

TVSportsMarkets

www.sportbusiness.com/tv-sports-markets

Inside this issue

FOOTBALL: BT confident it can monetise £1.2bn Uefa deal	3
FOOTBALL: Local links help Fox/Turner win Argentinian league rights	9
TV AFRICA: Premier League joins IOC in African tender queue	12
IN-FLIGHT/IN-SHIP: IMG renews Bundesliga and NFL; adds horse racing	16
TV USA: Eleven gets headstart with One World Sports acquisition	19
FOOTBALL: Cameroonian and Zimbabwean leagues set for new contracts	21
FOOTBALL: Serie A may sell international rights before doing domestic deal	25
TENNIS: Eurosport extends Wimbledon footprint with Saran agreement	28
FOOTBALL: Tenfield picks up Ecuadorean league rights from 2018	30
MOTORCYCLING: MotoGP live once more in Finland following MTV3 deal	32
WOMEN'S FOOTBALL: Fifa benefits from aggressive BBC offer	33
Sports clips	34

Editorial


Robin Jellis

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


Richard Welbirg

Senior Reporter
+44 20 7265 4233
+44 7738 421882
richard@tvsportsmarkets.com
@richardwelbirg


Callum McCarthy

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


Frank Dunne

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


Gino Di Castri

Analyst
+44 20 7265 4246
+44 7792 662816
gino.dicastri@sportbusiness.com
@gdicastri


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


Rhiannon Davies

Account Manager
+44 20 7265 4198
+44 7583 192269
rhiannon.davies@sportbusiness.com
@RhiDavies88


Patrick Odling

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

Client Services


Marie-Louise Ferrigno-Issa

Head of Client Services
+44 20 7265 4114
marie-louise@sportbusiness.com


Max Frew

Client Engagement Executive
+44 20 7265 4178
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, registered office: 7th Floor, 133 Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QA © TV Sports Markets Ltd 2017

FOOTBALL

BT confident it can monetise £1.2bn Uefa rights renewal

By Robin Jellis

UK telco BT told *TV Sports Markets* this week it is “well-placed” to monetise its huge investment in rights to Uefa’s Champions League and Europa League.

Its pay-television broadcaster, BT Sport, renewed rights to both competitions in a three-season deal, from 2018-19 to 2020-21, for about €456m (\$483m) per season. BT said the deal will be worth £394m per season, but *TV Sports Markets* understands BT will pay in euros rather than pounds.

BT’s increased outlay in euro terms is just over 27 per cent. The broadcaster’s current deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, is worth €358.7m per season.

Andy Haworth, director of BT Consumer Strategy, told *TV Sports Markets* in an exclusive interview this week there were three main reasons why BT was prepared to pay such an increase.

“One, these are strong competitions. Two, we have strong exclusivity. Three, we are a stronger business. We believe we can monetise the rights more effectively than we could before.”

This time, BT’s deal will include exclusive highlights and clips rights. It currently holds these non-exclusively. Commercial broadcaster ITV pays about £2m (€2.3m/\$2.5m) per season for highlights rights while News UK pays just over £1m per season for clips rights. Both deals run for three seasons, from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (*TV Sports Markets* 18:5).

Champions League rights will also be more attractive to BT from 2018-19 onward due to two significant changes Uefa has made to the competition format.

First, it has guaranteed the qualification of four clubs from England – as well as Germany, Italy and Spain.

Second, it will introduce an additional kick-off slot on match nights, creating double-headers. Instead of matches kicking off simultaneously at 8.45pm CET on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, group-stage matches will be played at 7pm and 9pm. More content means broadcasters can generate greater revenue from advertising and sponsorship around their coverage.

“BT is a multi-faceted company. We are well-placed to monetise these rights across a host of different platforms,” Haworth said.

“Of course there will be broadband and TV subscriptions and churn reduction. Then there is the commercial business with pubs and clubs. I think the 6pm [UK time] slot will be great for them as it will help them get punters in early. That’s going to be very valuable to them.

“Advertising will naturally increase as we have 35 per cent more kick-off slots and more opportunities to sell sponsorship. And we are getting people to use more data on their mobile devices.”

In February 2015, BT agreed a £12.5bn deal to buy mobile operator EE. The deal was completed in January 2016.

For the year ended March 31, 2016, BT Group’s reported revenue was £19.012bn, with reported profit before tax of £2.907bn.

Importance to BT

The consensus among local rights experts is that BT could not afford to lose its Uefa rights. Its English Premier League rights are more crucial to its business, but the Champions League and Europa League are the only premium rights over which BT has complete exclusivity.

One local expert said: “This shows the amazing strength of the UK market – Uefa has earned about 30 per cent more from a base of £900m without a bidding war.”

It also shows the importance of the rights to BT. The two competitions may not be huge drivers of subscriptions but the Champions League especially is an extremely prestigious property.

BT has the right to sublicense rights, but any sublicensing deal would need to be approved by Uefa. One insider said such a deal is unlikely considering the premium BT has paid to acquire rights to the two competitions exclusively.

Tender and bidding

Uefa, football’s European governing body, issued a tender for its Champions League and Europa League rights in the UK on January 18, with bids due by March 1. The BT renewal was announced on March 6.

The rights were sold by Team Marketing, Uefa’s sales agent for its club competitions.

Five packages were available. They were: a first-pick match on Tuesdays; a first-pick match on Wednesdays; all other matches; highlights on Tuesday evenings; and highlights on Wednesday evenings. There were two rounds of bidding.

BT had to allocate a value to each package to Uefa as part of its winning bid.

BT's pay-television rival Sky is thought to have been the only other serious bidder. One informed source said Sky bid for more than one package, but not all.

There were also bids from at least two free-to-air broadcasters. They are thought to have considered bidding for live rights, but offers were for highlights.

Uefa is seeking large growth in the value of its club competitions in its new cycle, especially in Europe. It is targeting global income of €3.2bn per season from media and marketing rights in the 2018-2021 cycle, an increase of 28 per cent on the €2.5bn per season it earns in the 2015-2018 cycle (*TV Sports Markets* 20:22).

The BT deal is Uefa's first to be finalised in its new cycle, although it is close to concluding deals in China, Japan and the US (*TV Sports Markets* 21:4).

BT coverage

BT will make clips, weekly highlights, Uefa's magazine show and both the Champions League and Europa League finals available for free on social media in an attempt to reach new audiences.

The finals of both competitions in the 2015-16 season were streamed on video-sharing website YouTube. These matches generated a cumulative audience of 12m on YouTube and across all BT platforms.

Haworth would not be drawn on BT's plans for 2018-19 onward. He said the company has "strong ideas" which are being developed, but are not yet ready to be announced.

There are also question marks over the future of the BT Sport Showcase channel. The channel was launched to fulfil the obligation of showing at least one match per season of each participating British team for free in the Champions League and the Europa League. There is no such obligation in BT's new deal.

Haworth said: "The new rights cycle doesn't start until 2018-19. I can't comment on the future of the channel beyond that. But we have no obligation to show matches free-to-air."

Sponsor dissatisfaction

In January, beer brand Heineken's global head of sponsorship Hans Erik Tuijt told Bloomberg he was hopeful of some free-to-air coverage in a new UK deal for the Champions League and Europa League.

His comments came after Heineken's parent company, AB InBev, had renewed its deal to sponsor both competitions from 2018-19 to 2020-21 in a deal worth between €105m and €110m per season, according to *Sports Sponsorship Insider*.

Most observers, however, claim sponsors can have few complaints about Uefa agreeing exclusive deals with pay-television broadcasters.

First, the sums paid by broadcasters far outweigh those paid by brands. The split is about 85:15 in the current cycle and the broadcaster contribution is expected to rise, possibly to 90 per cent, in the 2018-2021 cycle.

Second, Uefa is under pressure from the biggest clubs in Europe to secure the most lucrative deals possible. Following the return of the threat of a breakaway competition, the so-called European Super League, Uefa agreed to certain concessions to placate the bigger clubs. One was to commit to earning 28 per cent more in the 2018-2021 cycle compared to 2015-2018.

One rights expert said: “The UK is their biggest individual market worldwide. Uefa is not in any position to make sacrifices to help out sponsors in the UK. Maybe in other markets, but not in their biggest revenue generator. Uefa made it clear it would be about the money.”

Although sponsors may be unhappy there will be no free-to-air linear coverage in the UK in the new cycle, there will be significant coverage online.

Many experts believe social media platforms may replace linear free-to-air broadcasters as methods of reaching wide audiences. This is mainly due to likely changes in consumption behaviour, but also due to the large amount of data that can be gathered from online platforms.

One sponsorship expert said brands will become more focused on exploiting digital rights around their sponsorship deals, meaning free-to-air coverage on linear television will be less important.

BT Sport reaches just over 5m households, Haworth said. Slightly more than 3m are direct BT TV subscribers while the remaining 2m or so have access via wholesale agreements with the likes of Sky, and telcos TalkTalk and Virgin Media.

Sky, the biggest sports broadcaster in the UK, has close to 6.5m subscribers to its Sky Sports channels.

Status quo ahead of more auctions

Many observers believe BT’s renewal means there will be little change in the UK sports-rights market in the coming years.

BT appears to have settled for a share of Premier League rights and a chunk of European football coverage – it also holds rights to Germany’s Bundesliga, Italy’s Serie A and France’s Ligue 1. It also has Scottish football and FA Cup rights.

