

SPORTS LAW

COVID-19 - TELEVISION RIGHTS

Major sports competitions - national and international - such as the UEFA Champions League, European Football Championship, Olympic Games, Premier League, NBA, Grand Slams - move, as is well known, billions of euros in television broadcasts and related products (marketing, advertising, pay per view...)

As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of these competitions and events have been suspended and a vital source of revenue for national and international sports societies has also been suspended.

As is well known, the sale - centralised or individual - of television rights to sporting events is of paramount importance to the budgets of sports clubs and societies in the most varied collective and individual sports.

Thus, with the progressive lifting of restrictive measures and the consequent approximation of the resumption of competitions, some leaders of the competition organisers have expressed their intention to broadcast the remaining matches of the season on an open channel.

This intention, despite being recognised as a measure aimed firstly at defending the

interests of fans who, in difficult economic circumstances, could accompany the competition and secondly at public health itself, encouraging each person to watch the game in their own home and preventing concentrations in public places (cafe and restaurants), has not been unanimously welcomed.

First of all, in Portugal, the operators that have acquired the rights to the TV broadcasting of the clubs of the professional competitions and thus want to maintain the exclusivity of the broadcasting.

On the other hand, many of the clubs themselves, possibly with a view to avoiding litigation and non-payment by those operators - essential for their financial survival - have not agreed to such a measure either.

For the sake of completeness, some estimates suggest that the remaining value of the TV rights for the remainder of the 2019/2020 season is around EUR 850 million.

If this measure goes ahead without further measures to compensate for the potential losses, the economic position of the clubs could be called into question which could trigger a number of restrictions and difficulties for them.

This raises a number of legal issues at the contractual level and also at the level of sports law, in particular with regard to regulations on competitions, market pools and other mechanisms for the centralised distribution of television rights.

For any issue related to this subject or other matters of Sports Law, Caiado Guerreiro has a team prepared to assist you.

For further information:

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The content of this information does not constitute any specific legal advice; the latter can only be given when faced with a specific case. Please contact us for any further clarification or information deemed necessary in what concerns the application of the law.