers say the new agreement is a good one for the federation, which has secured a strong fee increase while maintaining coverage on the country's public-service broadcaster and increasing the number of matches shown.

The new deal represents a second successive fee increase for the federation. The last time it sold its rights, in January 2014, the FFF increased its domestic earnings from €14.15m per season in the 2010-11 to 2013-14 cycle.

Protracted broadcaster negotiations

The deal brings months of negotiations to an end. A tender was sent out by the federation in January with bids initially due on February 10. The deadline was pushed back to March 3 following queries from interested broadcasters (*TV Sports Markets* 21:4).

The process was then delayed by the FFF presidential election in March, which saw incumbent Noël Le Graët re-elected on March 18.

The tender also fell awkwardly for broadcasters as many were involved in separate tenders for rights in France to Formula One and the Uefa Champions League and Europa League competitions.

France Télévisions and Eurosport are said to have initially offered the FFF just over €20m per season. It is understood that no other broadcasters bid.

One local expert said commercial broadcasters would struggle to make a return on any deal at the level of France Télévisions' investment.

Pay-television broadcasters Canal Plus, beIN Sports and SFR Sport are not thought to have bid as the Coupe de France would add few subscribers.

Had the federation agreed an exclusive deal with a pay-television broadcaster, at least the final would have had to be sublicensed to a free-to-air broadcaster as it is protected by listed-events legislation.

FFF president Le Graët was directly involved in the talks and is thought to have approached other broadcasters to encourage them to bid. However, no other offers were forthcoming and the FFF finalised the €22m-per-season deal with its incumbent broadcast partners.

It is understood the federation was seeking to at least match the €23m per season earned by the French football league, the Ligue de Football Professionnel, when selling Coupe de la Ligue rights in December 2015 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:1).

However, local experts say the LFP had benefited from Canal Plus' strong desire to win the rights following its loss of English Premier League rights to telco SFR in the run up to the tender.

Other content included

The FFF deal also includes the Coupe de France Féminine (the women's version of the knockout competition) and the Coupe Gambardella, the male youth equivalent. France Télévisions will show the final of both competitions on its France 4 channel.

The new deal with France Télévisions and Eurosport does not include the top women's league, Division 1 Féminine, which was included the last time the FFF sold domestic Coupe de France rights.

Local observers believe the FFF carved these rights out of the new deal in order to capitalise on the growing interest in women's sport in the country. The federation is expected to tender the women's league rights with rights to women's national team matches.

Rights to women's national team matches are currently held by digital-terrestrial channels Canal 8 and Canal Star (formerly D8 and D17 respectively) – owned by Canal Plus – as part of a deal including rights to the men's U-21 team. That four-season deal, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, is worth just over €1.7m per season.

International rights deals

The FFF is understood to have grown the value of its Coupe de France media rights internationally to about €2m per season following the agreement of a separate multi-territory deal with Eurosport.

The Eurosport deal will run for the same four seasons as its domestic deal, from 2018-19 to 2021-22, and will cover all territories where the FFF does not currently have a deal in place.

Eurosport will pay the federation about €1m per season for the rights. The broadcaster was offered the rights by the FFF as part of the domestic negotiation. Eurosport is understood to have since sold the package on to the IMG agency, for the full four seasons, also for about €1m per season.

The FFF usually agrees direct deals with interested broadcasters in certain territories, and has previously sold to agencies in others on a piecemeal basis.

The federation has two current international rights deals, as well as a betting rights deal with digital media company Perform. Its international rights deals are with sports broadcaster Sport1 in Germany, from 2016-17 to 2018-19; and pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports in the Middle East and North Africa. These three deals combined are thought to be worth about €1m per season. ♦

TV RUSSIA

Telesport's OTT plans could reshape Russian rights market

By Callum McCarthy

The Telesport agency is aiming to take advantage of Match TV's weakened financial position and become the main buyer of sports rights in Russia, wresting control of the market from the Gazprom Media-owned broadcaster.

TV Sports Markets understands Telesport plans to launch an OTT service in the country as a means of exploiting rights itself, as well as distributing live and delayed content across other digital platforms. Telesport wants greater control over how it monetises rights in a market where broadcasters' ability to pay fees continues to decline.

Instead of sublicensing platform-neutral rights as it has in the past, Telesport is expected to hold back digital rights for its own use while attempting to sublicense linear rights to sports broadcaster Match TV or, in rarer cases, state broadcaster VGTRK or state-owned commercial broadcaster Channel One.

Telesport's plan to take control of the market could lead to a stand-off with Match TV, which now has to adapt.

Sources close to the broadcaster say it is struggling financially due to declining subscriber numbers, ratings and advertising sales. It will want to maintain its current rights portfolio to prevent further decline, but local experts believe Match TV could refuse to buy linear rights from Telesport in an attempt to disrupt the agency's plans.

In order to make any profit from digital exploitation – whether via third-party platforms or its own OTT venture – Telesport will almost certainly need to offset some of its costs by sublicensing linear rights to Match TV in exchange for small rights fees or airtime.

Telesport will also be expected to provide linear distribution by many rights-holders, something it would struggle to achieve without the support of Match TV.

LaLiga to be Telesport's test case

In order to test its new model, Telesport has acquired rights to Spain's LaLiga in a four-season deal, from 2017-18 to 2020-21. The deal is worth about €2.5m (\$3m) per season.

Telesport competed directly against Match TV for the rights, and is thought to have comfortably outbid the broadcaster.

LaLiga had no broadcast deal in place in Russia last season after Match TV and the league's international sales agent, Mediapro, failed to agree a fee. Telesport showed no interest last season.

To begin the 2017-18 season, Telesport is using Russian social media and video-hosting platform VKontakte to live-stream LaLiga matches. It is thought Telesport will strike partnerships with other digital platforms to stream matches.

Sources close to the platform say the two matches aired on August 20 – Barcelona vs. Real Betis and Deportivo de La Coruña vs. Real Madrid – attracted a cumulative audience of 1.4m viewers. This is considerably more than Match TV achieved for the corresponding matches in the 2015-16 season.

It is understood neither Mediapro nor LaLiga has demanded matches to be shown by linear broadcasters, removing any pressure on Telesport to strike a deal with Match TV. Telesport is selling advertising around the matches to monetise the rights on digital platforms.

Local experts are sceptical Telesport will come close to breaking even this way, but believe the agency is testing its earning potential from advertising alone, while also exploring if Match TV is receptive to a non-exclusive deal at a knockdown price.

One source said: "Match TV is very angry and would like to pass on LaLiga. We will see how this develops. It's obvious it's impossible to recoup the LaLiga investment via digital advertising, so Telesport has to sell rights partially to Match TV."

A local consultant said: "This new approach could be a good way for Match TV to get the rights at a massively reduced fee, and for right-holders to monetise digital platforms while taking revenues away from pirates."

Previous Telesport/Match TV deals

Until the beginning of this year, the relationship between Telesport and Match TV had been symbiotic, with Telesport acquiring platform-neutral rights to large sporting events such as the Olympic Games and the Uefa European Championships, and selling pay-television rights to Match TV.

Match TV has been the only viable broadcast option for rights-holders and agencies selling year-round and season-long content since November 2015, after the Russian government legislated against foreign ownership of mass media and forced the consolidation of the sports broadcasting sector.

Match TV, which replaced VGTRK's Rossiya-2 channel, was created in November 2015. Its parent company, state-owned media group Gazprom Media, also owns pay-television operator NTV Plus.

Gazprom's monopoly over sports broadcasting has allowed it to create its own market value for rights, leading to falls in revenue for rights-holders such as the English Premier League and Uefa.

Telesport's decision to compete with Gazprom is a risky one, both financially and politically. But since the launch of Match TV, Telesport has been the only company capable of paying what rights-holders view as market value in Russia.

