

English Golf Union

Question 1:

Yes. The steady flow of sporting events from free to air to satellite channels has seen a marked reduction in viewers. This lack of exposure directly impacts on new people taking up sport. It is clear that when golf appears on television about the time of the Open Championship it creates an influx of new players to municipal courses and golf clubs and par 3 courses. I understand Wimbledon has a similar effect on tennis. The loss of the Ryder Cup from free to air had a damaging effect.

Question 2:

Yes. I think important events of state; trooping the colour, state opening of Parliament and the Remembrance Day coverage are examples of what should remain free to air. These are "fabric of society" events; not necessarily of commercial benefit, but if lost would amount to a changing of what represents Britain. I do not however think this should be reserved for traditional events alone.

Question 3:

Yes. This criterion remains suitable (although I think its interpretation has been found wanting). The Ryder Cup meets both the above criterion.

Question 4:

That is of unique importance to the country or in an international context, which does not necessarily have to appeal to the majority.

Question 5:

No, I do not think this is entirely appropriate. Some critical events may not attract a large audience, but be of significant importance.

Question 6:

I would like to see in sporting terms consideration of the impact that a sport would suffer if a particular live to air agreement was lost. An example could be Test Match Cricket (compare 2005 Ashes viewing figures with 2009 later this year). A generation of inspired cricketers tried the sport in the light of the Ashes 2005. How many will see the matches in 2009?

Question 7:

Yes

Question 8:

Some sports can be represented well by highlights, whether the result is known or not. But other sports need to have live free to air if the main tension of the sport is not to be lost. This need to be considered by Ofcom.

Question 9:

1. The Open Championship should remain a Group B sport. It would be a shame to lose the Open to free to air, but the length of play does mean highlights can be effective except for on the final day.
2. The Ryder Cup should become a Group A sport. It is high intensity edge of the seat golf; the best advert for the game. As a biannual event it is not an onerous imposition. Viewing figures on Sky are woeful and golf loses a vital audience.

Question 10:

The entire Ryder Cup should be shown. It lasts 3 days only once every 2 years. When played in the US there are time issues to consider.

Question 11:

1. Important and traditional events of state; Remembrance Day, Trooping of the Colour, State Opening of Parliament.

2. Arts programmes; the Proms.

Question 12:

The impact of losing free to air broadcasting for golf (and other sports) is the equivalent of losing the best marketing platform for a sport. It is not in the interest of sport or health for this to happen. Free to air TV is the lifeblood of sport. Removing the Ryder Cup to satellite severely damaged golf's profile and ability to connect with young people as it is the modern game that attracts new players. That decision caused more damage to golf than the current recession is doing.