[DE] Champions League Rights Sold

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In early May, the television broadcaster tm3 secured the television rights to football matches in the European Champions League. For a total outlay of around DM 800 million, the partners in tm3 , the News Corporation owned by media entrepreneur Rupert Murdoch - majority shareholder in tm3 with 66 % - and the Tele München group, jointly acquired national television broadcasting rights for the next four years' matches in the top European league from the European football union, UEFA. The four-year contract covers exclusive free-TV and pay-TV rights. tm3 was set up in August 1995 as a specialist women's television channel, but had difficulty in gaining access to German cable networks, even after it began broadcasting via the Astra satellite. The notion of pure women's television was unsustainable. tm3 can now be received via cable and satellite by almost 80 % of German TV households, but has less than 1 % of the market share.

Murdoch controls a world-wide newspaper, book, film and television empire. He owns two-thirds of the daily press in his home country of Australia, " The Times " and the most popular tabloid " The Sun " in Great Britain, and the " New York Post " in America. He also owns 15 television stations in the USA, together with the Twentieth Century Fox film studio. His satellite channels are available not only in Australia, the USA and Great Britain, but also in Northern Europe, Latin America and Asia. Murdoch has already used popular sports to make small broadcasting companies in the USA and Great Britain into major players in national broadcasting markets. In May of this year, in collaboration with the Italian media group Cecchi and the football clubs Lazio, Parma, Fiorentina and AS Roma, Murdoch acquired 65 % of Telecom Italia's digital TV subsidiary Stream for 130 billion lire.

Stream had previously purchased exclusive rights to broadcast matches involving the four first division clubs until 2005.

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