Haworth seemed to largely agree with this, saying BT’s strategy is to be “a strong number two to Sky”.

He said: “We always approach auctions with a clear head and in a disciplined fashion. We always have a clear business case and we know how we will monetise the rights. If the rights go above and beyond that, we lose them. We will continue that approach.”

“We will continue being happy with being a strong number two. Winning these rights was a key part of that.”

He refused to be drawn on future auctions, saying only: “We will look at all rights that are available to us and decide if they increase our attractiveness.”

The sale of the Uefa rights is expected to have a knock-on effect on several important auctions in the coming months.

Premier League: The Premier League is thought likely to tender its domestic rights in Q4 this year. One major difference to the current cycle is that the league will sell at least 190 live matches per season, up from 168 matches per season.

The Premier League earns £1.712bn per season from its domestic rights from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Sky is paying £1.392bn per season for 126 matches each year; BT is paying £320m per season for 42 matches each year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:3).

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB): ECB rights are one of Sky’s prized properties and the broadcaster will be very keen to maintain its grip on them – they protect it against churn in the summer months.

Rights in a new cycle are expected to be tendered in May, but before the ECB can do so first-class counties must vote on the proposed restructuring of the domestic T20 competition. The ECB will present to the counties on Monday (March 27) with a vote due in April.

The ECB is keen for at least some of its rights to be shown live on free-to-air. The tender will offer rights for four or five years from 2020 onward.

Sky pays £75m per year in its current four-year deal, from 2014 to 2017, and will pay about £95m per year in its two-year extension, covering 2018 and 2019.

Commercial broadcaster Channel 5 has highlights rights in a four-year deal, from 2014 to 2017, in a deal worth about £1.2m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 20:17).

Football League: The Football League last month appointed Oliver & Ohlbaum Associates and consultant Phil Lines as advisers on the sale of its domestic rights in a new cycle. A tender is expected in the coming months (*TV Sports Markets* 21:4).

Sky currently pays an average of just under £90m per season in a deal from 2015-16 to 2017-18, later extended to cover 2018-19. Highlights are held by Channel 5 in a deal from 2016-17 to 2018-19 worth just under £700,000 per season.

Spain’s LaLiga: It is believed that LaLiga rights will be offered to broadcasters in July. These are currently held by Sky in a three-season deal, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, worth about €30m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

MotoGP: A new MotoGP deal is thought to be close. The IMG agency is the global media-rights adviser to Dorna Sports, MotoGP's commercial rights-holder. BT currently pays between £6m and £8m per year for its rights in a five-year deal from 2014 to 2018 (*TV Sports Markets* 17:8).

Pro12: Pro12 rights are currently split between Sky and a host of smaller local broadcasters. Sky pays about £5.5m per season over four seasons, from 2014-15 to 2017-18, for rights to 30 live matches per season, plus the semi-finals and final.

TV Sports Markets understands IMG is advising the league on the sale of its rights in a new cycle and that informal talks have begun with broadcasters over a new deal.

European Professional Club Rugby: EPCR intends to offer its rights to broadcasters before the end of Q3. Its preference is to agree an exclusive deal with one of BT or Sky.

The two broadcasters currently share rights in the four seasons from 2014-15 to 2017-18, in deals worth a combined total of about £24m per season. BT pays about £13m per season and Sky about £11m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:6).

Scottish Professional Football League: Recent media reports have suggested BT is in talks with the SPFL to acquire exclusive rights to the league.

BT currently shares SPFL rights with Sky in a three-season deal, from 2017-18 to 2019-20, worth a total of about £21m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:17).

European Tour and Ryder Cup: These are expected to be sold by the end of the year. Sky currently holds rights to both properties in a six-year deal, from 2013 to 2018, worth about £36m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 16:7). ♦



For the full interview with Andy Haworth, visit
www.sportbusiness.com

FOOTBALL

Local ties ensure Fox and Turner win the race for Primera rights

By Richard Welbirg

Intervention from Grupo Clarín and Torneos helped ensure the joint bid from Fox and Turner won rights to Argentina's Primera División, local sources told *TV Sports Markets* this week.

Vital to the decision appears to have been an agreement that – if Fox Sports Latin America and Turner Latin America's offer was accepted ahead of those from pay-television broadcaster ESPN and the Mediapro agency – Televisión Satelital Codificada would drop its ongoing legal proceedings against the Asociación del Fútbol Argentino, which operates the league.

Televisión Satelital Codificada was the joint venture between Clarín and the Torneos agency. It broadcast Argentina's domestic leagues from 1991 until 2009, when the AFA terminated the contract in order to enact Fútbol para Todos – the scheme by which the Argentine government paid to ensure free-to-air coverage on public-service broadcaster Televisión Pública Argentina.

The value of Clarín and Torneos's commitment to end the TSC case was enough to persuade the AFA to award Fox/Turner the rights, despite Mediapro having offered a higher annual guarantee.

The AFA's new deal

Fox/Turner will equally share all Primera media rights for five seasons, from 2017-18 to 2021-22, with an option to extend by a further five seasons until the end of the 2026-27 season.

They will guarantee the AFA about ARS3.2bn (€196m/\$207m) per season, scaled in line with the TNB, a measure of pay-television subscribers. They will also pay a signing fee of ARS1.2bn as specified in the AFA's February tender.

Local experts were unanimous that the only way Fox and Turner could recoup their expenditure would be to create a premium subscription channel for all matches, similar to the way TSC had operated. Any such channel would be a 50:50 joint venture.

Argentine newspaper *La Nación* has claimed Fox/Turner will charge ARS300 per month for the channel, with more expensive OTT access to be made available later. Insiders say no decisions have been finalised.

Revenues from such a channel above the guarantee would be shared 50:50 with the AFA.

TV Sports Markets understands Mediapro offered the federation ARS3.3bn per season and a 60:40 revenue share above the guarantee in favour of the association.

It is likely that Fox and Turner will also show selected matches from each matchday non-exclusively on their own pay-television channels. In order to guarantee some income, the broadcasters could also sublicense some matches to ESPN or pay-television broadcaster TyC Sports.

Turner is intent on building a sports portfolio with locally-relevant rights in countries across Latin America. The company sees this as vital to support its channel business – it operates news channel CNN and entertainment channels Space and TNT, among others.

Acquiring domestic Primera rights builds upon its major investments in Brazilian football through its wholly-owned pay-television broadcaster Esporte Interativo (*TV Sports Markets* 20:22).

Fox is an established pan-regional sports broadcaster, and operates three channels in Argentina. But the Primera deal represents the first time it has invested such significant sums in a top domestic property.

Fox's pan-regional business is built on its rights to club competitions operated by Conmebol, South American football's governing body. It pays about \$150m per year for rights to the Copa Libertadores and Copa Sudamericana from 2016 to 2018 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:19).

The two broadcasters' outlay on the rights is a significant increase on the headline values paid by the Argentine government under Fútbol para Todos.

Experts said it was very unlikely Fox/Turner could profit on the rights in the first season. "Even with all the matches on pay-per-view the football doesn't have this value," one expert said.

But, taking into account Fox/Turner's option to extend, the length of the deal is advantageous. Several experts said the two would be likely to profit in the second half of the contract at least.

TSC case decisive

TSC's case against the AFA stems from the termination of its contract in 2009. It had been due to run for seven seasons, from 2007-08 to 2013-14, and was worth about ARS268m per season.

The AFA accepted an offer from the Kirchner government for Televisión Pública Argentina to show matches. The government paid ARS600m in the 2009-10 season. The contract was set to run until 2018-19.

TSC began legal action in 2010, but private cases can take many years to progress through Argentina's commercial courts. In August last year, when the government of Mauricio Macri – elected in October 2015 – made clear its intention to curtail Fútbol para Todos, lawyers for TSC moved to progress the case. The company was claiming the right to complete the remaining years of its previous contract, or to be paid damages.

This was a problem for the AFA, which had no intention of allowing the rights to return to TSC when much greater value was available in tendering them.

In February, the government agreed to pay ARS530m to terminate the Fútbol para Todos contract.

Clarín and Torneos benefit

Media group Clarín is an influential player in Argentinian media. It is the majority owner of Cablevisión, the country's largest pay-television operator. And Clarín's eponymous newspaper has the highest circulation in Latin America.

At the end of 2015, Argentina had 8.47m pay-television households according to research firm Dataxis. Cablevisión had about 40 per cent of the market, ahead of rivals DirecTV (27 per cent) and Telecentro (seven per cent). Pay-television penetration in Argentina is relatively high.

Clarín was keen for domestic football to return to pay-television. Via TSC, Clarín and Torneos are thought to have favoured the Fox/Turner bid because of Torneos's very close relationship with Fox. Torneos produces all Fox's Latin American sports content. It is certain to produce Fox/Turner's Primera División coverage.

El Presidente

The Fox/Turner contract will be formally announced at the AFA meeting on March 29, which will also see the federation elect a new president.

This will be current vice-president Claudio Tapia, who is the only standing candidate after an agreement between various factions within the association.

