

Scramble for TV deal

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A struggle for rights to broadcast Uganda's domestic football live on TV is looming between SuperSport and the little-known pay-TV from Tanzania, Azam.



Local media have been awash with reports that Azam has dislodged SuperSport and a deal to sponsor the league for the next three and a half seasons has been secured. Fufa spokesman Ahmed Hussein, however, refuted these rumours. He said Fufa, who own the property rights of football in the country, hadn't signed any new TV sponsorship deal with Azam, meaning that SuperSport's deal is still intact, for now.

There appears to be a quagmire for the football clubs and Fufa to make a decision on the offers from the two TVs - that is if there is really need to debate the two companies.

First, with coverage across Africa, SuperSport is of a higher international stand than Azam. Although Azam is smaller, Tadeus Kitandwe, the chairman of Vipers FC, and the individual who has been behind the whole Azam deal, said they are offering them Shs 60m per club per season compared to SuperSport's deal of Shs 20m.

However, according to the offer made to Fufa last week by Azam, a total of \$1.9m covering a period of three and a half years was on the table. And with this offer, Azam hoped that it would be allowed the naming rights of the UPL as title sponsors as well.

Big League, Uganda Cup

In addition, this money would also cover the Big League, which is the second tier league and the knock-out Uganda Cup, at least as partners of these Fufa properties. The breakdown of this money indicates that for the second half of the 2014/2015 football season, which takes off later this month, \$400,000 (Shs 1bn) would be disbursed by Azam.

Furthermore, for the other three full seasons, \$500,000 (Shs 1.35bn) cash would go to the UPL, Big League and Uganda

Cup, although there is no breakdown of how much money the particular parties to such a deal would indeed be.

That, anyway, is usually known in the latter stages of the contract discussions according to Peter Kibazo, a board member of KCCA FC. He added recently, following Azam TV's offer, that it was difficult to be carried away until the details of such a deal, which must be ample to the clubs' valuation, were agreed on.

Kibazo added that the UPL clubs were still bound by the SuperSport deal, which unless it was run down or terminated, still left them liable. That said, Hussein told *The Observer* that SuperSport also informed Fufa that they were ready with an improved offer for the topflight league.

"Supersport has been offering \$1m per season for just the broadcasting rights of the topflight league. Of this, \$450,000 has been cash to the parties in the league. Now, they intend to make it \$2m," Hussein said.

In a nutshell, Fufa and the football clubs are at a point where they have to choose whether to remain with Supersport or pick Azam TV. The former is currently offering a \$1m package for just one property every year, but are willing to raise it to \$2m, while the latter is offering \$1.9m for three and a half years for the UPL (including naming rights), the Big League and the Uganda Cup.

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