After Match TV and the IMG agency failed to agree a deal for Ultimate Fighting Championship rights, Telesport stepped in to complete a two-year deal, covering 2017 and 2018, worth \$1m per year. This was about \$400,000 per year more than Match TV was willing to pay (*TV Sports Markets* 21:2).

Knowing Match TV could not afford the fee and needed the rights, Telesport agreed a deal combining a rights fee and airtime around UFC broadcasts. Match TV was reluctant to allow Telesport to control its airtime, and local sources believe the resulting one-year deal, covering 2017 only, satisfied neither party.

The UFC deal is understood to have influenced Telesport's decision to exploit rights itself, and take greater control over its finances and the wider market. ◆

TV TURKEY

Football fees fall in Turkey as Bundesliga is still without deal

By Callum McCarthy

The depreciation of the Turkish lira since 2014 continues to hurt the value of football rights in the country. Italy's Serie A, the German Bundesliga and – most significantly – Turkey's domestic cup, have all been affected.

In a deal completed on August 16, the Turkuvaz Media Group agreed to pay about 27 per cent less than it did in the previous cycle for rights to Turkey's domestic cup competition, Türkiye Kupası.

Pay-television operator Tivibu – owned by telco Türk Telekom – is understood to have paid about nine per cent less for Serie A rights than pay-television operator Digiturk did last season.

And broadcasters have been unwilling to meet the MP & Silva agency's asking price for rights to the German Bundesliga, which went unaired in its first match-week.

Turkish Cup deal

Turkuvaz, which owns commercial broadcaster ATV and digital-terrestrial sports broadcaster A Spor, will pay an average of about \$11m (€9.3m) per season – plus 18 per cent VAT and a small fee to the Turkish football federation – in a three-season deal, from 2017-18 to 2019-20. The deal was struck directly with the federation, Türkiye Futbol Federasyonu.

Turkuvaz will pay \$10m in 2017-18, about \$11m in 2018-19, and just over \$12m in 2019-20, in line with expected inflation. To protect against further depreciation, half of the fee will be paid in US dollars and half in lira. This is about 27 per cent less than the value of Turkuvaz's previous deal, worth an average of just over \$15m per season from 2014-15 to 2016-17. Turkuvaz paid \$13.75m in 2014-15; \$15.125m in 2015-16; and \$16.637m in 2016-17. Its fees were paid in US dollars only.

Turkuvaz is not thought to have faced any competition, but this was not due to a lack of interest in the rights. Digiturk – which holds rights to the top-tier domestic Süper Lig from 2017-18 to 2021-22 – is unhappy about the federation's handling of the tender. The TFF brought forward its original deadline by a week, to August 16, at short notice.

Sources close to Digiturk say the new date precluded it from bidding, with other sources citing changes to Digiturk's management structure as the reason. It is thought beIN Media Group, which acquired Digiturk in August 2016, is in the process of merging Digiturk staff into its global team.

Turkuvaz will exploit Turkish Cup rights across its three free-to-air broadcasters: ATV, A Spor and its A Haber news channel.

Serie A switches hands

Tivibu will pay about €2m for Serie A rights in 2017-18 after Digiturk passed on an option to extend its own one-season deal for 2016-17.

Tivibu struck the deal with MP & Silva, which holds Serie A international rights in a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, worth an average of \$185.7m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:20). The deal was completed on August 10, eight days before the start of the season.

Digiturk paid about €2.2m for Serie A rights in 2016-17, up from €1.8m in 2015-16. Its option to extend its deal for 2017-18 is thought to have been contingent on paying a larger fee (*TV Sports Markets* 20:16).

Turkish stars Hakan Çalhanoğlu and Cengiz Ünder have recently signed for AC Milan and Roma respectively, theoretically boosting Serie A's appeal to a Turkish audience.

Tivibu has acquired Serie A rights to bolster its top-tier football content, which currently consists solely of rights to the Uefa Champions League and Europa League, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:23).

The operator will have the chance to renew these rights either in late October or early November, when Uefa is expected to come to market with rights in a new three-season cycle, from 2018-19 to 2020-21.

Bundesliga struggle

MP & Silva also holds rights to the Bundesliga in Turkey as part of a four-season deal covering 31 territories, from 2017-18 to 2020-21, worth about €40m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 20:14). The agency holds rights in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Eurasia (including Turkey), the Nordics and Portugal.

International sports broadcaster Eurosport previously showed the league in Turkey in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons in a deal worth just over €4m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 18:22). Eurosport has declined to bid for rights from 2017-18 onward.

MP & Silva has received offers from pay-television operator D-Smart and Tivibu, but neither bid is thought to come close to the fee previously paid by Eurosport.

Digiturk is thought to have some interest in the rights, but will only consider a bid should D-Smart and Tivibu decline to offer more. One source says Digiturk has cleared schedule space in key Bundesliga match slots in case a last-minute deal can be completed. ◆

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

NFL digital rights value grows in China as Tencent gets exclusivity

By David Cook

The NFL secured a solid increase in the annual value of its digital rights in China from an exclusive deal with online streaming platform Tencent.

TV Sports Markets understands Tencent will pay close to \$3m (€2.7m) per year for NFL rights in a three-year deal, from 2017 to 2019.

The Tencent Sports streaming site will show just over 100 games each season, including: selected pre-season games; all games on Thursday, Sunday and Monday nights; two to three Sunday afternoon games per week; the playoffs; the Pro Bowl; and the Super Bowl.

Shoulder programming, such as the NFL Draft, NFL Combine and NFL Game Day, will be shown on the Tencent News app. Content can also be accessed via social networking services QQ and WeChat.

The rights were sold directly by NFL China. Rights in China are not included in the NFL's international rights deal with digital media company Perform (*TV Sports Markets* 21:8).

Over the past two seasons, 2015 and 2016, a similar package of digital rights was sold non-exclusively to seven streaming platforms: Alisports, BesTV, iQiyi, LeSports, PPTV, Sina Sports and Tencent.

Social media platform Sina Weibo also agreed a deal to show seven regular-season games, three playoff games and the Super Bowl last season.

The combined value of these deals was close to \$2m per year, with all platforms paying roughly the same amount for its rights, though it is unclear if Sina Weibo contributed toward this.

The NFL previously sold its digital rights in the country non-exclusively to gather information about which platform would be the best exclusive partner. It was always the NFL's intention to agree an exclusive deal for the 2017-19 cycle.

Richard Young, managing director of NFL China, told *TV Sports Markets* this week: "We want better commentary, engagement, news coverage, social coverage, off-field coverage and better coverage of shoulder programming.

“That is all far more possible now with one partner. In addition, there are now better opportunities for our commercial partners to really engage and focus. They don’t have to spread their spend across eight platforms now.”

NFL viewer numbers on digital platforms in China last year were just over 280m, up from 169m a year earlier. Live Super Bowl viewer numbers increased from 4.7m on digital to almost 7.7m.

TV Sports Markets understands the NFL had been hoping to secure a five-year deal worth a total of around \$17m, or about \$3.4m per year, but was not able to meet that target due to a lack of interest. It is thought Tencent became interested in picking up the rights when the NFL lowered its expectations.

The NFL is considering distributing digital highlights rights to a separate platform at some point in the future.

Tencent’s on-demand success

More than half the digital on-demand views of NFL games last year were generated by Tencent, and this was one of the key reasons the NFL decided to award exclusive rights to the platform.

However, the NFL spoke to all platforms that had digital rights in the previous cycle. Tencent was not the only bidder. Sina chose not to bid as the fee was too high. Alisports chose not to bid as media is not its core business and it could not justify paying the requested fee.

Acquiring NFL rights exclusively fits into Tencent’s focus on buying rights to top North American sports properties: Tencent also holds rights to the NBA and NHL. It pays a minimum of about \$150m per year for the former, and an average of \$3.5m per season for the latter (*TV Sports Markets* 20:12; 20:21).

