[FR] Rights for excerpts from Football World Cup: last-minute agreement between TF1 and BeIN Sports

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An agreement between TF1 and BeIN Sports, joint holders of the rights to broadcast the 2014 World Cup in France, was reached just two days before the start of the competition, enabling other television channels to acquire match excerpts. TF1, a private channel broadcasting unencrypted, had acquired full broadcasting rights for 130 million euros, and the Qatari sport channel BeIN Sports bought the rights from it for all the matches. BeIN Sports was thus offering live broadcasting of all 64 matches in the competition, showing 36 of them in exclusivity. TF1 for its part will be broadcasting 28, including those in which the French national team plays. The last-minute agreement reached by the joint holders of the rights thus enables those other channels wishing to broadcast longer excerpts than provided for in information law (i.e. free of charge for news broadcasts and limited by the audiovisual regulatory authority (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel - CSA) to 90 seconds per hour of air time) to pay for images within a certain period of time. Under the agreement, the channels can pay to use a maximum of two minutes of images from any one match in the competition or a maximum of three minutes from a number of matches in any one news broadcast, within 24 hours of the end of the match in question. The excerpts, the charge for which is in the order of EUR 5000 to 6000 per minute, are intended for use in newscasts and by news channels, but not by magazine programmes devoted to the competition or for special reports. It should be recalled that the opening match, the semi-finals and the final of the football World Cup are all on the list of "events of major importance" defined in Decree No. 2004-1392 of 22 December 2004 on the broadcasting of events of major importance (see IRIS 2005-2/24). Accordingly, a freeview television service cannot be prevented from broadcasting them; such a broadcast must show the entire event and be sent out live. TF1 will therefore be broadcasting the matches. On 20 June, the Chairman of the CSA for his part reaffirmed the need for sport and its major events to remain accessible for freeview television. Furthermore, he felt it was necessary for the CSA to be able to intervene "directly or indirectly in negotiations for rights concerning sports". He also said that the list of events of major importance provided for in the Decree "would be extended to women's competitions".

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