Title: Premier League issues ITT for UK audiovisual broadcasting rights

The Premier League has today made available to interested parties two separate Invitations to Tender (ITT) for its UK audiovisual broadcasting rights for seasons 2016/17-2018/19.

These documents describe the packages of rights the Premier League is now inviting bids for:

* Live broadcasting rights to a total of 168 matches – split into seven packages.
* A Free-to-Air highlights package.

The Live rights consist of five packages of 28 matches and two packages of 14 matches. No single buyer will be allowed to acquire more than 126 matches.

This creates an attractive offering for broadcasters and fans; whilst allowing the continued protection of the Saturday 3pm "closed period" – the purpose of which is to encourage attendances and participation at all levels of the sport at the traditional time at which English football takes place across the country.

A separate sales process will take place later for two other packages. They are:

* A "Near Live" long form package containing 212 matches, for linear and on-demand exploitation
* An Internet-based Clips package for all matches

Both the Live and "Near Live" packages will be available for exploitation on a technology-neutral basis.

The Premier League's live audiovisual broadcasting rights are sold in separate packages for a three-year term. The process is monitored by an independent trustee and no single buyer will be permitted to purchase rights to more than 126 of the 168 matches available for live broadcast.

Those conditions stem from an agreement with the European Commission, for the auction processes for Premier League live audiovisual rights for 2007/08-2009/10 and 2010/11-2012/13, which was put in place in order to ensure compliance with relevant competition law.

In the last auction process, incorporating seasons 2013/14-2015/16, 154 matches were made available for live UK broadcast split into seven packages. Sky won five of the packages (116 matches) and BT two packages (38 matches). The seven packages were sold for a total of £3.018 billion.

The Saturday 3pm "closed period" is an agreement whereby football leagues and associations do not televise matches at the traditional time football is played in their country in order to protect attendance and participation at all levels of the game. It is compatible with both UK and EU law and detailed in UEFA Article 48.