Marcelo Tinelli, television host and vice-president of San Lorenzo football club, who had at one point appeared the most likely rival, has been made president of the Comisión de Selecciones Nacionales, with responsibility for all national team affairs. ♦

TV AFRICA

Premier League jumps the queue in Africa to maximise its returns

By Callum McCarthy

The wave of tender processes in sub-Saharan Africa has continued to swell with the English Premier League and the International Olympic Committee both selling their rights earlier than expected.

The Premier League's decision to tender its pay-television rights for three seasons, from 2019-20 to 2021-22, has taken the market by surprise. The league was expected to begin a sales process either late this year or early in 2018, but has decided to sell early in order to take advantage of the market at peak levels of competition.

It is the first time the league has tendered its rights in the region since 2010, when pay-television broadcaster SuperSport acquired the rights across sub-Saharan Africa in all languages, from 2010-11 to 2012-13, for \$98m (€93m) per season.

Then, as now, the league split the tender into three regions: South Africa, Nigeria, and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. In 2010, the league removed this split after the first round of bidding.

The Premier League currently earns \$190m per season for its rights, from 2016-17 to 2018-19. SuperSport pays about \$180m per season for pay-television rights over the term; sports broadcaster Kwesé Sports pays \$10m per season for free-to-air rights (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15; 20:5).

The IOC tendered rights to four Olympic Games – in 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024 – in late February, also earlier than expected. Second-round bids for free-to-air and pay-television rights have been submitted, and the IOC is currently considering them.

Free-to-air rights to the Games in sub-Saharan Africa – which for 2014 and 2016 were acquired by the Infront Sports & Media and TV Media Sport agencies – are more valuable than pay-television rights. Infront and TVMS paid about \$3m plus production (*TV Sports Markets* 19:15).

Pay-television rights to the Olympics have been held by SuperSport since the broadcaster's inception in 1995.

Premier League tender

First-round bids are due on April 3. As well as by territory, bids can also be split by language at the bidder's discretion: English, French, Portuguese, or any combination of these languages.

It is thought the league will assess first-round bids and make a decision on whether to continue with the regional split based on the strength of competition in Nigeria – pay-television operator StarTimes's main market.

The tender has been sent to broadcasters only. Agencies are not allowed to bid.

In a move thought to accommodate Kwesé, the tender permits matches – other than those that kick-off on Saturdays at 3pm UK time – to be shown free-to-air, should the winning broadcaster so wish.

Dominant, but not untouchable

The Premier League's decision to sell its rights early is thought to be due to the flurry of activity by other football rights-holders, and its fear that Kwesé could build a strong portfolio of European club football before it had the chance to sell.

Kwesé has already acquired non-exclusive pay-television and exclusive free-to-air rights outside South Africa to the 2018 Fifa World Cup, and *TV Sports Markets* understands it has acquired the same set of rights to Uefa Euro 2020.

Rights to the English FA Cup, from 2018-19 to 2023-24, are currently being sold by the IMG agency. The Pitch International agency is currently selling rights to the League Cup and the second-, third- and fourth-tiers of English league football, from 2017-18 to 2019-20 (*TV Sports Markets* 21:3).

Team Marketing, Uefa's sales agent for its club competitions, plans to tender rights to the Champions League and Europa League in October.

Had the Premier League gone to market in early 2018, Kwesé could have acquired rights to all of these properties, meaning it would have had far less incentive to bid aggressively for Premier League rights when they became available.

IMG originally asked for \$30m per season for FA Cup rights, but the asking price is understood to have dropped to about \$20m per season. Pitch wants about \$10m per season for English Football League rights. SuperSport currently pays about \$130m per season for its rights to the Champions League and Europa League (*TV Sports Markets* 17:21).

The Premier League was also mindful of Kwesé's strong desire to acquire Champions League rights, and the effect that a bidding war with SuperSport could have on its acquisition budget.

Strong competition from Kwesé will be key to the league earning another large increase in the value of its rights.

In the current cycle, SuperSport increased its previous spend on Premier League pay-television rights by just over 60 per cent. It paid \$113m per season from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

EPL must-have for SuperSport

Industry experts believe SuperSport will pay whatever it takes to secure English- and Portuguese-language Premier League rights exclusively across all territories in sub-Saharan Africa. The broadcaster is all but certain to acquire rights in South Africa, but will face strong competition elsewhere from Kwesé, StarTimes and Portuguese-language pay-television operator Zap.

SuperSport's parent company Multichoice – and Multichoice's pay-television operator DSTV – rely on Premier League rights outside South Africa to promote subscriber growth and prevent churn.

It has come under severe pressure from cheaper competitors in these territories, and has been forced to cut subscription prices for DSTV across East Africa, Ghana and Nigeria.

SuperSport has begrudgingly ceded rights to other properties outside South Africa in the face of aggressive bidding from Kwesé, but the Premier League is a property it regards as “must-have”.

Kwesé is expected to aggressively seek English- and French-language rights outside South Africa, and is thought to be more willing than SuperSport to split English-language rights.

It is not known how receptive the league is to the idea of selling its rights non-exclusively. This model has been used by SuperSport to retain its grip on some rights in its key South African market, while not increasing its total acquisition costs. Kwesé has also used this model to acquire rights in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa at a lower cost than it would have otherwise paid.

StarTimes will also be interested in acquiring English- and French-language rights, but its greatest chance of success is thought to be via a knockout bid for English-language rights in Nigeria. The operator had an unsolicited bid for Premier League free-to-air rights – later acquired by Kwesé – turned down in October 2015.

It is thought the Premier League would be willing to sell rights to StarTimes in all territories, but only in the event of a huge bid and with close collaboration on production and broadcasting.

StarTimes is not considered a premium sports broadcaster by most rights-holders. It holds rights to Germany's Bundesliga and Italy's Serie A, but has been criticised for its production and marketing of both.

Outside the main three pan-African broadcasters, local broadcasters are wary of a market entry from US media company Discovery Communications. The company has studied the sub-Saharan Africa market for more than two years and was close to making a more low-key entry into the English-language market via its Eurosport channels about 18 months ago.

Buying Premier League rights would be an expensive and risky option for Discovery, which would then have to recoup its expenditure from carriage deals with operators it had beaten to get the rights.

Pay-television operator Canal Plus Afrique is expected to bid for French-language rights, while Zap is expected to bid for Portuguese-language rights.

In the current cycle, SuperSport sublicenses French-language rights to Canal Plus for \$14m per season (*TV Sports Markets* 20:15). SuperSport shows Portuguese-language coverage on its SuperSport Maximo channels.

IOC receives second-round bids

Sources close to the IOC sales process believe SuperSport, Kwesé, StarTimes, Canal Plus, Infront and TVMS have all made first- and second-round bids for rights to 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024.

Interested parties are able to bid for whatever rights they choose. The IOC is thought to prefer a gatekeeper deal with a single buyer for rights across all platforms.

It is seeking a single pay-television buyer so it can establish a wider partnership. The winner of these rights will be expected to work closely with the governing body on developing the Olympic Channel in the region.

One bidder is concerned with the IOC's insistence on Olympic Channel carriage being part of any deal, as the tender specifies the channel must be localised for an African audience. Broadcasters fear the burden of creating content for the channel may fall on them as opposed to the IOC.

The IOC still views sub-Saharan Africa as a developing region for the Games. Sources close to the body say the fee offered for free-to-air rights will be a secondary consideration. Instead, the IOC is keen to ensure the summer and winter Games receive the widest possible exposure. For the 2016 Games, TVMS produced a specialised African feed providing 14 hours of live coverage per day.

Free-to-air rights are more hotly contested than pay-television rights as there is greater opportunity for monetising the rights via deals with sponsors and advertisers.

For 2016, Infront enlisted the help of advertising agency WPP's subsidiary ESP Properties to secure sponsorship for the tailored African feed. This enabled Infront and TVMS to lower their asking prices when selling rights to national broadcasters which lack funds for upfront payments (*TV Sports Markets* 20:13). ◆

IN-FLIGHT/IN-SHIP

Bundesliga earns big increase as Sport 24 fortifies rights portfolio

By Robin Jellis

Germany's Bundesliga more than doubled the value of its in-flight and in-ship rights in a renewal with IMG this month.

The new three-season deal, from 2017-18 to 2019-20, will be worth about €1m (\$1.1m) per season. The Bundesliga's current deal with the agency is worth slightly more than €400,000 per season in 2015-16 and 2016-17.

IMG will continue to exploit the rights on its Sport 24 and Sport 24 Extra channels. The channels are available across 13 airlines and nine cruise lines.

In the new deal, IMG has committed to showing at least 160 live matches per season on its channels, roughly equivalent to five matches per week. In the current deal, Sport 24 is showing at least three matches per week.

IMG will distribute rights to other airlines and cruise ships which do not carry its Sport 24 and Sport 24 Extra channels on a commission basis, as it does in the current deal.

The deal was struck in direct talks between IMG and DFL Sports Enterprises, the commercial arm of the German professional football league, the Deutsche Fußball Liga.

The main reason behind the large fee increase is the growth in competition for in-flight and in-ship rights. IMG has long been the dominant player in the sector, but in recent months has faced challenges from Global Eagle Entertainment and the Pitch International agency, which plans to create an in-flight offering (*TV Sports Markets* 20:13).

It is understood Pitch didn't bid as it feels it has enough European football content at the moment via its deal for Spain's LaLiga, from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

The fee also increased as there is a greater amount of content included in the new deal. IMG is able to guarantee more live coverage of the league following the launch of Sport 24 Extra in June 2016.

