

Turner International invests in Bigballs Media

Turner International's new Digital Ventures & Innovation Group has taken an equity investment in Bigballs Media (BBM), parent company of one of the world's fastest-growing digital video platforms for football content, Copa90.



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This investment will be used to fuel BBM's international expansion, content production and distribution and enhance its data capabilities, as it continues its growth trajectory. It will fuel further international growth and fully establish Copa90 as the definitive football youth media brand.

Turner's Digital Ventures & Innovation Group was recently formed to focus on opportunities for innovation, development and acquisition. The investment comes within the group's first month of operations and signals the company's commitment to increasing its presence in the digital sports space. Turner is the largest provider of funding for the Series B investment round and the main strategic investor.

Cross-platform agreement

In parallel, Turner and BBM have signed a commercial agreement that embraces multiple opportunities for Turner and BBM to leverage their respective distribution and content production expertise. The partnership expands on an existing commercial relationship with leading digital sports brand Bleacher Report, a division of Turner.

The cross-platform commercial agreement includes strategic co-branded content production, the development of third party branded content and sponsorship opportunities, and content creation for Turner's own channels. It also facilitates BBM's close collaboration across the wider Turner portfolio, including Esporte Interativo, Turner Sports and CNN.

Additionally, Aksel van der Wal, head of Digital Ventures & Innovation, will take a seat on BBM's board of directors and Alex Vargas, COO Bleacher Report, becomes a board observer.

"Partnering with relevant brands is a core part of our strategy to compete and lead in today's rapidly evolving digital landscape," said van der Wal. "We see exciting opportunities to work with BBM in developing creative ways to engage new audiences, in particular expanding our growing touchpoints with millennials, while also offering innovative new platforms for advertisers. It is exactly the kind of forward-looking partnership we hope to establish more of."

Ready for 2018 FIFA World Cup

Tom Thirlwall, CEO BBM, said, "Our ambition is to be the world's most influential football media business by the time the 2018 FIFA World Cup kicks off and this investment and partnership with Turner is a decisive step towards making that a reality.

"We had significant interest in our round but Turner was by far and away the most compelling because of its team, vision and the strategic opportunities for both our businesses. The investment will enable us to accelerate our growth in our core markets, build our data and distribution capabilities and expand our commercial teams in Europe and the US and continue to make the best fan culture football content."

"Bleacher Report and Copa90 share a passion for global football fan culture. We are very excited about the investment and taking a step forward in expanding our existing relationship. Our popular 'Saturdays Are Lit' Snapchat collaboration has set a great benchmark for the kind of exciting opportunities we expect to develop together," added Vargas.

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