

# Amazon to livestream Premier League in online shakeup

June 7 2018, by Pirate Irwin

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The Premier League acquired a new television broadcaster when on-line giant Amazon bought the rights to show two rounds of matches.

Amazon has secured the rights to show English Premier League football matches in a pioneering move for the online sector in the bidding war

for sports events.

The global online retailer will show 20 Premier League matches a season for three years in the UK, starting from the 2019/20 season, the league said Thursday.

The US company breaks up the recent dominance of Sky and BT Sport of lucrative Premier League TV rights in a first for the online sector that is threatening to shake up the traditional sports rights market.

The EPL gave no details of the scheduling, but the BBC reported that Amazon will exclusively livestream all 10 matches over a bank holiday period and another 10 during the first midweek fixture programme in December.

The games will only be available to their Amazon Prime UK subscribers, which is the online seller's premium service available for a fee.

Memberships costs £79 (90 euros or \$106) a year or £7.99 a month.

Premier League executive chairman Richard Scudamore described Amazon as an "exciting new partner".

"Prime Video will be an excellent service on which fans can consume live Premier League football—including for the first time in the UK a full round of matches," he said.

Sky and BT will still show the vast majority of live matches, with 128 and 52—BT having been awarded the other package up for grabs on Thursday of 20 games at a reported cost of £90 million—respectively.

"Sky and BT are established Premier League partners and provide first-rate coverage of the competition through their live-match broadcasts and

comprehensive programming," said Scudamore.

Amazon, which started as an online retailer, has built up an increasingly impressive sports portfolio in both the Britain and the US including US Open tennis, ATP World Tour Tennis events—where they outbid Sky for UK rights by offering £50 million—and NFL games.



Live broadcasts of Premier League games will now be legally available online

**'The future is bright'**

Scudamore will be delighted as it was his idea to lure either Amazon, or

their rivals such as Facebook and YouTube into bidding for the rights.

Indeed, 58-year-old Scudamore having unveiled his commercial coup, then announced he would step down after almost two decades in charge—first as chief executive and then in his present role—a few hours later.

Although a figure has not been released as to how much Amazon—who have been in talks over the past couple of months over the package—is paying, the Guardian reported that the EPL did not get the price they were seeking as the companies bidding didn't see a deal for just two rounds of matches as a money maker.

However, Rob Wilson a financial football analyst at Sheffield University told AFP it could strike a blow against illegal streaming.

"It is a bold move for the Premier League to say we are going to start broadcasting online," he said.

"It has an implication for illegal streaming, it is clearly a problem for any entertainment industry.

"The development of Amazon Prime service is a longer-term strategy to try to reduce the number of illegal streaming sights and push people to pay for subscriptions."

The league divides its rights into bundles of possible games. In February, Sky Sports paid £3.58bn for four packages, while BT Sport spent £295m on another package.

In a separate announcement the Premier League also agreed that there would be a change in the distribution of money gained from the foreign broadcast deal.

The big six clubs—Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham—managed to get the necessary 14 votes out of the 20 to agree that from 2019/20, any increase in the current international rights package, will be distributed according to league position and not equally distributed between all 20 clubs as it has been up to now.

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