IMG was keen to renew as the rights are popular with certain airline carriers, notably Lufthansa and Turkish Airlines.

IMG renews NFL

The agency also renewed its agreement with the NFL for in-flight rights late last month. The deal is for four seasons, from 2017 to 2020, and deal excludes the US market. In-ship rights are excluded as these are included in the league's domestic deal with pay-television broadcaster ESPN.

IMG's deal will be worth just over \$500,000 per season. This is a large increase on the value of the agency's previous three-season deal, from 2014 to 2016, thought to have been worth about \$300,000 per season.

The Sport 24 channels will show up to six regular-season games per week. IMG will continue to sell on rights to NFL programming to other airlines which do not carry the Sport 24 channels, as it does for the Bundesliga. IMG will earn commission for any additional deals.

IMG was keen to renew the rights as they are important to American Airlines, which carries the Sport 24 and Sport 24 Extra channels. It also wants to cater to the league's growing international audience.

Both the Bundesliga and the NFL are thought to have been keen to renew with IMG as it can guarantee coverage on its two channels.

Pitch has yet to launch its in-flight service, but is expected to do so in Q3 or Q4 this year. It is currently agreeing partnerships with technology providers. It wants its service to be more widely distributed than the Sport 24 channels which are only available to airlines fitted with Panasonic equipment.

GEE has an in-ship channel, mainly comprised of entertainment programming, and is thought to be in the process of creating an in-flight channel.

Horse racing addition

IMG this week announced another addition to its in-flight/in-ship portfolio – it acquired rights to six high-profile horse races this year in a one-year deal. The agency is paying a nominal fee.

The deal covers: the Dubai World Cup; the Grand National; the Epsom Derby; Champions Day; the Breeders Cup; and the Melbourne Cup. The deal was struck jointly with Racecourse Media Group and Henry Birtles Associates.

IMG's deal represents the first time horse racing events will be broadcast on airlines and cruise ships. These event were not previously shown as there was little interest in a one-off race, but RMG and HBA have provided programming around the live event, meaning it is easier to schedule for IMG.

GEE's ICC deal

GEE announced an in-flight and in-ship deal with the International Cricket Council in January, although *TV Sports Markets* understands the deal began in March 2016.

The deal spans four years, from 2016 to 2019, and encompasses three major ICC events: the ICC World T20 in 2016; the ICC Champions Trophy in 2017; and the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup. GEE said the deal contained 1,140 hours of live programming over the four years.

GEE is understood to be paying a total of about \$2.5m for the three events. The World Cup is the most valuable event, accounting for about 50 per cent of the value. The other two events are each worth about 25 per cent of the total.

The ICC did not run a formal tender process but requested proposals from interested parties.

It is the ICC's first long-term deal for its in-flight/in-ship rights – it previously agreed one-off deals for tournaments with IMG. On a per-event basis, the deal with GEE represents an increase of more than 30 per cent.

Upcoming football rights

There are further battles for in-flight/in-ship rights on the horizon, with Fifa and Uefa to agree deals in the coming months.

Fifa, football's global governing body, will sell rights to the 2018 World Cup this year, probably in the summer. Rights to the 2014 edition were bought by IMG.

Uefa, football's European governing body, is expected to sell Champions League and Europa League rights late this year. Rights in the current cycle, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, are held by IMG in a deal worth about €2m per season. ♦

TV USA

Eleven grabs opportunity to plant flag in US media market

By Richard Welbirg

Acquiring the distribution infrastructure of One World Sports was an opportunistic move to get into the US media-rights market with a “headstart”, Eleven Sports Network executive chairman Marc Watson told *TV Sports Markets* this week.

Sports broadcaster Eleven launched in the US last week, replacing One World Sports across cable and satellite operators which carried its pay-television channel.

Watson said: “Getting good distribution in the US is a real challenge. We saw an opportunity to launch with good distribution and we took it. Paid distribution – which this is – is really hard to come by.”

He added that Eleven had been keen to launch in the US as it believes it has identified a gap in the market for a channel aimed at a younger audience.

Its current content is not reflective of what the channel hopes to offer. Watson said Eleven was looking for properties in football, basketball, mixed martial arts and other combat sports, multi-sport events, drone racing and esports.

Watson said Eleven will not initially compete for top-tier properties: “Let’s be clear – we aren’t beIN or ESPN. We’ll not be looking at any of the big leagues. We’ll look at the level below.”

The content strategy does not appear dissimilar to that pursued by OWS, which also targeted a millennial demographic. Joel Feld, former OWS executive vice-president for programming and production, told *TV Sports Markets* such a strategy was viable.

“We proved there’s a market for cost-effective programming with a focus on a young demographic. The measure of that success is that the strategy led to the ability to get paid affiliate deals with some of the largest operators in the US during a really challenging period with some major media acquisitions and cord-cutting going on.”

OWS’s distribution agreements mean Eleven is already available in about 50m US pay-television households, and subscribed to by 6m or 7m of them.

Feld suggested that for Eleven to embed itself in the US market it would need to reach 25m-35m subscribers and to control costs. “You aren’t going to make significant ad revenue before you can get in front of that many screens,” he added.

Eleven has two ways to expand its subscriber base. First, entice more of the households it already reaches to buy the channel, most likely via content acquisitions.

Second, agree additional distribution deals. The channel is not carried by Comcast, Charter, or Cox – respectively the second-, third- and sixth-largest cable operators in the US.

Watson said talks were already underway to expand Eleven's carriage. The channel is understood to have one mid-size carriage deal expiring in the coming months, but most of its existing deals have several years to run.

Its deal with AT&T, whose platforms make it the country's largest pay-television operator, was signed in September last year. Eleven is not believed to have an option to renegotiate existing deals.

Feld suggested Eleven could reach 25m homes without signing new deals with the major cable operators. He pointed to the rise of OTT channel aggregators like fuboTV, and the interest from major tech companies like Amazon in entering the market.

OWS's distribution agreements were for monthly per-subscriber fees of between \$0.03 and \$0.05. In 2016 it had a content acquisition budget of about \$3m.

By comparison, beIN Sports USA – which launched in 2012 – is available in close to 45m homes, and has a per-subscriber fee thought to be about \$0.10. But its content expenditure is much higher. Its deal for Spanish LaLiga rights across North America – which runs for five seasons from 2015-16 to 2019-20 – is worth \$120m per season alone (*TV Sports Markets* 19:14).

US media experts said OWS's investors had sought to sell the business because of the debt built up since its launch in August 2013. They spoke with Eleven and a potential North American buyer in November last year.

When the other suitor dropped out, Eleven was able to acquire OWS's distribution only for a fee of just over \$1m. OWS remains an active company but not an active television channel.

Feld said he thought with committed investment, broadcasters like Eleven could succeed in the market – “as long as you don't start to pursue rights deals outside your lane. You have to be disciplined.”

Organisation

Eleven's launch is being led by Anthony Bailey, a senior vice president of Eleven's parent company, Aser Group. The broadcaster is seeking a managing director to run the channel's day-to-day operations. Its business offices will be set up in New York or Connecticut, and it will establish a studio in Miami, Florida. ♦



For the full interview with Marc Watson, visit
www.sportbusiness.com

FOOTBALL

Cameroon and Zimbabwe set to agree new pay-television deals

By Callum McCarthy

Top-tier football leagues in Cameroon and Zimbabwe are set to agree lucrative new pay-television deals, *TV Sports Markets* understands. But while the fortunes of some African leagues are improving, others have begun to struggle after recent optimism.

The Malawi Super League looks set to cancel its deal with pay-television broadcaster Beta TV after just one season as the broadcaster has consistently missed payments and failed to broadcast the final 15 matches it agreed to in the 2016 season.

The Kenyan Premier League season kicked off on March 11, five weeks later than scheduled, due to yet another dispute with the Football Kenya Federation over the amount of teams taking part in the league.

And pay-television operator StarTimes's 10-season deal for the Ghana Premier League has begun inauspiciously as the broadcaster is still awaiting the arrival of its production equipment. StarTimes has hired public-service broadcaster the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation to produce one match per week until the problem can be resolved.

Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwe Premier Soccer League's current four-season deal with pay-television broadcaster SuperSport, from 2013-14 to 2016-17, is worth \$400,000 (£378,000) per season plus production.

However, SuperSport has cut back on the number of matches it produces in order to reduce costs, and is unlikely to increase its rights fee in any new deal.

Sports broadcaster Kwesé Sports is the favourite to acquire PSL rights from 2017-18 onward, but will face administrative hurdles and competition from StarTimes before it can do so.

Kwesé's ability to acquire the rights in a direct deal with the PSL is unclear as the owner of Kwesé's parent company Econet, Strive Masiyiwa, has had various deals blocked in his home country of Zimbabwe due to prior disputes with the government.

Most recently, Kwesé attempted to sublicense free-to-air English Premier League rights to state broadcaster the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, but the deal was cancelled by a government order.

As a result, the B4 Capital agency is seeking to act as a gatekeeper to the rights. *TV Sports Markets* understands the agency would prefer a guaranteed buyer for the rights before acquiring them, but it is thought Kwesé would be reluctant to do the deal via an agency.