Linear NFL rights

The NFL generally does not agree live rights deals with linear broadcasters in China, but instead allows regional broadcasters to show highlights packages.

Young said: “We look at linear as a platform for highlights because of the time slots. People can watch a recap because they’re in front of their TV. A live two-and-a-half-hour game on a Monday morning is not appropriate. Live games on linear work with the big events, but it’s really about digital.”

In the previous cycle, various regional broadcasters shared the rights, with nine showing the Super Bowl.

The NFL is set to announce its linear deals in the coming weeks. It is expected eight to 10 broadcasters will have non-exclusive rights to the same package. ◆



For the full interview with Richard Young, visit www.sportbusiness.com

BOXING

Kelly: Mayweather vs. McGregor set to break international record

By Callum McCarthy

The IMG agency says global media-rights revenue earned from Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Conor McGregor will exceed that of previous marquee fights, and expects the pay-per-view revenue record to have been broken in multiple major territories.

IMG sold rights to Mayweather vs. McGregor in all territories outside the US and Canada, where rights were exploited or sold by US pay-television broadcaster Showtime and Mayweather Promotions.

The agency was allocated the rights three-and-a-half weeks before the fight, which took place on August 26. This allocation is understood to have been a part of the wider bout agreement.

Speaking exclusively to *TV Sports Markets*, Adam Kelly, head of global sales at IMG, said: “We always felt we were tracking at the very top end of demand and certainly expected to exceed the [non-domestic] earnings of Anthony Joshua vs. Wladimir Klitschko.

“The difference in revenue between that fight and Floyd Mayweather vs. Manny Pacquiao is very significant, and we expected to exceed earnings for Mayweather vs. Pacquiao. In almost every single territory, we have done so.”

Media-rights and pay-per-view revenue outside the US and Canada for Mayweather vs. Pacquiao is understood to have been in the region of \$45m (€38m).

IMG agreed a total of 63 deals – a mixture of pay-per-view revenue-share deals, traditional rights deals and what Kelly describes as a “third way”.

“Broadcasters and platforms came up with creative new business models to deliver either an exact pay-per-view or a quasi pay-per-view model. Via that third way we’d be paid a bonus against the number of sign-ups, subscriptions or viewers.

“Broadcasters went above and beyond to be creative so they could be a part of it. Everybody wanted to be a part of this amazing phenomenon, and the ones that were creative and got on board have seen spectacular results.”

In deals involving traditional broadcasters, the agency strongly preferred a revenue-share element to be present, even when rights fees were paid. This was due to its expectation that any revenue-share income would exceed the upfront value a broadcaster would be willing to pay.

“I think in an ideal world, if we could have had a pay-per-view option in every single territory, with wide-reaching platforms, we would have done so,” Kelly said. “The pay-per-view value was many, many times the value a traditional operator would have been able to pay as a licence fee.”

Positive impact for the UFC

The event, which involved Ultimate Fighting Championship lightweight champion McGregor, was a risk for IMG. A poor performance from McGregor could have negatively affected the UFC’s reputation, and affected negotiations in the US over a new media rights deal from 2019 onward. WME|IMG owns the UFC.

McGregor performed well in the eyes of the majority of observers, and Kelly believes this outcome will have a positive impact on the UFC’s business in the short- to mid-term future.

“There’s going to be a huge amount of interest in him after he competed with Mayweather in the fight. To see him competing in the discipline he specialises in is going to be very interesting for a huge number of people around the world.”

Kelly is adamant that, though this particular crossover event was a commercial success, it is a trick unlikely to be repeated any time soon.

“In terms of crossover events, I think people have probably had enough of that for now,” he said. “This was an important event, a great event, but I don’t see there being an enormous appetite for seeing other boxers face other mixed martial artists.”

He continued: “I think the world is crying out for more UFC, and I think there’s going to be a huge interest in big, headline UFC events. There are a lot of people who have just been educated about the UFC brand, and about the talent of one of its stars.” ◆



For the full interview with Adam Kelly, visit
www.sportbusiness.com

US COLLEGE SPORT

Big Ten bucks trend by agreeing shorter-term deals than its rivals

By David Svenson

The Big Ten collegiate athletic conference has agreed a set of new domestic media-rights deals, increasing the value of the existing package by almost 300 per cent.

The new deals with broadcasters Fox, ESPN and CBS will all run for six seasons, from 2017-18 to 2022-23, and are worth a combined total of about \$440m (€372m) per season. This is up from the value of previous deals with ESPN and CBS, worth a combined average of about \$112m per season.

In the new deals, Fox will pay an average of \$240m per season; ESPN will pay \$190m per season; and CBS will pay \$10m per season.

In the previous deals ESPN paid an initial \$1bn over 10 seasons from 2007-08 to 2016-17, starting at \$100m per year. This fee increased to \$150m in the final season of the contract due to the introduction of Nebraska, Maryland and Rutgers into the conference. CBS paid an average of \$12m per season over six seasons from 2011-12 to 2016-17.

Under the new deals, Fox will show up to 27 American football games and up to 47 men's basketball games each season. ESPN will also show 27 American football games, but will only show up to 39 men's basketball games each season.

Both deals also include women's basketball and Olympic sports. CBS will show at least 10 men's basketball games each season, including the semi-finals and final of the end-of-season tournament.

Fox will have first-pick of most American football games, meaning high-profile games, such as Ohio State vs. Michigan, will be shown on Fox for the first time.

The Ohio vs. Michigan match has been broadcast on ABC, sister channel of ESPN, for many years, and in 2016 was watched by over 17m people. It was also streamed on OTT service ESPN Player, and was the first Big Ten regular-season match to gain over 1m unique viewers.

Shorter deals than Big Ten rivals

The six-season term is unusually short for a major college conference media-rights deal – such deals are typically between 12 and 15 years long.

The duration means the Big Ten's rights will come up for renewal before broadcasters have drained their budgets with major outlays on the rights of other major conferences.

Its rival conferences are locked into deals, and are extremely unlikely to be allowed to negotiate an early renewal by the broadcasters. One industry expert described the shorter duration of the deal as "game-changing".

The Pac-12's deals with ESPN and Fox, worth a combined \$225m per season, will run until the end of 2023-24 (*TV Sports Markets* 15:9). The Big 12 also has deals with both broadcasters, running until the end of 2024-25, worth \$200m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 16:16).

The Southeastern Conference's current deal is with ESPN until the end of 2023-24, and has already been renewed until the end of 2033-34 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:9). The current Atlantic Coast Conference deal with ESPN, worth \$240m per season, was due to expire at the end of 2026-27, but the deal has since been extended until the end of 2035-36.

More partners means more money

ESPN was the last of the three broadcasters to agree a deal. However, one US media-rights expert told *TV Sports Markets* an agreement was always likely as ESPN wanted to "protect their turf".

ESPN has a 38-year relationship with the conference dating back to 1979 and did not want to see Big Ten American football exclusively on rival Fox.

Sharing the rights with Fox allows ESPN to continue its Big Ten coverage without paying the huge increase that would have been required to maintain its previous package of rights.

Fox has a stake in the Big Ten through its 51-per-cent holding in the Big Ten Network, a joint venture with the conference. Big Ten Network has a 25-season contract for rights to the Big Ten conference, from 2007-08 to 2032-33, paying an average of \$112m per season.

The deal includes rights to live American football and men's basketball, along with several other sports. However, the content does not rival that acquired by Fox, ESPN and CBS in terms of high-profile games. The Big Ten Network airs 'overflow' content that broadcasters would struggle to show. The Big Ten conference covers 28 sports. ◆

TENNIS

Amazon makes first significant UK sports play with ATP rights

By David Svenson

Amazon secured its first major sports rights deal in the UK with the acquisition of ATP World Tour 1000 and 500 rights, a move which surprised local experts.

