

## Press Release

Paris – December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### **LALIGA Studios, Blend Studios & MContent Develop "Veleta" Biopic on Spain's First Women's Footballer**

LALIGA Studios, the joint venture between Banijay Iberia and LALIGA, is to partner with Blend Studios, and M Content, to develop a brand-new film dedicated to the fascinating story of Spain's first women's footballer, Anita Carmona Ruiz; nicknamed both Nita and Veleta. A story of survival and courage in a man's world, the fascinating true story dates back to 1920s Malaga and follows the sportswoman as she disguises herself as a man in her quest to pursue her passion... football.

Andalusian producer Blend Studios was founded by director Paco Torres, winner of two RTVA awards, a Corporate Cannes and an Amnesty International award, among others; and M Content, led by showrunner Amaya Muruzábal, is creator of successes, *Reina Roja* and *Hernán* (Amazon Prime Video).

*Veleta* is based on the work of author, journalist and sports collector, Jesús Hurtado, who only uncovered this never-before-told story in 2020, 80 years on from her death, her identity remained a mystery as Malaga's fans had made a pact of silence with one purpose: to enable her to keep playing. Now the trio of producers are bringing this tale to screens.

"Our goal is to make a film that moves, mobilises, and tells the whole world the practically unknown story of Anita Carmona" says Paco Torres, director and co-screenwriter with Amaya Muruzábal.

Amaya Muruzábal highlights that "Andalusian *Veleta* is an exceptionally combative and determined character, a figure rarely seen on the big screen, since she was the world's first women's footballer"

"We always talk about those stories that deserve to be told. The world of sport is full of them. We are here to talk about those issues that we all know need to be discussed. Football still drags issues like racism, sexism, homophobia... and sometimes, fiction is the best vehicle to tell a truth" says Chalo Bonifacino Cooke, CEO of LALIGA Studios.

In recent months, LALIGA Studios has announced two major deals: a project with Little Spain (by artist C. Tangana) to create a fiction series set in the LALIGA universe; and another

agreement with Hollywood production company MTP, led by Mike Tollin, executive producer of the acclaimed documentary series, The Last Dance.

Blend Studios is currently producing animated series, Jesterina, together with Indian production company, Toonzstation, which will be distributed by Digitoonz. Among other developments is short film, Leviticus 20:13, a crime thriller already selected by Seville European Film Festival (SEFF), the Elche Film Festival, Islantilla Flickers, Sombras and BARS (Buenos Aires Rojo Sangre). Paco Torres directs his second feature film after his intriguing debut The Magic of Hope, and after the premiere at the Cork Film Festival of an experimental film shot in 14 hours in Ireland, Saol; plus his multi-award-winning short films The Rattle of Benghazi, Halowin and Setenta.

Since launching in March 2023, M Content has been in advanced development of its first two films with showrunner Amaya Muruzábal serving as executive producer, following the international success of Reina Roja. The label's purpose – a fiction brand emerging from Mandarin Contentidos, creator of Argentine hit, El amor después del amor (Netflix) – is to create Spanish content with high social impact on both sides of the Atlantic.

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### **About Banijay Group**

Banijay Group is a global entertainment leader founded by Stéphane Courbit, a 30-year entrepreneur and entertainment industry pioneer. Our mission is to inspire passion by providing audiences with engaging and innovative entertainment experiences. The Group's activities include content production & distribution (through Banijay Entertainment, the largest international independent producer distributor), live experiences (through Banijay Live, a leading player in live experiences) and online sports betting & gaming (through Banijay Gaming, Europe's fastest-growing online sports betting platform). In 2023, Banijay Group recorded revenue and Adjusted EBITDA of €4,318m and €737m respectively.

Banijay Group is listed on Euronext Amsterdam (ISIN: NL0015000X07, Bloomberg: BNJ NA, Reuters: BNJ.AS).