B4 was one of many entities given a mandate by the Ghana Football Association to sell rights to the Ghana Premier League – a common problem in domestic African sport. Local rights-holders often give a mandate to multiple agents in the hope of securing a better deal, telling each agent they are the exclusive representative of the rights.

Rights in Ghana were eventually sold by the Proton Sports agency, an events and athlete management company which had never sold media rights before (*TV Sports Markets* 20:21).

StarTimes has its own problems in Zimbabwe. The operator would like to acquire domestic league rights to ease its entry into the Zimbabwean market as a direct-to-home player, as it has in Ghana. But it is currently without a licence in the country and looks unlikely to receive one from the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe.

A Zimbabwean company illegally using StarTimes's DTH brand name, StarSat, successfully claimed to local media it had received a broadcasting licence, which prompted a heated response from the authority on March 12 making clear the operator had no such licence.

A StarTimes statement read: "StarTimes Group is extremely astonished by the infringement of StarTimes' trademark and our DTH business trademark StarSat. The infringement act greatly affected the reputation of StarTimes brand."

Cameroon

Pay-television rights to Cameroon's top-tier league, the Elite One, are set to be sold from the current 2017 season onward, which began in February. Pay-television operator Canal Plus Afrique is understood to have submitted a strong bid. StarTimes has been considering a bid since October.

Free-to-air rights are held by public-service broadcaster CRTV in what is thought to be a rolling contract. CRTV currently produces Elite One matches using a production vehicle donated by StarTimes shortly before November's African Women's Cup of Nations, held in Cameroon.

It is still unclear why StarTimes donated the vehicle. CRTV is not the commercial rights-holder of the Elite One – an autonomous league which sells its own rights – while SuperSport held rights to the 2017 Cup of Nations.

Local sources believe a deal for the Elite One will be completed within a month. It would be the second league in Francophone Africa to secure a pay-television deal after Canal Plus acquired rights to the top-tier Ligue 1 in Côte d'Ivoire (*TV Sports Markets* 20:17).

Canal Plus targeted rights in Côte d'Ivoire as it is the largest and fastest-growing pay-television market in Francophone Africa with about 750,000 subscribers in 2017, almost double the amount in 2013.

Cameroon's pay-television market is significantly smaller – it has about 250,000 pay-television subscribers and is not expected to grow as quickly.

Malawi

Malawi's top-tier league – the Malawi Premier Division – has been suspended indefinitely after pay-television broadcaster Beta TV missed a series of payments and title sponsor, telco Telekom Networks Malawi, withdrew from its 10-year sponsorship deal.

TNM pulled out after Malawi's Competition and Fair Trading Commission declared its contract anticompetitive due to it preventing clubs and broadcasters securing sponsorship or advertisements from rival telcos.

Beta TV has exclusive Super League rights in a deal worth MWK266m (\$365,000) per year, from 2016 to 2018. This deal looks set to collapse as Beta TV is beset with cash flow problems and a striking workforce. Local experts believe the broadcaster's spend to have been far in excess of market value.

Pan-regional broadcasters are not thought to be interested in acquiring these rights as the Malawi pay-television market is small and the withdrawal of TNM has crippled clubs financially. There are about 350,000 pay-television subscribers in Malawi, most of them with StarTimes's low-cost digital-terrestrial operation.

Local sources hope SuperSport could broadcast the 2017 season as it has production vehicles in neighbouring Zambia, but *TV Sports Markets* understands SuperSport has no interest in doing so.

Kenya

In Kenya, SuperSport has not broadcast the first round of Kenyan Premier League matches. The league was delayed by five weeks, before beginning abruptly on March 11.

A dispute between the Football Kenya Federation, Kenya's footballing governing body, and the league about the number of participating teams – as well as the eligibility of certain clubs due to their non-compliance with Confederation of African Football club licensing regulations – has caused delays.

SuperSport's deal for KPL rights, from 2016 to 2021, is worth KES266m (€2.6m/\$2.7m) per season (*TV Sports Markets* 19:10).

Sources close to SuperSport believe it is losing patience as the FKF has persistently interfered in the league's affairs for the past two years. The KPL is the third-most expensive African league in SuperSport's portfolio, behind those of South Africa and Nigeria.

The FKF has long pushed for an 18-team league, despite KPL clubs and local football experts believing a 16-team league provides better-quality football and greater financial stability for clubs.

Local experts believe SuperSport would have difficulty backing out of its deal, but could respond by producing fewer matches and spending less on marketing.

While SuperSport has had difficulty with the KPL, the broadcaster is delighted with the performance of the Zambian Super Division. SuperSport pays \$1m per season plus production for the rights, from 2016 to 2020 (*TV Sports Markets* 19:17). ◆

FOOTBALL

Serie A international rights could be sold first due to Mediaset case

By Frank Dunne

Italy's top football league, Lega Serie A, is considering selling its international rights before its domestic rights in the next cycle due to uncertainty about the future of pay-television platform Mediaset Premium.

The league's next rights cycle will cover three seasons, from 2018-19 to 2020-21.

It is understood the league's media-rights adviser, the Infront Sports & Media agency, has put forward the idea to the 20 clubs, who have yet to vote on it. One well-placed source said several big clubs were sceptical about the idea.

It is unusual for leagues and national federations to sell international rights before domestic rights. This is largely for practical reasons.

Until the rights matrix for the domestic market is completed – including everything from kick-off times to club rights and hold-back periods – it is impossible to give international broadcasters a full picture of the scope of rights available. Selling international rights first leaves “the tail wagging the dog”, as one football executive put it.

Leagues also usually prefer to know who the host broadcaster or broadcasters will be – whose signal will be distributed internationally. For Serie A, however, this will be Infront, regardless of which company secures the domestic rights.

In the extreme situation no domestic deal is agreed in time for the 2018-19 season, the league may have to cover production costs, which are normally factored into domestic rights deals.

Another possible downside, according to some experts, is that international deals could have a negative impact on the domestic sales process. For example, if pay-television group Sky were to miss out on the rights in Germany and the UK, it could affect the valuation the group puts on the rights in Italy.

One possible benefit of selling early is that markets which are hot now – such as China – might no longer be at the back end of the year. The league expects to enjoy a substantial uplift in revenues in China. There would, however, be nothing to stop the league doing an early deal in the country, as the Premier League did last year, and coming back to the rest of the world later (*TV Sports Markets* 20:18).

Approval needed

The league will need approval for its sales guidelines from the antitrust authority, the Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato. Approval is needed for both domestic and international sales guidelines and will probably delay any sale until June or July.

The first draft of the guidelines, sent to the authority last year, was rejected as being too vague. The league is working with Infront on a revised set of guidelines which have yet to be submitted.

The league earns €185.7m (\$196.7m) per season for its international rights in the current three-season cycle, from 2015-16 to 2017-18, via a deal with the MP & Silva agency (*TV Sports Markets* 18:20).

The big clubs believe they are worth far more than this. To increase the level of competition, the league plans to abandon its previous strategy of making only one global package of rights available (*TV Sports Markets* 20:19).

Agencies and broadcasters will be able to bid for single territories, groups of countries, regional or all international rights. This strategy also requires sign-off by the clubs.

The league had wanted to go to the market with its domestic rights early in 2017 but has faced two problems. First, its initial sales guidelines were rejected by the antitrust authority. Second, there appears to be no imminent resolution to issues surrounding Mediaset Premium.

The Italian company is still strongly resisting the hostile takeover bid by French conglomerate Vivendi. With each seeking damages in claims from the other, a quick resolution to the impasse looks unlikely. The league is not optimistic it will be settled by the summer.

Mediaset impasse

The league is thought to fear another negative scenario in the event that Vivendi completes the takeover: a strategic collaboration – whether tacit or explicit – between Vivendi and Sky over rights acquisitions.

In France, Vivendi-owned pay-television broadcaster Canal Plus initially went toe-to-toe with rival pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports following the latter's launch. However, faced with mounting losses and other aggressive players – such as SFR Sport and Eurosport – Canal Plus has become far more selective.

Some rights-holders fear there is effectively an *entente cordiale* between Canal Plus and beIN, and that a similar agreement could materialise in Italy. This would be far harder for regulators to police than a full-scale merger between the two.

Officially, the league's position is that if there is not sufficient competition in the market for its rights, it will launch its own channel. But as in most cases where a league channel option is floated, few believe it would make sense.

Almost certainly, whenever the domestic rights come to the market, Sky will be in the strongest position. The league will be hoping Sky does not want to damage its core subscription driver by lowballing and undermining the ability of Serie A clubs to attract good players.

It will also be hoping OTT players such as Amazon and Perform's DAZN will bid. Eurosport is expected to bid but is not thought likely to bid for one of the primary bundles of rights. It is understood the league has given up hope of beIN launching its premium channels in Italy. ♦

TENNIS

Eurosport completes set of grand slam tournaments in Turkey

By Callum McCarthy

Sports broadcaster Eurosport has completed its set of grand slam tennis rights in Turkey and Central Asia, acquiring Wimbledon rights from Saran Media in a three-year deal.

Eurosport will pay Saran about €400,000 (\$424,000) per year for the rights in all these territories, from 2017 to 2019. A direct comparison with the previous cycle is difficult as Wimbledon rights were packaged with ATP World Tour Masters 1000 events.