The five-year deal with internet company Amazon, from 2019 to 2023, will be worth just over £10m (€10.9m/\$12.9m) per year.

This is a 25-per-cent increase on the £8m per year pay-television broadcaster Sky pays in its current five-year deal, from 2014 to 2018 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:21). Sky also held the rights from 2011 to 2013 in a deal worth about £3m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 14:22).

The rights were sold by ATP Media, the broadcast arm of professional men's tennis circuit the ATP World Tour. ATP Media was advised on the sale of its rights by the IMG agency.

Switching from Sky – the leading pay-television platform in the UK – to Amazon will reduce the reach of the ATP in the UK, but the fee was hard to turn down. Both Sky and pay-television rival BT Sport bid for the rights, with Sky offering less than it pays in the current cycle.

Amazon has shown increasing interest in sports rights. In April it acquired worldwide live streaming rights to the NFL's Thursday Night Football, paying about \$50m for rights to 10 games in the 2017 season (*TV Sports Markets* 21:6).

Local sources are divided as to whether this is the start of Amazon building a serious live sports offering, or a test to see whether creating such a package could be effectively monetised.

Roy Price, head of Amazon Studios, has said sports rights represent a good opportunity for the company, suggesting Amazon is likely to further invest in sports rights.

In May, Amazon added live television feeds to its Amazon Prime offering in the UK at an additional subscription charge. Following a deal with US media company Discovery Communications, Amazon carries the Eurosport channels in the UK.

The deal allows Amazon Prime subscribers to access Eurosport content, which includes live rights to tennis properties such as the US Open, French Open and Australian Open. Eurosport also holds highlights rights to Wimbledon in the UK from 2016 to 2020.

Sky makes move away from tennis

Once the current deal for the ATP World Tour 1000 and 500 events finishes, Sky will have no tennis rights in the UK.

UK sports rights expert David Murray, director at consultancy firm Fozmuz and former BBC head of sports rights, told *TV Sports Markets*: “Sky would not have been too bothered about letting these rights go as their focus doesn’t appear to be on tennis.”

Sky recently revamped its sports offering, moving away from a numbering system to sports-focused channels, with dedicated channels set up for football, cricket and golf. The lack of a tennis channel suggests it is not a priority for Sky.

One reason behind its decision is likely that the next ATP Tour cycle will likely see the decline or the retirements of top players such as Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal, and, most importantly, Briton Andy Murray. ♦

FOOTBALL

ANFP earns increase in value of Chilean national team matches

By Mónica Villar

The Chilean football federation has earned a slight increase in the value of its national team friendly and qualifier matches in a new deal with Chilevisión.

Free-to-air broadcaster Chilevisión will pay a total of \$119m (€100m), from 2018-19 to 2021-22, for exclusive media and sponsorship rights to all national-team matches, including World Cup qualifying matches and friendly matches. Six friendly matches have already been scheduled.

The federation, the Asociación Nacional de Fútbol Profesional, sold the rights following a tender process. Bids had been due by August 1.

The deal represents a 12-per-cent increase on the value of the ANFP's current agreement with free-to-air broadcaster Mega. Mega's deal, for the same set of qualifier and friendly matches, is worth \$106m, from 2014-15 to 2017-18.

Chilevisión held national-team rights in the previous cycle, from 2010-11 to 2013-14, when it paid the ANFP a total of \$22m.

Chilevisión outbid Mega and free-to-air rival Canal 13 in the tender. Public-service broadcaster Televisión Nacional de Chile (TVN) was discouraged from bidding because its coverage of the 2017 Fifa Confederations Cup generated low ratings, despite Chile's run to the final. Local sources said the low ratings were a reflection of TVN's failure to invest in production.

The recent success of Chile's national team boosted the value of the rights. As well as being Confederations Cup finalists, Chile won the Copa América in both 2015 and 2016.

In Chile, all national-team matches must be available free-to-air. Chilevisión will sell on pay-television and sponsorship rights.

Domestic football

The ANFP also recently ran a tender to secure a new partner for rights to domestic club football. The tender closed last month.

Domestic club rights are currently exploited via pay-television broadcaster Canal del Fútbol, which is 80-per-cent owned by the federation and 20-per-cent owned by channel operator Gestión de Televisión (GTV) (*TV Sports Markets* 21:12).

ANFP has the right to buy out GTV's stake. In the tender, it sought a partner that would fund the buyout – giving 100 per cent control over club football rights to the federation – and in return strike an exclusive carriage deal for the two CdF channels.

TV Sports Markets understands that media companies ESPN, Fox, Liberty Global and a foreign investment company have bid. All parties can improve their offers at any time before the deadline on September 30. It is likely any agreement would be long-running, with a duration of 15 to 20 years expected.

According to one local expert, the annual cost of running CdF is about \$6m. This is because CdF has to rent production equipment, mainly from film production company Chilefilms. ◆

FOOTBALL

MP & Silva takes hit on package value due to LeSports' collapse

By David Cook

MP & Silva has seen the value of several of its European football properties tumble in China following a pair of new deals in place of its broken agreement with LeSports.

Online streaming platforms PPTV and Tencent will each pay \$2.5m (€2.2m) for non-exclusive rights to the English FA Cup and Community Shield, French Ligue 1, Italian Serie A and the Scottish Premiership. The deal covers the 2017-18 season only. Both platforms will stream the same content. Rival online streaming platform Sina Sports turned down a deal for the same set of rights on the basis of price.

The package includes: 10 Serie A matches per match week; six Ligue 1 matches per match week; 40 FA Cup matches per season from the first to fifth round and all matches from the quarter-finals onwards; and 55 Scottish Premiership matches per season. The Community Shield was played on August 6.

Rights to these properties were previously held by online streaming platform LeSports, but it lost access to the rights as a result of missed payments. Its deal for FA Cup rights alone was thought to be worth between \$7m and \$8m per season for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (*TV Sports Markets* 21:10).

MP & Silva earned €6.5m per season from Serie A rights in the same 2015-2018 period in China from deals with LeSports and state broadcaster CCTV. LeSports is thought to have paid the majority of the total. CCTV still holds linear rights (*TV Sports Markets* 19:19).

One informed source said MP & Silva is now taking legal action against LeSports, as it is still owed a “huge amount” by the platform.

LeSports' deal for Serie A rights with MP & Silva also included rights to several smaller properties: England senior and U-23 national team home friendly matches; the English Championship; the English League Cup; the Scottish Professional Football League; the Belgian Pro League; and friendly matches of the Brazilian national team. It is unclear if any of these properties will be broadcast in China the immediate future.

European football content forms a key part of both Tencent and PPTV's offering. PPTV will show the English Premier League and German Bundesliga in the leagues' respective new cycles, while it currently shows Spain's LaLiga (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15; 20:20; 21:6). Tencent shows the Bundesliga in the current cycle and both platforms currently hold rights to the Uefa Champions League and Europa League (*TV Sports Markets* 20:22). ◆

FOOTBALL

CBF chooses Synergy to handle keenly-anticipated sales process

By Mónica Villar

The Brazilian football confederation has appointed the Synergy Sports agency to manage the sale of media rights to its national team matches. The move represents the first time the confederation, the Confederação Brasileira de Futebol, will sell its rights via an agency.

The CBF and Synergy deal will run from November 2017 until the 2022 Fifa World Cup. The two are expected to launch a tender process for the rights – covering 37 national-team matches over the period – on September 1, with bids due two weeks later. The package will consist of nine qualifying matches for the 2022 Fifa World Cup and 28 friendly matches.

