[DE] Kirch and ARD/ZDF Agree on Football World Cup Rights

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At the beginning of May, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Union of German Public Broadcasters - ARD) and Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF) acquired from the Kirch group the broadcasting rights to 24 matches in the 2002 football World Cup. The matches include those described in Section 5a of the Rundfunkstaatsvertrag (Inter-State Agreement on Broadcasting) as "events of particular importance to society", which may not be broadcast exclusively on pay-TV, ie matches involving the German national team, the opening match, both semi-finals and the final.

The public-service broadcasters also agreed not to broadcast the matches digitally via satellite so that they would not interfere with the rightsholder's marketing opportunities in other European countries.

Furthermore, the broadcasters negotiated an option to purchase the broadcasting rights to the 2006 World Cup in Germany. The fact that they have first refusal to buy these exclusive rights fulfils the requirement that publicservice broadcasters should be able to cover major events staged in their own country. If a deal is not struck by 2003, the price of the 2002 World Cup rights will be reduced.

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