



BBC & Discovery Communications Sign Long-Term Olympic Games Partnership

February 2, 2016

The BBC will be the exclusive free to air Olympic broadcaster in the UK for the next five Games

Discovery have committed to strike innovative partnerships across the continent to ensure that the Olympic Games remains accessible to as wide an audience as possible

The BBC and Discovery Communications today announce a long-term Olympic Games agreement in the UK, building on a 30-year partnership between the two global media organizations. The innovative deal means that the BBC will sub-license (from Discovery) exclusive free-to-air audio-visual and non-exclusive radio rights to the 2022 and 2024 Olympic Games. In turn, Discovery will sub-license (from the BBC) exclusive pay-TV rights in the UK to the 2018 and 2020 Olympic Games.

The Olympic Games are highly valued and hugely popular with audiences. The London 2012 Olympic Games was watched on the BBC by more than 50 million people in the UK, 7 million people in the UK accessed the BBC website every day, with 111 million requests for video throughout the Games and over 2 million people downloaded the app. It was truly the first digital Olympic Games and the BBC raised the bar in its coverage.

Today's announcement ensures that the BBC will continue to be the free to air home of the best action from the Olympic Games until 2024, bringing the moments that unite the nation on TV and radio. Additionally, the BBC's package of rights is supplemented by digital rights to the content it broadcasts on TV.

This agreement marks the first Olympic Games sub-licensing deal by Discovery and reinforces Eurosport as the home of the Olympic Games across Europe, ensuring that every event is available to fans across all screens. The news follows an agreement announced by Discovery Communications and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) last June, which includes exclusive multimedia rights for 50 countries and territories in Europe for the 2018 through the 2024 Olympic Games. The rights for the UK were included for only 2022 and 2024, as these rights had already been secured by the BBC in the UK.

Tony Hall, Director General of the BBC, says, "The BBC prides itself on bringing the biggest sporting moments to the public. For many, the BBC has been their stadium for Olympic coverage. It is an event that unites the nation like no other. I'm delighted that through our new partnership with Discovery, the BBC will continue to carry the torch for great sporting coverage right through to the 2024 Games.

"While the BBC has had to take some tough financial decisions, this partnership underlines our commitment to making world class sport available to all."

David Zaslav, President and CEO of Discovery Communications, says: "Discovery is a passionate and committed partner of the Olympic Movement. Today's agreement is a win for UK sports fans and marks an exciting new chapter in Discovery and the BBC's partnership on major sporting events. For 30 years, our two organizations have chartered new frontiers with co-production partnerships in factual and natural history programming. Now we join together once again to bring the most compelling stories of human ambition, sacrifice and achievement to people across the UK."

Timo Lumme, Managing Director of IOC Television and Marketing Services, said, "We are delighted our partners Discovery / Eurosport and the BBC are collaborating on this long term agreement which is great news for viewers in the UK. By sharing the rights, viewers will benefit from the BBC's rich Olympic heritage and Discovery's innovative approach to storytelling. Together, they will make the Olympic Games as accessible and engaging as possible."

Barbara Slater, Director of BBC Sport says, "We are very pleased that the BBC will continue to bring free-to-air Olympic Games coverage to audiences through to 2024, extending our relationship with the event which began in 1928 and reinforcing the BBC's long term commitment to major sporting events. The Olympic Games is one of the

nation’s most treasured sporting events and this is an extensive package of rights that ensures we can offer ‘the best of the Games’, across TV, radio, online and digital, maximizing the reach and impact of the BBC. This ground-breaking partnership also shows how the BBC can collaborate and work with others to continue to bring the very best in sport to licence fee payers.”

JB Perrette, President of Discovery Networks International, says: “Since the announcement of our partnership with the IOC, it has been Discovery’s goal to engage and entertain local audiences in Europe with the ultimate Olympic Games experience across all screens. To realize this ambition, we will leverage our portfolio of pay-TV, free-to-air and digital services, and collaborate with the very best partners who share this vision – the BBC partnership embodies this perfectly.”

Dominic Coles, COO, Discovery Networks Northern Europe, says: “We are proud and excited to be announcing this ground-breaking sports partnership with the BBC today. Not only will the BBC be able to continue to play its historic role of uniting the UK in celebrating the sporting achievements of its Olympic heroes, but also Discovery, through Eurosport, will bring additional expert and comprehensive coverage to the 2018 and 2020 Olympic Games. Greater exposure for UK Olympians only can be good news for the development of sport and the promotion of Olympic values in this country. Watch this space.”

-ENDS-

Timeline of Partnerships Between the BBC and Discovery Communications

1985	
June	Discovery Channel launches in the U.S. featuring numerous productions from the BBC.
1996	
September	BBC and Discovery Communications announce \$600M global content and network partnership.
October	Animal Planet, Discovery’s third network, launches in the U.S. in cooperation with the BBC.
1997	
June	Animal Planet and People+Arts launch in Latin America, as a joint venture with BBC Worldwide. Other markets follow in coming years.
December	BBC and Discovery form joint venture to launch BBC America in the U.S., with Discovery selling advertising for the new channel.
2000	
April	The three-hour special, WALKING WITH DINOSAURS, produced by BBC, airs on Discovery Channel setting the all-time U.S. cable ratings record and remains the most-viewed telecast in the channel’s history to date.
2002	
January	BLUE PLANET: SEAS OF LIFE, produced by BBC, premieres on Discovery Channel.
March	BBC and Discovery Communications announce "The Deal of the Decade," a landmark ten-year extension to the global partnership originally commenced in July 1996.
2006	
January	Long-term partnership agreement between Discovery Communications and BBC to distribute the BBC World News channel in the U.S.

2007

March BBC and Discovery Channel co-produce award-winning 11-part series, PLANET EARTH, which becomes the most-watched U.S. cable event of all time.

2010

March BBC and Discovery Channel co-produce LIFE, a follow up to PLANET EARTH.

November BBC and Discovery Communications extend strategic programming relationship by two years to 2014. BBC Worldwide sells to Discovery its 50 percent interest in the global TV channels joint venture Animal Planet and Liv.

2016

February Discovery Communications and BBC sign long-term Olympic Games agreement.

For head shots, b-roll and images for Discovery Communications please click [here](#)

Media Contacts

BBC:

Vicky Owens

Vicky.owens@bbc.co.uk

+44 7714 957 227

Discovery Communications:

Michelle Russo

Michelle_Russo@discovery.com

+44 208 811 3592

Sarah Farley

Sarah_Farley@discovery.com

+44 7717 787 424

Eurosport:

Fiona McLachlan

Fiona_McLachlan@discovery.com

+33 6 50 35 96 57