Synergy is a new company set up by Patrick Murphy, chairman of the Catalyst Media agency, and former managing director of sales at the Team Marketing agency. *TV Sports Markets* understands Synergy will be paid by the CBF on a commission basis.

The CBF has previously sold its rights directly to media group Globo. However, when its deal with Globo ended in 2016, Globo tried to reduce the cost of the rights, forcing the CBF to look for alternatives. Brazil's friendly matches in June against Argentina and Australia were streamed on social media platform Facebook (*TV Sports Markets* 21:12). Globo previously acquired rights to several friendly and World Cup qualifying matches on a piecemeal basis.

One local expert said an individual Brazil qualifier would be worth about \$2m (€1.6m); a Brazil vs. Argentina match could be worth \$2.5m; while friendly matches are generally worth about \$1m each.

All major free-to-air and pay-television broadcasters are expected to bid, with most competition likely to come from Globo, Esporte Interativo and ESPN. If a pay-television broadcaster were to acquire the rights, home qualifier matches would have to be sublicensed to a free-to-air broadcaster in accordance with local listed-events legislation. A pay-television broadcaster could retain exclusive rights to away qualifier matches and all friendly matches.

Digital players likely to be involved in the process include Facebook, Google and internet company Amazon; telcos Vivo, Claro and Oi are understood to be interested in mobile rights.

Synergy's only other significant client is Conmebol, South American football's governing body, for which Synergy will sell sponsorship rights to the 2017 and 2018 Copa Sudamericana tournaments. Synergy will also help sell media rights to Conmebol's minor tournaments such as beach football, women's football and futsal in 2017 and 2018. ◆



23-26
OCT.2017

SPORTELMONACO.COM

#SPORTEL

Meet the Elite

SPORTS MARKETING & MEDIA CONVENTION

With the support of the



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

Sportel
MONACO

DEALS ROUND-UP

AUGUST 3 TO 30

FOOTBALL

- ◆ OTT service DAZN, owned by digital media company Perform, acquired rights in Canada to competitions organised by the English Football League, which operates the three club divisions below the top-tier Premier League.
- ◆ Bantech, the video technology business of Major League Baseball's Advanced Media division, acquired rights in the US to the second-tier English Championship and the EFL Cup knockout competition.
- ◆ Sports broadcaster ESPN acquired live and delayed rights in the US to the English Championship and EFL Cup.
- ◆ International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network agreed a five-season deal with the EFL, from 2017-18 to 2021-22. The deal covers Belgium, Luxembourg and Poland.
- ◆ UK public-service broadcaster the BBC began showing live coverage of one match from each qualifying round of the FA Cup domestic competition from August 5.
- ◆ Chinese online streaming platform Tencent acquired non-exclusive live streaming rights to France's Ligue 1, Italy's Serie A and Scotland's Premiership, as well as the FA Cup, from the MP & Silva agency (page 33).
- ◆ Chinese streaming platform PPTV acquired non-exclusive rights to Serie A, Ligue 1, the Scottish Premiership and the FA Cup (page 33).
- ◆ The Turner Sports division of US cable-television broadcaster Turner Broadcasting System will launch a standalone sports streaming service after securing exclusive English-language rights to the Uefa Champions League and Europa League for three seasons, from 2018-19 to 2020-21. Turner said the OTT sports platform will launch in 2018 with the Uefa package serving as a "core pillar" of the direct-to-consumer offering.
- ◆ Greek pay-television broadcaster Cosmote TV acquired rights to the top-tier Portuguese Primeira Liga.
- ◆ Austrian commercial broadcaster Puls 4 renewed its rights to the Europa League for three seasons, from 2018-19 to 2020-21.
- ◆ Australian telco Optus agreed a deal with wagering company Tabcorp to show coverage of the English Premier League and the 2018 Fifa World Cup across Sky Racing venues in Australia.
- ◆ The Telesport agency acquired exclusive rights in Russia to LaLiga, the top division in Spain (page 18).
- ◆ Irish public-service broadcaster RTÉ acquired rights to the Euro 2020 tournament as well as rights to European Qualifier matches of the Irish national team from 2018-19 to 2021-22.
- ◆ Romanian commercial broadcaster Pro TV acquired rights to: Euro 2020; European Qualifiers of the Romanian national team from 2018-19 to 2021-22; and the first two editions of Uefa's Nations League tournament in 2018-19 and 2020-21. Coverage will be shown via the Pro X channel.

DEALS ROUND-UP

AUGUST 3 TO 30

◆ Italian state broadcaster Rai and sports broadcaster Sportitalia retained rights to Serie C, the third tier of Italian club football in three-season deals, from 2017-18 to 2019-20. Rai secured 'National Package 1', while Sportitalia was awarded 'National Package 2'.

◆ Brazilian media group Globo was awarded exclusive rights to the Uefa Euro 2020 national team tournament. Coverage will be shown on commercial broadcaster TV Globo and pay-television broadcaster SporTV, as well as the GloboEsporte.com website. The deal was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 21:12.

OTHER SPORTS

◆ **American Football:** Chinese online streaming platform Tencent signed a three-year digital rights deal with the NFL, from 2017 to 2019 (page 23).

◆ **Athletics:** Czech public-service broadcaster Česká Televize extended a deal for the International Association of Athletics Federations World Championships. The deal will cover three editions of the Championships, from 2018 to 2023.

◆ **Athletics:** African sports broadcaster Kwesé Sports acquired rights to IAAF competitions throughout sub-Saharan Africa under an agreement with sports broadcaster ESPN. The six-year deal, from 2018 to 2023, was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 21:14.

◆ **Basketball:** Australian pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights to a host of national team competitions organised by the International Basketball Federation (Fiba). Fox

will hold exclusive live rights to games played by Australia's men's and women's national teams. The deal covers the 2019 men's World Cup and its qualifiers; the 2018 women's World Cup; qualifying tournaments for the 2020 Olympic Games; the 2017 and 2021 editions of the men's Asia Cup; the 2019 and 2021 editions of the women's Asia Cup; and the 2021 Fiba Continental Cup qualifiers for men and women.

◆ **Basketball:** Fiba appointed the Torneos agency to distribute its media rights in South America from 2017 to 2025. The partnership involves the distribution of linear broadcast rights for all of Fiba's major national team competitions during the period.

◆ **Basketball:** German telco Deutsche Telekom acquired rights to national team events operated by Fiba for five years, from 2017 to 2021.

◆ **Basketball:** The Fox Sports division of US network Fox renewed a rights partnership with Big3, a three-on-three, half-court league that launched this year. Fox Sports will cover the 2018 season of the competition.

◆ **Boxing:** DAZN secured rights in Japan to the bout between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and UFC lightweight champion Conor McGregor on August 26. Japanese subscribers were able to watch the fight as part of their monthly subscription.

◆ **Boxing:** International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network acquired live and exclusive rights in Belgium and Taiwan to the Mayweather vs. McGregor fight. The full fight was available to Belgian fans via the Fight Pass

DEALS ROUND-UP

AUGUST 3 TO 30

subscription service for a one-off payment of €20 (\$23.50), and in Taiwan for NT\$199 (€5.57/\$6.56).

◆ **Boxing:** Indian digital media company Veqta acquired rights for the Mayweather vs. McGregor fight. Veqta's coverage was available via its digital platform and its Android and iOS apps.

◆ **Boxing:** Combat sports broadcaster Fight Sports acquired rights to the middleweight clash between Saúl Álvarez and Gennady Golovkin in multiple territories. Fight Sports said it would broadcast the fight in more than 40 territories, including Spain, Germany, Singapore, India, Thailand and Indonesia.

◆ **Boxing:** International sports broadcaster ESPN agreed a multi-year deal in the US and Canada with the Top Rank promotion. ESPN will provide exclusive coverage of fights featuring Top Rank boxers on linear and digital platforms. English-language coverage will be provided by ESPN in the US and its sister pay-television broadcaster TSN in Canada. French-language coverage in Canada will be provided via ESPN sister channel RDS.

