



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Bob Russo, Prime Network (303) 778-5555

Bob Thomson, TCI (303) 721-5220

Ken Haines, Raycom, Inc. (704) 331-9494

FOR RELEASE: August 10, 1989

**RAYCOM INC. AND PRIME NETWORK ANNOUNCE
JOINT VENTURE TO ACQUIRE AND MARKET
SPORTS PROGRAMMING TO BROADCAST AND CABLE**

Two of the nation's major sports programming companies, Prime Network and Raycom, Inc., are teaming up to acquire and distribute sports events through both broadcast and cable television syndication, the companies announced this week.

The venture will expand the distribution of collegiate sports and other events to an estimated audience of 18 million cable households through regional sports networks, cable systems and satellite dish owners.

Raycom, of Charlotte, N.C., a major force in networking college athletics for the last decade, and Prime Network, a new cable regional sports programming company operating in 11 states and actively expanding, said their joint venture will greatly expand exposure of college athletics throughout the nations.

Ed Frazier, president and chief executive of Prime Sports, and Prime Network and Raycom had been in discussions for several months in an effort to form the new venture.

Frazier said the new venture will jointly bid for telecast rights to selected sports events. In addition, Prime Network will also telecast selected Raycom games on a live basis through its affiliated cable regional sports networks, to other cable systems and to satellite dish owners.

The new venture will also develop new cable programming based upon the telecast rights now owned by Raycom. Officials believe this will benefit college conferences both regionally and nationally, and create a considerable amount of new cable programming.

"The new venture is great news for sports fans," said Rick Ray, Raycom's co-founder. "It gives them an even greater opportunity to watch a number of major sports events on cable without diminishing broadcast carriage of events traditionally available in the local viewing area."

According to Ray, the venture does not interfere with Raycom's broadcast syndication rights, which have been the hallmark of its success, as well as its agreements with the national broadcast networks and ESPN.

"Raycom productions will always remain on broadcast television," said Ray. "The importance of the joint venture is that now a significant number of cable viewers and satellite dish owners will also have access to these telecasts."

(more)

Prime Network, owned by Bill Daniels and Tele-Communications Inc., operates four regionals including Home Sports Entertainment (Southwest), The Sunshine Network (Florida), Prime Sports Network (Rocky Mountains), and Prime Sports Network-Midwest (launching this fall). Additionally, Daniels is the majority owner of the Prime Ticket Network (West), the nation's largest regional sports network.

Frazier said "the Prime family of networks" is the nation's largest regional sports programming group.

According to Frazier, Prime Network is also affiliated through programming exchange agreements with MSG Network (New York), Home Team Sports (Washington), PASS (Michigan), New England Sports Network (New England), KBL (Pittsburg), Pacific Sports Network (San Francisco) and Northwest Cable Sports (Northwest).

Frazier said the Raycom programming will also be distributed to cable operators in areas of the country not served by regional sports networks and to satellite dish owners through Prime Network's Satellite Sports Network, based in Arlington, Texas.

"We bring a lot to the party," added Frazier. "We have considerable experience in sports production and cable operations. We'll focus on maximizing the distribution of the Raycom events through the cable television and TVRO industries."

Raycom will televise more than 400 events in the next year, with network packages for the Big Eight, Big Ten, Metro, SWC, Pac-10 and, in association with Jefferson-Pilot Teleproductions, the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Raycom is also a powerful force in college football, producing, marketing and distributing the Southwest Conference regionally, and the Kickoff Classic to more than 90 percent of the nation. Its Liberty Bowl telecast has been the highest-rated non-network bowl game for the fourth year running.

"We think cable subscribers want this kind of high-quality programming," Frazier said. "Raycom's coverage of the various college conferences matches up beautifully with our regional sports networks. We'll show cable viewers the teams from their part of the country. That will dramatically enlarge both viewership and exposure for the leagues."

While the new venture will initially focus on obtaining rights to college events, a spokesman said there are no limits when it comes to acquiring new programming. "We're interested in sports, all kinds of high-quality sports," he said.

Raycom said its long-standing relationships with individual broadcast stations will not be effected by the agreement.

"This is an instance where two major programming distributors are expanding the exposure for various events through regional and national syndication, both on broadcast television and cable," Ray said.