Pay-television operator Digiturk paid about €650,000 per year for rights to both Wimbledon and ATP 1000 events, from 2014 to 2016. It is thought the value allocated to each property was roughly similar.

Digiturk has renewed its deal for ATP 1000 events for four years, from 2017 to 2020, in a deal worth about €300,000 per season. But it was unwilling to pay an increase for Wimbledon rights because it didn't value a one-off competition as highly.

Saran chose not to retain Wimbledon rights for its new S Sport pay-television channel as it did not believe holding rights to a single grand slam was worthwhile.

Saran holds rights to ATP 250, 500 and 1000 events in Turkey, but will only retain ATP 500 events for its channel. It is understood Saran has sold ATP 250 events to Eurosport in a separate deal.

Eurosport now has rights to all four grand slams in Turkey. It holds pan-European rights to: the Australian Open, from 2017 to 2021, in a deal worth €19m per year; the US Open, from 2013 to 2017, in a deal worth \$26.5m per year; and the French Open, from 2015 to 2021, in a deal worth €20m per year (*TV Sports Markets* 17:19; 19:5; 20:3).

Prior to Discovery Communications' acquisition of Eurosport in 2015, the broadcaster held Wimbledon rights in just one European territory: Belgium. It now holds at least some Wimbledon rights in 27 European territories.

Wimbledon rights are sold market-by-market by tournament organiser and commercial rights-holder the All-England Lawn Tennis Club. The AELTC is advised on all sales by the IMG agency. The rights in Turkey were sold to Saran due to the agency's expertise and established relationships in the Turkish market.

Sources believe Wimbledon rights will be sold next in: Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

S Sport launch

Saran Media's pay-television S Sport channel launched on March 18, and is available in the sports channel packages of pay-television operators Digiturk and D-Smart, and telco Turkcell. The channel is currently available in approximately 2.3m homes. Saran is also negotiating a carriage deal with telco Türk Telekom.

The channel was originally slated to be available in November but Turkey's media regulator, Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu, delayed its approval (*TV Sports Markets* 21:3).

The future success of the channel will depend on Saran's ability to renew its rights to the National Basketball Association and Formula One. Along with the Premier League, these rights form the backbone of its content offering. Saran's deal for NBA rights expires at the end of the current 2016-17 season, while its Formula One rights expire at the end of 2017 (*TV Sports Markets* 20:5; 20:17).

Local experts believe that if Saran can secure carriage deals with as many pay-television operators as possible, it will reduce operators' incentive to bid strongly for these rights. ♦

FOOTBALL

Casal's Tenfield surprises with direct Ecuadorean league deal

By Richard Welbirg

Agency Tenfield is understood to have struck a deal in principle for global rights to Ecuador's domestic football competitions.

The 10-year deal will run from 2018 to 2027. Tenfield is thought to be guaranteeing \$22m (€20.8m) in the first year, rising five per cent each year.

Tenfield, the agency which owns pan-regional pay-television broadcaster GolTV, is expected to create a premium pay-television channel to exploit the rights.

Any revenue above from the guarantee from such a channel would be shared 75:25 in favour of the Federación Ecuatoriana de Fútbol, which operates the Primera Categoría Serie A and Serie B, the top tiers of domestic football.

This is the model used by Canal del Fútbol in Chile, which has been very lucrative for the clubs (*TV Sports Markets* 21:4).

Across the rest of Latin America, Tenfield can show matches on the GolTV pan-regional feed.

The deal is thought to have arisen from conversations held between Tenfield and the FEF in October last year. At the time, the FEF invited a number of players – also including pan-regional pay-television operator DirecTV, the Lagardère Sports agency, and Ecuadorean tech company Servisky – to express their interest in a deal starting from the 2017 season (*TV Sports Markets* 21:1).

The FEF was hoping to curtail its existing agreement with government-controlled channels Ecuador TV, GamaTV and TC Televisión on the grounds of late payments.

That deal is worth an average of about \$18m per year over five years, from 2013 to 2017. Eventually, the government came to terms with the FEF that the deal would run until its planned expiry at the end of 2017.

Rights from 2018 were expected back on the market later this year, but the deal with GolTV appears to have been struck in direct talks in late February or March. A source close to the original discussions told *TV Sports Markets* that \$22m per year was the minimum the FEF had been targeting.

Casal's power grows

The deal extends the power base of Tenfield, and its owner – Uruguayan businessman Paco Casal – in South American football.

Tenfield is also the primary rights-holder of the Uruguayan and Venezuelan leagues.

It pays the Uruguayan football association (AUF) about UYU345m (€11.5m/\$12m) per year for rights to the country's Primera División. Tenfield originally agreed to pay UYU288m per year for five years, from 2017 to 2021. The deal was renegotiated in August 2015, increasing the fee and extending the deal to 2025.

Tenfield's two-season deal with the Venezuelan football federation for rights to the Primera División, the top division of domestic football in the country, covers 2015-16 and 2016-17. It is thought to be worth about \$20m per season.

Tenfield is also a joint partner with telco Telefónica in Gol Peru, the domestic broadcaster of Peru's Primera División. ♦

MOTORCYCLING

MotoGP live again in Finland after hiatus thanks to MTV3 deal

By Robin Jellis

MotoGP will be shown live in Finland again this season after a one-year hiatus, although it will be earning about 60 per cent less than from its last live rights deal in the country.

Commercial and pay-television broadcaster MTV3 – owned by the Bonnier media group – bought rights to the 2017 season for about €200,000 (\$212,000). The deal was struck in direct talks with Dorna Sports, MotoGP's commercial rights-holder.

MTV3 will show all races and qualifying sessions on its linear C More pay-television channels and online. There was no live coverage in 2016 as MTV3 and Dorna failed to agree on price. MTV3 showed highlights only, although it paid no fee for the rights. Dorna hoped the deal would help drive uptake of its on-demand subscription service VideoPass, which provides comprehensive coverage.

Dorna's last live rights deal in Finland was with commercial and pay-television broadcaster Nelonen, from 2013 to 2015, and was worth just over €500,000 per year (*TV Sports Markets* 19:20).

Nelonen declined to renew from 2016 onward, partly because its parent company – media group Sanoma – sought to cut costs. Its decision was also driven by the fact the series had no local riders and no events were held in the country.

Although there are still no Finnish riders in the series, local racer Patrik Pulkkinen is competing in the Moto3 series. And from 2018 a race is set to be held at the new KymiRing track.

Motorsport is one of the most popular sports in Finland. MTV3 also holds Formula One rights in the country. Its three-year deal, from 2016 to 2018, is worth close to \$16m per year.

SM-Liiga rights on the market

Rights to the SM-Liiga, the Finnish top-tier ice hockey league, are currently on the market.

A tender was sent to interested parties on March 3 with bids due today (March 24). The league is being advised on the sale of its rights by the Commercial Sports Media agency (*TV Sports Markets* 20:22).

Nelonen currently holds the league's rights from 2013-14 to 2017-18. It pays a fee of between €16m and €17m per season and covers production costs on top of this. Nelonen is said to be losing between €3m and €6m per season on the contract. ♦

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Fifa benefits from BBC zeal after missing out on Euro 2017 rights

By Robin Jellis

Fifa took advantage of the BBC's failure to acquire women's Euro 2017 rights to secure a big increase in the value of the women's World Cup.

UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights to the 2019 World Cup in a deal worth more than €1m (\$1.1m). The deal was agreed with Fifa, football's global governing body, earlier this month. Fifa had issued a tender on October 10 with bids due by November 3. The rights were awarded after one round of bidding.

The BBC paid slightly less than €500,000 for rights to the 2015 edition (*TV Sports Markets* 20:21). Fifa has been able to roughly double the value of the rights in the UK, mainly thanks to the outcome of the Euro 2017 auction. In November, commercial broadcaster Channel 4 outbid the BBC to secure rights to Euro 2017.

As such, the BBC was extremely keen to retain its women's World Cup rights, and had budget left over from the Euro 2017 auction. One insider described the BBC as having been "very aggressive".

Other reasons behind the fee increase include the growing interest in women's sport more widely. A peak television audience of 2.4m watched England's semi-final defeat to Japan at the 2015 tournament, even though it was played late at night UK time. The rights will also help the BBC fulfil its public-service remit.

Another factor behind the growth in value is the better time-zone for a UK audience in the new deal. The 2015 tournament was held in Canada; the 2019 edition will be hosted in France.

Fifa is understood to have been happy to renew with the BBC for two main reasons. First, the increased rights fee offered. Second, the wide exposure the broadcaster can provide, including coverage on its flagship BBC1 channel. One local expert added that the BBC's relationship with Fifa – based on its purchase of rights to the men's World Cup – may have helped.

Unlike the women's World Cup rights, Euro 2017 rights were not sold directly by Uefa, European football's governing body. They were sold by sports broadcaster Eurosport, which has a pan-European deal with Uefa for a host of lower-tier events.