◆ **Boxing:** 7Sports, the sports business division of German commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat.1, acquired rights to the inaugural edition of the World Boxing Super Series. 7Sports will show exclusive coverage of the event in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

◆ **Cricket:** Willow TV, a US-based cricket-dedicated broadcaster, acquired rights to this year's edition of the Caribbean Premier League Twenty20 competition.

◆ **Cricket:** Media company Sony Pictures Sports Network acquired exclusive rights to the 2017 Caribbean Premier League in the Indian sub-continent.

◆ **Cricket:** The England & Wales Cricket Board extended its deal with UK commercial broadcaster Channel 5 until the end of 2019. The deal will grant free-to-air coverage for the women's national team for the first time. Channel 5 will also retain highlights rights to the home games of England's men's team.

◆ **Cricket:** Fox Sports acquired exclusive rights in Australia to the national team's tour of Bangladesh. The deal covers two Test matches. Fox will show the final session of each day's play live, with full live coverage on the Foxtel Now platform.

◆ **Cricket:** Sportsfix, a new OTT service in Southeast Asia, acquired rights to Bangladesh national cricket team home matches. The agreement began with the first Test of Bangladesh's series against Australia, on August 27.

◆ **Drone Racing:** Eleven acquired live and exclusive rights in Belgium, Italy, Singapore, Taiwan and the US to the remaining five events of the 2017 Drone Champions League season. Coverage will also be shown in Luxembourg on a non-exclusive basis.

◆ **Drone Racing:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 acquired rights to the Drone Champions League event in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, on September 2 and 3. Live coverage will be shown on its website.

DEALS ROUND-UP

AUGUST 3 TO 30

- ◆ **Esports:** Social video platform Twitch agreed to live-stream the inaugural Universal Open Rocket League. The tournament is being operated by the NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal, online competitive gaming platform Facelt, and games developer Psyonix.
- ◆ **Esports:** Sport1 agreed a deal with event operator ESL to show coverage of a number of upcoming contests in Germany. Sport1 will broadcast ESL One Hamburg 2017 free-to-air from October 28-29. Sport1 will also show the final of the ESL Summer and Winter Championship for both the Fifa 17 and League of Legends competitions.
- ◆ **Golf:** Irish pay-television broadcaster Eir Sport acquired rights for this year's PGA Championship.
- ◆ **Golf:** Indian pay-television channel DSport acquired rights for the PGA Championship. The multi-year deal began with this year's edition of the event, which ran from August 10-13.
- ◆ **Golf:** NBC Sports Group extended a deal between its Golf Channel platform and the National Collegiate Athletic Association in the US. Golf Channel will continue to broadcast live coverage of the NCAA Division 1 men's and women's Golf Championships until at least 2029. The agreement encompasses worldwide media rights to both competitions.
- ◆ **Handball:** Multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group extended an agreement for exclusive rights in the Nordic region to Germany's Handball-Bundesliga for six seasons, from 2017-18 to 2022-23. MTG's Viasat channels and Viaplay streaming service will show coverage of up to three live matches per week.
- ◆ **Ice Hockey:** MTG renewed a rights deal in the Nordic region for the Kontinental Hockey League club competition (page 12).
- ◆ **Ice Hockey:** The AMC Networks International Central Europe division of US entertainment company AMC Networks acquired KHL rights in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia (page 12).
- ◆ **Ice Hockey:** Austrian public-service broadcaster ORF acquired rights to the pan-European Champions Hockey League. ORF will cover games featuring Austrian teams from the group stage of the 2017-18 season. The remaining games will be streamed free of charge via the league's official website.
- ◆ **Ice Hockey:** International sports broadcaster Eurosport acquired CHL rights in Poland. The deal will run until at least the end of the 2017-18 season.
- ◆ **Ice Hockey:** MTG acquired non-exclusive CHL rights in Sweden, and will share coverage with public-service broadcaster SVT.
- ◆ **Judo:** International pay-television broadcaster CNN agreed a deal with the International Judo Federation to show a regular 30-minute show dedicated to major IJF events.
- ◆ **Judo:** Eleven acquired live and exclusive rights in Belgium, Luxembourg and the US to the 2017 and 2018 editions of the World

DEALS ROUND-UP

AUGUST 3 TO 30

Championships. Eleven will also hold non-exclusive rights in Italy. Eleven will show exclusive coverage of the IJF's World Tour in 2017 and 2018 in the same territories.

◆ **Judo:** Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports acquired rights in Italy to the 2017 World Championships.

◆ **Mixed Martial Arts:** Eleven acquired rights in Belgium and Luxembourg to the Ultimate Fighting Championship. Eleven will show live coverage of 40 UFC events each year.

◆ **Mixed Martial Arts:** Fox Sports Australia renewed its long-running media-rights deal with the UFC until the end of 2018. The deal was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 21:14.

◆ **Mixed Martial Arts:** Singaporean media company Mediacorp struck a rights deal with One Championship. Mediacorp will show live coverage of events on its free-to-air channel, oktoSports.

◆ **Motorsport:** The Infront Sports & Media agency reached an agreement to market the commercial rights to series organised by the Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club, Germany's largest automobile club.

◆ **Olympic Games:** German public-service broadcasters ARD and ZDF agreed a sublicensing deal with media company Discovery Communications for live and highlights coverage of the Games through to 2024 (page 6).

◆ **Snooker:** World Snooker signed a digital rights deal in China with Rigour Media (page 9).

◆ **Surfing:** Eleven acquired rights in Belgium, Luxembourg, Singapore, Taiwan and the US to International Surfing Association events. Eleven will show highlights of all premier ISA events until the end of 2017.

◆ **Tennis:** Pay-television broadcaster Tennis Channel agreed a multi-year deal in the US for exclusive rights to the Laver Cup. The deal was completed with event organisers Trident8 and Tennis Australia.

◆ **Tennis:** Tencent Sports agreed a three-year deal with the United States Tennis Association for rights to the US Open grand slam tournament, from 2017 to 2019.

◆ **US College Sport:** The Learfield Sports agency agreed a multimedia rights partnership with the University of California, Davis. The 10-season deal will run from 2017-18 to 2026-27.

◆ **US College Sport:** The IMG College division of the IMG agency extended a deal with the University of Akron for a further eight years, from 2021 to 2028.

◆ **US College Sport:** Learfield agreed a multimedia rights partnership with the Atlantic 10 Conference.

◆ **US College Sport:** Learfield renewed its exclusive deal with Eastern Kentucky University until the end of June 2027.

◆ **US College Sport:** IMG College extended its multimedia rights partnership with the athletics department of the University of Arkansas until the end of 2028.

DEALS ROUND-UP

AUGUST 3 TO 30

◆ **US College Sport:** Social media platform

Facebook agreed a deal to live-stream coverage of 15 US college American football games during the 2017-18 academic year. Facebook will stream the games on an exclusive basis. The deal covers nine Conference USA games and six Mountain West matches.

◆ **Volleyball:** French sports broadcaster

L'Équipe struck a deal to provide coverage of the 2017 men's European Championship.

◆ **Volleyball:** Infront Sports & Media brokered deals for the 2017 men's European

Championship with: African pay-television broadcaster Kwesé TV; commercial and pay-television broadcaster Polsat in Poland; public-service broadcaster VRT in Belgium; public-service broadcaster BNT in Bulgaria; pay-television broadcaster ESPN in Brazil; commercial broadcaster Kanal 2 in Estonia; public-service broadcaster YLE in Finland; Sport1 in Germany; public-service broadcaster Rai in Italy; public-service broadcaster NOS in the Netherlands; sports broadcaster Match TV in Russia; pay-television broadcaster Arena Sport in Serbia; and public-service broadcaster TVE in Spain.

