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## “DFL for Equity”: DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga and Athletia establish joint venture to monitor international piracy

The DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga has agreed a cooperation with Athletia as part of the “DFL for Equity” investment strategy. The German company based in Cologne was founded in 2013. Athletia supports around 80 international clubs, leagues and associations with its services and products – particularly in the areas of content, branding, analysis and rights protection. Since 2015, the market leader has also been working for the DFL in the field of social media protection and content compliance, handling cases in which protected content has been distributed on social media without authorisation. The company is on a growth course and is establishing the joint venture “ryghts” together with the DFL in order to add web streaming and IPTV to its rights protection business. The DFL will hold a share in the company in the lower double-digit percentage range and thereby expand its own business model.

“Holding shares in a company that aims to better protect media rights is a compelling update of our strategy. We want to cover large parts of the media value chain around professional football and also develop services for other sports leagues from that,” said DFL CEO Christian Seifert: “Protection from the illegal distribution of valuable content is a crucial factor in the economic success of a sports organisation and its media partners. For that reason, ryghts has enormous potential for the future.”

“For us, ryghts is the logical expansion of Athletia in two respects. Firstly, the new product fits perfectly into our portfolio of individual services based on proprietary technology; secondly, we are delighted to take our long-standing cooperation with the DFL to a new level and to now develop this topic that is essential for the industry together,” said Athletia Managing Director Lukas Klumpe.

From now on, ryghts will carry out the monitoring of all international piracy surrounding the broadcast of Bundesliga matches. The DFL is therefore entrusting proceedings against piracy violations in the areas of social media, web and IPTV to a single service provider for the first time. As part of the cooperation, ryghts will also profit from intangible assets such as the joint market presence with the DFL, the existing expertise of the DFL Group in the specialist area and the corresponding cooperation in relation to innovations in the area of anti-piracy.

“Investments in legal tech companies are a global issue for the future. We see this potential in sport, too. As a result of digitalisation, completely new possibilities are opening up not only for sports broadcasts, but also for illegal business models. Monitoring these and giving sports rights holders – also online – control over their value creation is the objective of ryghts. In this context, we take a positive view of the demand for our product and believe in international growth,” said Britta Sölter, Managing Director at Athletia and ryghts with a focus on internationalisation.

The joint venture is the second investment as part of the “DFL for Equity” program that was launched last October. The basic idea behind it is to enter into partnerships with start-ups and medium-sized companies. The DFL acquires shareholdings in these companies by contributing tangible and intangible values that help them to enjoy economic success.

The first partnership, agreed in October 2018, was with the Israeli start-up Track160, which is developing a system based on artificial intelligence and deep learning that will capture the motions of the players and the trajectory of the ball in 3D. The system of Track160 can be used in future-oriented areas such as match analysis, coaching, sports medicine, media offerings and gaming.

Since 2006, the DFL has been working on serving the media value chain related to German professional football itself – from producing the base signal and creating precisely tailored content for media partners through to recording and preparing match data and marketing the broadcasting rights. This gives the DFL a unique selling point in world football.

[Click here to read the news article on dfl.de/en.](#)

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