The expert said Eurosport would have been more interested in acquiring the biggest sum possible, whereas Fifa, as the direct rights-owner, would have weighed up the value and the exposure offered. ♦

MEDIA RIGHTS DEALS

MARCH 2 TO 22

FOOTBALL

- ◆ Streaming operator PPTV agreed a deal for domestic digital media rights to the 2017 Chinese Super League season. The deal, reportedly worth CNY1.35bn (€185m/\$196m), was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 21:4.
- ◆ UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport renewed its deal for Uefa Champions League and Europa League rights for three seasons, from 2018-19 to 2020-21 (page 3).
- ◆ UK public-service broadcaster the BBC acquired rights to the 2019 Fifa women's World Cup (page 33).
- ◆ Spanish commercial broadcaster Mediaset acquired rights to the 2017 Uefa European Under-21 Championship national team tournament. The event runs from June 16-30.
- ◆ The IMG agency renewed in-flight and in-ship media rights to the German Bundesliga for three seasons, from 2017-18 to 2019-20 (page 16).
- ◆ Social media platform Facebook struck a deal with US pay-television broadcaster Univision for the right to stream at least 22 matches from the 2017 Major League Soccer season. Matches on Univision in Spanish will be available in English via the Univision Deportes Facebook page. MLS will also produce 40 exclusive shows on Facebook on MLS game days.
- ◆ The Argentinian Football Association selected a joint offer from US media companies Fox and Turner as the winner in the auction for rights to the domestic Primera División (page 9).

- ◆ Pay-television broadcaster beIN Sports acquired rights in Australia to Argentina's Primera División. BeIN Sports will show coverage from every remaining round of this season.
- ◆ The Lagardère Sports agency renewed its deal for commercial rights to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Football Federation's ASEAN Football Championship. The new deal will run for eight years, from 2017 to 2024, and cover four editions of the tournament.

OTHER SPORTS

- ◆ **Aquatic Sports:** Latin American sports channel Claro Sports acquired rights to the Swimming World Cup and Diving World Series from 2017.
- ◆ **Aquatic Sports:** The Lagardère Sports agency signed a deal with British diver Tom Daley in a bid to enhance UK coverage of the 2017 Diving World Series. Lagardère will live-stream World Series events on Daley's official YouTube channel in the UK.
- ◆ **Badminton:** UK production company Sunset+Vine will host broadcast this year's Badminton World Federation World Championships in Glasgow.
- ◆ **Baseball:** Pan-regional pay-television operator DirecTV acquired non-exclusive rights in Latin America for the 2017 World Baseball Classic national team tournament.
- ◆ **Baseball:** MLB franchise the Los Angeles Dodgers and pay-television operator Charter Communications, which sells regional pay-

MEDIA RIGHTS DEALS

MARCH 2 TO 22

television channel SportsNet LA, extended their rights partnership with LA-based broadcaster KLTATV. KLTATV will air 10 Dodgers games from the 2017 MLB season on a free-to-air basis as simulcasts of the SportsNet LA broadcast.

◆ **Basketball:** The NBA agreed a multi-year partnership with Chinese social media platform Sina Weibo, which will serve as NBA China's official social media platform.

◆ **Basketball:** Pay-television broadcaster ESPN signed a multi-year extension to its rights deal for the Basketball Tournament, a US-based amateur knockout competition. ESPN will show coverage of all 63 games this year and will broadcast a minimum of 15 matches on its ESPN or ESPN2 channels.

◆ **Basketball:** Australia's Women's National Basketball League employed production company Sportscast Australia to stream live coverage of its Grand Final Series via social media platform Facebook.

◆ **Basketball:** Multi-territory commercial and pay-television broadcaster Modern Times Group agreed a five-year extension to its deal with the International Basketball Federation (Fiba) in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, from 2017 to 2021.

◆ **Basketball:** Fiba signed a nine-year extension to its deal with Chinese state broadcaster CCTV, from 2017 to 2025. The contract covers the linear broadcast rights for all of Fiba's major national team competitions including: the World Cups in 2019 and 2023 – the former of which China will host – and their qualifiers; the Asia Cups in 2017, 2021 and 2025 and their qualifiers; the 2018 and

2022 Women's World Cups; all other Continental Cups; and the U17 and U19 World Cups. CCTV will partner with Fiba on production of all of China's qualifying games and the World Cup.

◆ **Boxing:** The MP & Silva agency was appointed as the exclusive distributor of the World Boxing Super Series, a new annual elimination tournament that will launch in September. The agreement covers three seasons, from 2017-18 to 2019-20. It excludes the US and Scandinavia.

◆ **Cricket:** International sports broadcaster Eleven Sports Network acquired digital rights in Singapore for this year's Indian Premier League Twenty20 competition.

◆ **Cricket:** Eleven acquired exclusive rights in the US to the Emirates Airline Twenty20 tournament.

◆ **Cycling:** The NBC Sports Group division of US media company NBCUniversal extended its rights deal for the Vuelta a España until the end of 2023.

◆ **Cycling:** NBC Sports Group extended a deal for the Tour Down Under event in Adelaide. The deal will run until the end of 2023.

◆ **Drone Racing:** Middle Eastern pay-television operator OSN agreed a rights partnership with the Drone Racing League until the end of 2017.

◆ **Endurance Events:** Tough Mudder agreed a content partnership with ESPN Media Distribution, which will serve as the international distributor for Tough Mudder's media rights outside the UK and Ireland.

MEDIA RIGHTS DEALS

MARCH 2 TO 22

◆ **Esports:** Social media platform Twitter agreed streaming partnerships with the ESL and DreamHack organisations. The ESL partnership began on March 4 with coverage of the Intel Extreme Masters Katowice event in Poland. All Intel Extreme Masters and ESL One tournaments will be streamed live via Twitter.

◆ **Esports:** Indian league UCypher agreed a rights deal with the Indian arm of commercial broadcaster MTV. MTV India will air coverage of the new league, which launches in April, in a one-hour daily format.

◆ **Golf:** Sports video and advertising platform SendtoNews struck a multi-year extension to its partnership with the PGA Tour. SendtoNews will continue to distribute video content throughout the US and Canada, primarily via local news and sports digital platforms.

◆ **Golf:** UK public-service broadcaster the BBC renewed rights to the US Masters.

◆ **Horse Racing:** The NBC Sports Group acquired rights in the US to the Dubai World Cup and Epsom Derby. NBC Sports Network will provide live coverage of the Dubai World Cup on March 25 and England's Epsom Derby on June 3.

◆ **Horse Racing:** Sky Racing World, a distributor of horse racing content, expanded its partnership with US pay-television racing broadcaster TVG. The broadcaster will now air full-card coverage of top-tier Australian races on key regional race nights, with three meetings to each night.

◆ **Lacrosse:** The National Lacrosse League agreed a content partnership with OTT provider

Xumo. The agreement will give smart television owners free access to on-demand NLL games and highlights.

◆ **Mixed Martial Arts:** MP & Silva agreed a deal for commercial rights to the Desert Force Championship Middle Eastern promotion.

◆ **Motorsport:** OSN extended its World Touring Car Championship deal to cover the 2017 season. OSN will show live coverage of all races.

◆ **Motorsport:** Australian series the Supercars Championship signed a new multi-year deal with pay-television broadcaster Fox Sports Asia.

◆ **Motorsport:** Spanish public-service broadcaster TVE acquired rights to the Supercars Championship.

◆ **Motorsport:** UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport acquired rights to the Speedway Great Britain Premiership competition. BT will show the 2017 season as part of its deal with the British Speedway Promoters' Association.

◆ **Motorsport:** UK free-to-air sports channel Front Runner acquired rights to the British GT Championship. Front Runner will provide live coverage of every UK round in 2017.

◆ **Motorsport:** Finnish commercial and pay-television broadcaster MTV3 acquired MotoGP rights in 2017. The deal includes live coverage of all races and qualifying sessions (page 32).

◆ **Motorsport:** Portuguese pay-television broadcaster Sport TV sublicensed exclusive rights to the 2017 Formula One campaign from international sports broadcaster Eurosport.

MEDIA RIGHTS DEALS

MARCH 2 TO 22

◆ **Motorsport:** UK commercial broadcaster Channel 5 acquired highlights rights to the 2017 MotoGP season.

◆ **Motorsport:** OSN acquired exclusive MotoGP rights in the Middle East and North Africa through a long-term agreement with the series' commercial rights-holder, Dorna Sports. OSN also acquired rights to the Superbike World Championship in a separate deal with Dorna.

◆ **Multi-sport:** German sports broadcaster Sport1 acquired exclusive rights in Germany and non-exclusive rights in Austria and Switzerland to the 2017 World Games, which take place in Wrocław, Poland, from July 20-30.

◆ **Multi-sport:** The Brazilian Confederation of University Sports agreed a deal with Esporte Interativo under which the pay-television broadcaster will cover the 2017 summer Universiade in Taiwan and the 2017 Brazilian University Games.

◆ **Rugby League:** Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand acquired rights to this year's World Cup. Sky will broadcast live coverage of all 28 matches from the tournament, which runs from October 27 to December 2 in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. Sky will serve as host broadcaster for all games in New Zealand.

◆ **Rugby League:** Fijian commercial broadcaster Fiji TV bought rights to the 2017 World Cup.

◆ **Skiing:** Production company TVStart agreed a deal to serve as the media partner of the Ski Classics long-distance skiing championship in Russia for the remainder of the 2016-17 season.

◆ **Surfing:** Facebook agreed a deal with the World Surf League for coverage of the 2017 season. All Championship Tour events and Big Wave Tour events will be shown live on the league's Facebook page.