◆ **Wrestling:** Australian pay-television

broadcaster Foxtel extended its deal for WWE rights.

◆ **Wrestling:** WWE agreed a deal with Colombian public-service broadcaster Canal 1.

◆ **Wrestling:** WWE agreed a multi-year deal with Caribbean-based pay-television operator Flow.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

◆ Lega Serie A, the organising body of the top division of Italian club football, launched its international media rights sales process for the three seasons from 2018-19 to 2020-21. The invitation to tender covers international rights to Serie A, the Coppa Italia and Supercoppa Italiana. It opened on August 11 and bids are due on September 15.

◆ *The Guardian* reported that UK pay-television broadcaster Sky is in exclusive talks with the English Football League to extend its deal.

◆ US media company Discovery Communications and OTT operator YuppTV entered into contention for rights to Twenty20 cricket competition the Indian Premier League, according to multiple reports.

◆ Pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Latin America denied reports it had entered into a rights partnership with Sportflix, a new OTT sports platform in the region. Various reports in Mexican media said Fox had agreed to make its coverage of the Superliga Argentina top-tier club football competition available to Sportflix. Fox said it had "no knowledge" of the deal and "no contact has been established with Sportflix".

◆ International sports broadcaster ESPN said it "has not engaged with Sportflix in any way" ahead of the launch of the platform on August 30. In a statement released to SportBusiness International, ESPN said: "ESPN works with the owners and rights-sellers of the content we air and we will take all the necessary actions to protect our products from piracy and illegal use."

DEALS ROUND-UP

AUGUST 3 TO 30

- ◆ Media companies Turner and Globo distanced themselves from Sportflix ahead of the platform's launch.
- ◆ Russian state-owned sports broadcaster Match TV rejected reports it will not broadcast the 2018 winter Olympic Games, stating it expects to complete a deal in the autumn. A sublicensing deal with the Telesport agency, which holds rights in Russia to next year's Games, has yet to be agreed.
- ◆ Formula One chief executive Chase Carey said he is keen for the motor-racing championship to alter its media-rights strategy in order to support long-term growth plans, rather than focus on quick methods to boost viewing figures. Carey said Liberty Media, the owner of the series, is looking to embrace digital media opportunities and expand the deals brokered by Bernie Ecclestone, the former chief executive of F1.
- ◆ Pro14 chief executive Martin Anayi said the European club rugby union competition could seek an exclusive rights partnership with a pay-television broadcaster in the UK to maximise revenues.
- ◆ The award of the next set of media rights for the IPL was hit by a further delay, with a total of 24 companies said to be in contention for its rights. The deadline has now been rescheduled for September 4. The tender covers five editions of the IPL, from 2018 to 2022.
- ◆ India's Supreme Court refused a request for the Board of Control for Cricket in India to conduct e-auctioning for the IPL tender. Bharatiya Janata Party member Subramanian Swamy had called for an e-auctioning process in order to gain maximum value from the tender and ensure its transparency.
- ◆ The Australian sports-rights market may have reached a "tipping point" in terms of fees, according to Tim Worner, chief executive of Seven West Media, which operates commercial channel Seven. Worner added that Seven is operating "in a very different market" to when it negotiated the rights to the 2020 summer Olympic Games.

INDUSTRY NEWS IN BRIEF

AUGUST 3 TO 30

- ◆ The NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal agreed a deal to acquire direct-to-consumer digital platform Revolution Golf. NBC Sports said the addition of Revolution Golf to its portfolio will increase the number of digital monthly aggregated users across all its platforms to 15m golfers.
- ◆ US network CBS outlined plans to launch a sports streaming service. CBS chief executive Leslie Moonves said the channel is in the early stages of development and is currently untitled.
- ◆ The Walt Disney Company agreed to acquire a majority shareholding in Bamtech, the video technology business of MLB Advanced Media. Disney will pay \$1.58bn (€1.35bn) to acquire an additional 42 per cent of Bamtech from MLBAM having taken up the option to accelerate its acquisition of a controlling stake.
- ◆ US pay-television broadcaster Showtime opened up its access of the August 26 fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Conor McGregor by taking it direct to consumer. The fight was available on ShowtimePPV.co and through the Showtime PPV application on Apple mobile and Apple TV devices.
- ◆ Walt Disney confirmed its ESPN-branded video-streaming service will launch in early 2018, with a new Disney-branded direct-to-consumer streaming service starting in 2019. The OTT service will offer coverage of about 10,000 live events per year.
- ◆ Media company 21st Century Fox's bid to take full control of European pay-television operator Sky was met with further delays after the UK government requested media regulator Ofcom to undertake further analysis of its adherence to broadcasting standards. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport said it has written to Ofcom seeking further clarification in relation to representations made on the referral decision of Karen Bradley, secretary of state for Culture, Media and Sport.
- ◆ The National Collegiate Hockey Conference extended its partnership with technology products and services provider NeuLion until the end of 2021-22.
- ◆ Nascar, the North American stock car-racing series, confirmed plans to live-stream coverage of the 10 Nascar Cup Series Playoff races scheduled to take place before the end of 2017 via in-car cameras. The initiative will begin with the first race of the playoffs on September 17, with the coverage set to be shown via the NBCSN, NBCSports.com and NBC Sports app platforms. Coverage will also be available via Nascar's official Twitter account.
- ◆ OTT service DAZN agreed a content partnership in Canada with pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports. DAZN subscribers in Canada will have access to beIN Sports' portfolio of: top European club and international football; the Pro14 cross-border rugby union club competition; and the MotoGP motorcycling series. DAZN also secured deals for rights to: the English Football League and EFL Cup; the WTA Tour and men's ATP 250 events; PDC darts and the Kontinental Hockey League.
- ◆ English Premier League chief executive Richard Scudamore said the league's stance of

INDUSTRY NEWS IN BRIEF

AUGUST 3 TO 30

not showing matches in the UK held at 3pm on Saturdays would not change, stating it was a “solidarity issue”. Scudamore said these matches are not broadcast to protect grassroots football.

- ◆ UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport agreed a deal to live-stream its BT Sport Score football results programme via social media platform Twitter.
- ◆ A new free-to-air sports channel, FreeSports, launched in the UK on August 31. A sister channel of pay-television broadcaster Premier Sports, FreeSports will be available via operators Freeview, TalkTalk, BT, Sky and Freesat.
- ◆ The Scottish Professional Football League signed a partnership with Dugout, a digital media platform supported by a number of elite European football clubs. Content will be provided from the Premiership, Championship, Leagues 1 and 2, as well as the League Cup and the Challenge Cup.
- ◆ Altice increased its stake in fellow French telco SFR to more than 95 per cent and plans to offer to buy out the remaining shares. Altice plans to offer €34.50 (\$40.70) per share to acquire the outstanding shares.
- ◆ The Italian division of the Infront Sports & Media agency recorded a drop in turnover, but saw its net profits rise by more than 50 per cent. Infront Italy’s financial statements for 2016 detailed that turnover fell from €259m (\$301.5m) to €247.3m. Net profit increased from €6.1m to €9.27m.

◆ Spanish cable television operator Telecable said it would close its OTT platform Tedi.tv after failing to secure football rights for the 2017-18 season. It was set to cease operating on August 31.

◆ The ProLiga association, which represents football clubs in Spain’s third-tier Segunda División B and fourth-tier Tercera División competitions, agreed a deal with Mallorca-based production company Fibwi to launch a new television channel. The channel will feature live coverage of matches, as well as the latest news and highlights from the Spanish lower leagues.

◆ German media company Axel Springer rejected reports it is in talks to acquire sports broadcaster Sport1. Multiple reports in July claimed Axel Springer had entered into exclusive negotiations with fellow media company Constantin Medien, parent company of Sport1. Axel Springer chief executive Mathias Döpfner told the Reuters news agency Sport 1 “is not a priority”.

