

## GMM Grammy seeks to wrest Thai Premier League rights from TrueVisions

Music and entertainment giant GMM Grammy aims to acquire the broadcasting rights for Thailand Premier League soccer after TrueVisions' contract with the Football Association of Thailand under the Patronage of His Majesty the King ends in 2014.

The country's primary soccer competition normally runs from March to October, with teams playing 34 games each, totalling 306 matches in the season. Currently TrueVisions, the country's largest subscription-based television operator, has the broadcasting rights until the 2014 season.

Paiboon Damrongchaitham, chairman of GMM Grammy, said yesterday that his company also planned to join the bid for the Uefa (Union of European Football Associations) Championship broadcasting rights after 2014 season ends. The bidding is expected to start this year.

However, in a previous interview with a local newspaper, Attaphon Na Bangxang, chief programme and content officer at TrueVisions, said his company wanted to secure the Uefa broadcasting rights for upcoming seasons as well as other world-class soccer tournaments like the English Premier League.

The competition between these two giants seems to be high, particularly as Paiboon aims to take both rights away from TrueVisions.

Meanwhile yesterday, GMM Grammy announced that it had acquired the broadcasting rights for the Japanese national soccer league, J League Division 1, for the next five years to 2017. Division 1 is ranked as the top professional association football league in Japan.

Kobkiat Sangwanich, managing director for GMM sports and content development, said the live coverage of 676 matches each season would be broadcast via many channels, namely free TV, satellite TV and Internet.

Additionally, Thana Thienachariya, chief executive officer for broadcasting business and GMM Z, said that given these efforts in sports management, the company expected to sell at least 800,000 satellite set-top boxes after Uefa Euro 2012 ends.

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