◆ **Tennis:** Eurosport acquired rights to the Wimbledon grand slam tournament in eight territories: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan (page 28).

◆ **Triathlon:** UK pay-television broadcaster Bike Channel acquired exclusive rights to the International Triathlon Union's World Triathlon Series, X-Terra and the Ironman World Series.

◆ **Wrestling:** Digital-terrestrial channel Spike acquired exclusive rights for the Impact Wrestling promotion in the UK and Ireland via a deal with Anthem Sports & Entertainment.

MEDIA RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS

◆ The Discovery Networks Sweden division of international media company Discovery Communications acquired domestic rights to the Allsvenskan, the top division of Swedish football, according to multiple reports. The deal was first reported in *TV Sports Markets* 21:4.

◆ The CAA Eleven agency launched tenders for rights to Uefa national team properties in Latin America, Brazil and the Caribbean. They include rights to European Qualifiers from 2018-19 to 2021-22, the 2018-19 and 2020-21 Nations League competitions, and other international matches. Rights to the Euro 2020 tournament are also available.

MEDIA RIGHTS DEALS

MARCH 2 TO 22

◆ UK pay-television broadcaster BT Sport is reportedly preparing a record bid to acquire exclusive Scottish Professional Football League rights. BT is said to be in talks to take rights to games involving Celtic and Rangers, as well as 60 live top-tier Premiership matches per season.

◆ England and Wales Cricket Board chief executive Tom Harrison said the organisation was in talks with free-to-air broadcasters over a rights deal for its proposed domestic Twenty20 tournament in a new rights cycle. Harrison told UK newspaper the *Financial Times* he wants some games in the new league to be screened live on free-to-air, even if it means forsaking money from pay-television broadcasters.

◆ The Pro League, the top division of club football in Belgium, said it had received offers from 10 interested parties for its next cycle of broadcast rights. The tender for rights from the 2017-18 season onward was sent out on February 8. Eleven and telco Orange are reported to have bid, as are existing live rights-holders Proximus, Telenet and Voo.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MARCH 2 TO 22

- ◆ Snap Inc., parent company of social media platform Snapchat, priced its initial public offering above its target range on March 1 as it prepared to begin trading on the New York Stock Exchange. After targeting a valuation of between \$19.5bn (€18.36bn) and \$22.3bn, Snap priced 200m shares at \$17, placing its market valuation at roughly \$24bn.
- ◆ NBCUniversal acquired a \$500m (€471m) stake in the initial public offering of Snap Inc., according to NBCU chief executive Steve Burke.
- ◆ The UK's Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, Karen Bradley, confirmed that US media company 21st Century Fox's proposed takeover of pay-television broadcaster Sky will be investigated by UK media watchdog Ofcom. The investigation will centre around whether the deal will give Fox owner Rupert Murdoch too much control of news output in the UK and whether the Murdoch family are "fit and proper" owners following the phone-hacking scandal. Ofcom has until May 16 to report back.
- ◆ International sports broadcaster Eleven acquired "certain distribution assets" of US broadcaster One World Sports (page 19).
- ◆ Pay-television broadcaster Sky New Zealand and telco Vodafone New Zealand filed appeals with the High Court against the Commerce Commission's decision to block a merger between the two businesses.
- ◆ London's High Court approved a request from the English Premier League to shut down unlicensed online streams. The ruling related to illegal streaming of games on IPTV, or Kodi, boxes. Judge Mr Justice Arnold approved an order for the UK's top four broadband providers – BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media – to block connections to servers hosting pirated streams of matches.
- ◆ French media group Vivendi and Italian broadcaster Mediaset launched defamation lawsuits against each other in a Milan court on March 21.
- ◆ US mixed martial arts organisation Alliance MMA will use the Kings Highway Media agency to sell its domestic and international media rights.
- ◆ US mixed martial arts promotion Bellator will return to pay-per-view television for the first time since 2014 for an event held at Madison Square Garden in New York on June 24.
- ◆ UK commercial broadcaster ITV partnered with virtual-reality production company VR City to distribute VR coverage of the Cheltenham Festival horse racing event. ITV provided daily highlights packages in ultra-high-definition and 360-degree video. Content was uploaded to ITV's official pages on social media platform Facebook and video-sharing website YouTube.
- ◆ Spanish commercial broadcaster Mediaset filed a complaint with the Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y La Competencia (CNMC), Spain's competition regulator, against LaLiga, the organising body of club football in the country. Mediaset reportedly protested a decision by LaLiga preventing the company from having cameras in stadiums during game weeks 24 and 25 of the season. LaLiga claimed Mediaset had breached the terms of an agreement that grants

NEWS IN BRIEF

MARCH 2 TO 22

it access to game clips. The CNMC has opened proceedings against LaLiga.

◆ Spanish news website El Confidencial reported that venture capital funds Access Industries, Advent International and Pamplona Capital Management were the three finalists in contention to acquire a controlling stake in Imagina, the owner of Mediapro.

◆ Amaury Sport Organisation struck a five-year deal, from 2017 to 2021, to produce and distribute cycling's Volta a Catalunya. The deal also includes the management of sponsorship rights.

◆ Middle Eastern pay-television operator OSN launched a range of new sports channels. The OSN Sports Action 1 HD, OSN Sports Action 2 HD and OSN Sports 5 HD channels are available through the operator's 'Ultimate Sports Pack'.

◆ The German Football League (DFL), the organising body of the top two divisions of the domestic game, is to replace DFL Sports Enterprises with a new body entitled Bundesliga International. Bundesliga International will subsume DFL Sports Enterprises, establish additional organisational units overseas and strengthen the global marketing of the league.

◆ Swiss pay-television broadcaster Teleclub said it would launch a free-to-air sports channel, Teleclub Zoom, in July.

◆ Golf Channel launched in Poland through a carriage deal with pay-television service Polsat. The channel, operated by NBC Sports Group, will be available through Polsat's OTT service.

◆ BeIN Media Group reportedly injected €600m (\$646m) into supporting its beIN Sports pay-television operation in France.

◆ MTG sold its free-to-air television, pay-television, digital and radio businesses in the Baltics to US private equity investment firm Providence Equity Partners. The transaction included leading sports and entertainment channels in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and values 100 per cent of the business at an enterprise value of €115m (\$1212m).

◆ Snapchat signed an extended partnership with Aussie rules football league the AFL. Snapchat will cover games during the 2017 season as part of its 'Our Story' feature, which collates snaps from fans, players and the league.

◆ UK-based media company Ginx TV agreed a carriage deal for its Ginx eSports TV channel with OSN. The channel will be available to all OSN subscribers throughout the Mena region. It also agreed a carriage deal with SuperSport, the pay-television broadcaster that operates in sub-Saharan Africa. Ginx eSports TV will be live streamed on the DStv Now platform and on SuperSport.com.

◆ International motorsports broadcaster Motors TV rebranded to Motorsport.tv following its takeover by automotive digital technology business Motorsport Network.

◆ Mexican media company AYM Sports entered into a production partnership with the North, Central America and Caribbean Volleyball Confederation. The three-year agreement runs until 2020.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MARCH 2 TO 22

◆ The IMG agency relaunched its sports media archive. IMG Replay will provide greater access to premium archive material, including rights-ready content pre-cleared for editorial use.

◆ Lagardère Sports and Entertainment, which operates the Lagardère Sports agency, reported a marginal increase in turnover for the 2016 financial year. Revenue for the division totalled €517m (\$546m), up 1.5 per cent on a like-for-like basis and 0.3 per cent on a consolidated basis. Recurring earnings before interest and tax was stable at €20m.

◆ The World Karate Federation launched a new online streaming platform. Karateworld.tv will provide worldwide coverage of the WKF World Championships, the Karate 1-Premier League and the European Championships.

◆ The International Table Tennis Federation signed an extended partnership with social video production company Tellyo. The two will work to create and share video content on the ITTF's social media channels from 80 tournaments this year, including the World Tour, World Championships and World Cup Series.

◆ Consumer electronics company Samsung is planning to offer virtual-reality coverage of the 2018 winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang.

◆ IMG launched Boomeo, a web-based esports platform. Boomeo will feature premium gaming content and exclusive educational tutorials from top esports teams and professionals. Five professional esports organisations – Cloud9, compLexity, Counter Logic Gaming, G2 Esports and SK Gaming – have partnered with Boomeo

to provide exclusive Counter Strike: Global Offensive content for the platform.

◆ According to figures released by analytics company Nielsen Sports, the 2016 Paralympics saw the global cumulative television audience increase by seven per cent on the 3.8bn people that watched London 2012, rising to more than 4.1bn. A total of 154 countries showed the Games, 39 more than London 2012 and nearly double the 80 that showed Beijing 2008. The total number of hours broadcast also increased to nearly 5,110 – more than the total hours broadcast for 2008 and 2012 combined.

INDUSTRY MOVES

◆ The Turner Sports division of US cable-television broadcaster Turner Broadcasting System promoted Matt Hong to the new position of chief operating officer.

◆ Social video production company Grabyo appointed sports and entertainment executive Mike Kelley as its new president of the Americas.

◆ UK production company Sunset+Vine appointed Andrew Preece as executive director to oversee all digital, branded content, distribution and news operations.

◆ Jean-Thierry Augustin is to step down from his role as president, sports and Olympic development at media company Discovery Networks International.