◆ Internet company Amazon started offering content from international sports broadcaster Eurosport to subscribers of its Prime subscription service in Austria and Germany (page 6).

◆ Polish pay-television broadcaster NC Plus launched a new channel designed to create extra scheduling space for its sports portfolio. Canal Plus Now began broadcasting on August 15.

◆ NC Plus joined forces with media company Grupa Onet-RAS Polska to launch a new digital sports platform. The canalplussport.onet.pl

INDUSTRY NEWS IN BRIEF

AUGUST 3 TO 30

platform will offer video content from the portfolios of NC Plus and Grupa Onet-RAS Polska.

◆ Norwegian pay-television distributor RiksTV extended its carriage deal with commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group. MTG's sports channels, which had previously been sold in individual packages, will now be brought under RiksTV's National Package.

◆ Viasat, the pay-television operator run by MTG, opted to revamp its sports offering in Norway by rebranding four channels. The change will take effect from September 4, with the existing Viasat Sport, Viasat Motor, Viasat Hockey and Viasat Fotball channels to be rebranded. Viasport +, Viasport 1, Viasport 2 and Viasport 3 will be introduced with sports content spread across the channels.

◆ Australian telco Telstra and media group News Corp announced their intention to merge Australian pay-television operator Foxtel and pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports into a new company, with a view to launching an initial public offering. News Corp will have a 65-per-cent stake in the new company, while Telstra will have 35 per cent. News Corp currently owns 100 per cent of Fox Sports, while Telstra has 80 per cent of the equity in Foxtel but acts as a 50-per-cent owner.

◆ US media company CBS agreed a deal to acquire Australian commercial broadcaster Ten, which entered into voluntary administration in June. In addition to its core linear channel, CBS acquired digital-terrestrial channel Eleven – which it already owns a 33 per cent stake in – digital-terrestrial channel One, and Ten's digital

platform, Tenplay. The *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper said CBS would refinance Ten's existing debt, including a loan from Commonwealth Bank and guarantor fees of about A\$33m (€22.2m/\$26.2m) owed to businessman James Packer and media moguls Lachlan Murdoch and Bruce Gordon. CBS will also launch CBS All Access, the company's video on-demand subscription service, in Australia.

◆ WWE agreed a deal with online streaming platform PPTV to launch the WWE Network OTT service in China.

◆ Golf body the PGA of America partnered with Hong Kong-based sports event and media company i3 Sports on a digital media initiative for Greater China. Under the multi-year licensing agreement, i3 Sports will create and implement a digital media strategy that localises PGA content.

◆ Sportsfix, a new OTT service for Southeast Asia, secured further funding from Australian investment group IPO Wealth.

◆ Middle Eastern pay-television broadcaster OSN launched Wavo, a streaming service. The Wavo Sports package will be available for \$4.99 (€4.25) per day or \$7.99 per week. OSN will also offer the WWE Network app for \$9.99 per month.

◆ BeIN Media Group partnered with an allegiance of sporting organisations and broadcasters to call on Saudi Arabia to shut down pirate channel beoutQ in the country. BeIN claims beoutQ is showing the broadcaster's "propriety media content". The alliance comprises Uefa, football's European governing

INDUSTRY NEWS IN BRIEF

AUGUST 3 TO 30

body, and LaLiga, which operates the top two football divisions in Spain, as well as the Audiovisual Anti-Piracy Alliance.

◆ The Caribbean Premier League Twenty20 cricket tournament live-streamed the first three overs of every innings of its 2017 edition in India via its official page on social media platform Facebook.

◆ The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) hired the Synergy Sports agency to help it sell media rights to its national team matches (page 34).

◆ The Zimbabwe government and the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe banned African pay-television operator Kwesé TV from operating in the country. Kwesé TV recently revealed plans to go live in Zimbabwe, but the BAZ said Kwesé TV does not have the relevant license to broadcast in Zimbabwe.

◆ The WME|IMG agency received a cash infusion of approximately \$1bn (€859m) as part of an investment led by the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and the Government of Singapore Investment Fund (GIC). CPPIB and GIC will join current investors Silver Lake, SoftBank and Fidelity as WME|IMG strategic partners.

◆ Discovery formed a joint venture with media group The Enthusiast Network, through which the former's Velocity channel will be integrated into the latter's extensive automotive portfolio.

◆ The Octagon sports marketing agency launched a global media-rights consultancy. The new venture will provide strategic consultation

to major domestic and international rights-holders, broadcasters, emerging distribution platforms and investors in sport. The service will be supported by analytics provided by Futures Sport & Entertainment, a consultancy owned by Interpublic Group, Octagon's parent company.

◆ Specialist cycling and tri-sports video distributor Play Sports Network launched a new platform dedicated to triathlon. Global Triathlon Network will launch across video-sharing website YouTube, as well as social media platforms Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

◆ Facebook launched Watch, a video platform that will allow users to access a variety of shows, including sports coverage. Watch will feature live events, with North America's MLB set to show one game per week on the platform.

◆ The International Cricket Council hailed a major uplift in broadcast and digital performance for the 2017 women's World Cup. More than 180m people around the world are estimated to have watched the tournament.

◆ News services provider Bloomberg Media Distribution struck a deal with production company Niche Sport Media to distribute coverage of its sporting events. Bloomberg clients will receive access to Niche Sport Media's video content portfolio, which includes more than 200 videos per month from the English Premier League, FA Cup and EFL, as well as the Champions League and Europa League.

◆ The European Broadcasting Union consortium of public-service broadcasters outlined its plans for the inaugural European Championships, the

INDUSTRY NEWS IN BRIEF

AUGUST 3 TO 30

multi-sport event that will debut in Glasgow and Berlin next year. The EBU said it had signed agreements with almost 40 of its member broadcasters to ensure the event will be viewed free-to-air in all major European markets.

◆ The European Hockey Federation partnered with the Sportradar agency to launch an OTT platform. EuroHockeytv.org (EHTV) will provide fans with free live games from the EuroHockey Championships, subject to geo-blocking, along with the Euro Hockey League club competition and other EHF events.

◆ The Commonwealth Games Federation is set to switch to a multi-Games model of marketing its sponsorship and broadcasting rights, as part of major changes made under its CGF Partnerships venture. The changes are set to take full effect for the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

◆ Agencies Mediapro, Lagardère Sports, MP & Silva, B4 Capital and MVA, as well as Perform, were named by the South American Football Confederation (Conmebol) on a shortlist of bidders to become the governing body's new partner agency for the commercialisation of its club and national team competitions. The winning agency will hold rights to the Copa Libertadores and Copa Sudamericana club competitions, as well as national team event the Copa América, from 2019 to 2022.

◆ The Asian Football Confederation live-streamed coverage of the AFC Cup match between Indian club JSW Bengaluru and North Korean side 4.25 SC via Facebook – a first for the organisation. The match, which took place on August 23, was live-streamed across India.

◆ The International Luge Federation (FIL) agreed a four-season extension to its commercial rights partnership with the Infront Sports & Media agency, from 2018-19 to 2021-22.

INDUSTRY MOVES

◆ Sports media executive Mark Shuken was appointed as the new president of Pac-12 Networks, the content and multi-platform media company for the Pac-12 US college sports conference.

◆ DAZN appointed Peter Parmenter to the new position of managing director of commercial partnerships.

◆ Joe Carr, a former senior executive at the Ultimate Fighting Championship, was appointed as the World Surf League's chief strategy officer. Carr will also serve as head of international for the WSL.

◆ The supervisory board of Constantin Medien appointed management board member Olaf Schröder, responsible for the firm's sports division and chief executive of sports broadcaster Sport1, as chief executive of the management board.