

NEWS

Price rise as broadcast giants table joint bid for SPL rights

Sky denies pubs Setanta refund

By Gerald

Not to be refunded as a result of the collapse of Setanta, into administration, trade unionists are pushing for a refund to Setanta, rights to live the US PGA golf, by buying a rough Sky. The plug being a Sky is refused. The stance because all the shown on available on Sky's pack: PGA Tour on - meaning technically not Premier will be made the Sky Ultimate Setanta contract, so customised live Premier without any British European: the US PGA so included in



Licensees could yet be faced with higher bills for Old Firm games next season.

the package," a spokeswoman told SLTN. Yet Sandy Innes, licensee at the Corner Bar in Lochwinnoch, said he was "fobbed off" with a different explanation when he contacted the broadcaster. "I phoned Sky and asked for money off in light of the Setanta situation but was told I had to read the small print in my contract," he told SLTN. "Apparently it says Sky reserves the right to cancel a programme at any time and so were not liable. They've got

every angle sewn up. "I've now cancelled my direct debit to Sky - that'll get their interest I'm sure." And with the new football season just five weeks away, operators are also faced with another concern - increased subscription costs. ESPN has already snapped up Setanta's share of English Premier League matches and it looks likely the American broadcaster will team up with Sky to force the SPL into accepting a cut-price bail-out deal too. Reports say the two would split

the live games under a straight five-year contract running until the summer of 2014. But it is still unclear whether Sky will increase subscription fees if this new partnership comes to fruition. "The fact the licensed trade has to buy a whole package from Sky, while domestic viewers can pick and choose their channels, is a disgrace," Sandy Innes said. "No doubt we'll have to foot the bill for these new deals too. The whole thing needs to be investigated by a higher authority." A Sky spokeswoman refused to rule out a price increase: "While there's no immediate impact on prices, we'll take all relevant factors into account as part of our review of prices." Innes said he is now looking forward to the resolution of the Karen Murphy test case, currently with the European Court of Justice. She is contesting a guilty verdict for using foreign satellite equipment to broadcast Premier League football in her Portsmouth pub. "I hope the grey area that is foreign broadcasting is sorted out soon," Innes said.

Stewards pass checks

RECENT checks at venues in St Andrews and Paisley found the majority of security staff working within licensing regulations, the SIA has revealed. Checks on door supervisors in the Fife town found seven stewards with valid licences. Fife Police charged one unlicensed individual for working without a licence under the Private Security Industry Act 2001. In Paisley, SIA investigators and officers from Strathclyde Police visited 11 sites, checking 19 door supervisors: all held valid SIA licences, it was found.

New gin from Inver House

THE firm behind Inver House distillers is set to launch a new Scottish gin said to have been inspired by ancient Celtic traditions. Caorunn - Gaelic for the Rowan berry - is a small batch distilled Scottish gin infused with "five Celtic botanicals". It's made in Speyside at the Balmenach Distillery. Influenced by the Scottish Art Nouveau movement, the five-sided base of the handcrafted Caorunn bottle, and the asterisk symbol, are said to represent the five Celtic botanicals used.

Beer tie inquiry too late?

Number of lessees' inquiry into has come too business. weeks, trade been contacted claiming they process of being imminent union claims high commits g beer excludors - is a the financial many lessees. r, MPs on the terprise Comed for the tied to the com- es. been reported y mediation l by the Ass- sed Multiple



Unite is calling for urgent action to reform the tie to stop more pubs from closing.

Retailers (ALMR) down south, has prompted a re-think by BEC MPs, who now want the government to wait until at least October before responding.

But Unite reckons action is needed now and plans to meet the newly-appointed minister for further education, skills, apprenticeships and consumer af-

airs, Kevin Brennan, to discuss the deepening crisis. "This is not a new problem," a Unite source told SLTN. "These people have been in desperate trouble for a long time and they haven't got anywhere so far. Kevin is new in his position and we aim to build a new relationship with him. "We want a reform of the beer tie and we want him to help us achieve it." Unite officer Jennie Formby added: "Our members cannot afford to wait long for a solution. We are fully committed to the mediation process and to working with all stakeholders in the industry to find a way forward. But our members are desperate. As our latest evidence shows, for far too many it is already too late to save their pubs and their livelihoods."

Student Laura named a hero

A TEAM leader at a Cumbernauld pub has been branded a hero. Laura McIver, front-of-house team leader at the Mitchells & Butlers-owned Red Deer pub, was named VQ Hero - Young Learner of the Year 2009 for Scotland. The awards formed part of last month's VQ Day - a UK-wide celebration of vocational achievement. Food and Drink Service student Laura was selected by the judges for completing the Level Two qualification in just eight months, and combining her studies and pub work with caring for her sick mother.