

ACC Season Ticket Debuts on ESPN

Never hesitant about adopting innovative procedures, the Atlantic Coast Conference takes a bold step into the uncharted world of pay television in the 1983-84 basketball season.

Between 20 to 25 games involving conference schools will be offered on a pay-per-view basis. The special package becomes an adjunct to the 38-game network that made the ACC area such a hotbed of fan interest down through the years. Those 38 games, including the ACC tournament, will be sent over the airways by a 27-station network located mainly in the Maryland to Georgia area.

Partners in the new venture with the Atlantic Coast Conference are Raycom Sports Network/Jefferson Pilot Productions and ESPN, The Total Sports Network.

"We look upon the venture as an extension of the ticket box office," Raycom President Rick Ray explained after announcing the new package of games early in September.

In New York, ESPN Senior Vice-President Roger Werner said that his organization was pleased to be a part of the new package.

"We worked closely with the con-

ference and Raycom/Jefferson last year and were happy with the results," he said. "We were pleased with the quality of games, the high degree of interest by the fans in the area and by the quality of the production.

"The joint venture materialized because we all were searching for new ways to bring more games into the fans' living rooms in the ACC market area where the interest is the highest," Werner added.

Designated the "Season Ticket Network," the package of games will be offered through cable outlets throughout the Atlantic Coast Conference area.

At the time this was written, a firm pricing structure had not been finalized, but individual games are expected to be offered for \$2.50 to \$3.00 a game as a package purchase.

The package, which must be purchased by viewers on a season basis, opens on November 26 with a pair of games. Vanderbilt plays at Duke at 7 p.m. while Missouri tests North Carolina at 9 p.m.

There are all kinds of goodies to entice the fans: NCAA national champion North Carolina State makes seven appearances on the pay television schedule of games, as

does North Carolina, already ranked as high as second in a pre-season basketball poll.

Another significant offering will be an ACC clash between the two long-time rivals. The Wolfpack's visit to Chapel Hill February 18, a Saturday, will be part of the package. It is scheduled for a 7 p.m. starting time. Other important matchups include the N.C. State-Virginia game January 11 at Charlottesville and North Carolina's encounter with Maryland at College Park on January 12.

All of the pay television games except the Maryland-Clemson matchup will be offered in the prime time segment at night. The Clemson-Maryland game begins at 1:30 p.m.

Ray viewed the introduction of pay television in the ACC area as a logical step. "Almost every conference game will be televised in one form or another," he explained. The Atlantic Coast Conference becomes the first in college basketball to offer its games on pay television.

Television exposure is the name of the game these days in college basketball. Exposure translates into big bucks. The three-year contract between the ACC and Raycom/Jef-

continued

erson reportedly was an 18-million-dollar deal; \$5 million for the first year, \$6 million for the second season and moving up to \$7 million for the final season.

Ray admits he had pay television in mind when his young company combined efforts with Jefferson Pilot Productions to win the bidding rights to ACC basketball.

"We've been working on it for two and a half years," Ray explained. Ray and his wife, Dee, got their start in television by taking a gamble that games not part of the regular ACC package could produce revenue. That was back during the 1979-80 season when they made a deal with North Carolina.

"We estimate that up to 140,000 homes will be willing to pay to see more ACC basketball above and beyond the regular ACC package of games," Rick points out in explaining what the potential demand for the new venture could be.

The Rays and their vice-president of network production, Ken Hains, estimate that there are 10 million TV homes in the ACC's compact area between Washington and Atlanta. Figures show that 2.7 million of those homes are connected to cable systems now, and the numbers are growing daily.

Raycom's high hopes for the acceptance factor of additional games in a pay TV package also is affirmed by a comprehensive survey done by a marketing company in Boston.

In interviews with 3,500 viewers, the survey showed that three of four respondents would pay a nominal fee to watch games. The same figure emerged in a similar survey among 100 cable companies.

Raycom took a close look at the package put together by the Seattle Supersonic organization, the most successful of pay television ventures. "They offered all their games to the pay TV market and did not include any other events," Rick explained. "We feel that the ACC market fits that same kind of pattern," he added.

TOP 50 HIGH SCHOOL PLAYERS

Player	Hgt.	Class	School
THE TOP FIVE			
Chris Washburn	6-11	Sr	Fork Union (VA) Prep
Danny Manning	6-10	Sr	Greensboro (NC) Page
John Williams	6-8	Sr	Los Angeles Crenshaw
Delray Brooks	6-3	Sr	Michigan City (IN) Rogers/r
Tony Kimbro	6-7	Jr	Louisville Manual
THE SECOND FIVE			
Danny Ferry	6-11	Jr	Hyattsville (MD) De Matha
Chris Morris	6-8	Sr	Atlanta Douglass
Cedric Henderson . . .	6-10	Sr	Marietta, GA
Chris Sandle	6-6	Sr	Long Beach (CA) Poly
Grady Mateen	7-0	Sr	Akron (OH) Central Hower
Skip Barry	6-7	Sr	Nashua (NH) Guertin
Jarvis Basnight	6-8	Sr	L.A. Verbum Dei
Ricky Blanton	6-5	Sr	Miami Killian
Charles Bledsoe	6-6	Sr	St. Louis Beaumont
Dwight Boyd	6-4	Sr	Memphis Kirby
Delray Brooks	6-3	Sr	Michigan City (IN) Rogers/r
Herb Brooks	6-2	Sr	Mullens, WVA
Greg Butler	6-10	Sr	Rolling Hills, CA
Arthur Caldwell	6-4	Sr	Columbia, SC
Eddie Collins	6-9	Sr	Orrville (AL) Keith
Duane Ferrell	6-5	Sr	Baltimore Calvert Hall
Danny Ferry	6-11	Jr	Hyattsville (MD) De Matha
Darren Guest	6-9	Sr	Harvey (IL) Thornton
Lowell Hamilton	6-7	Jr	Chicago Providence
Greg Harvey	6-0	Jr	Cambria Heights (NY) Jackson
Cedric Henderson . . .	6-10	Sr	Marietta, GA
Richard Ivy	6-5	Sr	Muncie (IN) North
Craig Jackson	6-9	Sr	Denver Monbello
Tyrone Jones	6-7	Sr	DC Dunbar
Jerry Johnson	6-5	Jr	Hillcrest, IL
Tony Kimbro	6-7	Jr	Louisville Manual
Billy King	6-7	Sr	Sterling (VA) Parkview
Walter Lancaster	6-4	Sr	D.C. St. Alban's
Robert Lock	6-10	Sr	Reedley, CA
Al Lorenzen	6-7	Sr	Cedar Rapids (IA) Kennedy
Richie Madison	6-7	Sr	Memphis Northside
Danny Manning	6-10	Sr	Greensboro (NC) Page
Tim Martin	6-11	Sr	Ridgeway (VA) Mason
Grady Mateen	7-0	Sr	Akron (OH) Central Hower
Perry McDonald	6-5	Sr	New Orleans Carver
Eugene Miles	6-9	Sr	Dorester, MA
Steve Miller	6-5	Sr	Lexington (KY) Clay
Richard Morgan	6-2	Jr	Salem, VA
Chris Morris	6-8	Sr	Atlanta Douglass
Shannon Nero	6-4	Sr	Houston Worthing
Rick Osburn	6-4	Sr	Parkrose, OR
Kenny Sanders	6-4	Sr	D.C. McKinley
Chris Sandle	6-6	Sr	Long Beach (CA) Poly
Charles Smith	6-9	Sr	Bridgeport (CN) Harding
Henry Smith	6-5	Sr	Philadelphia West
Ranzino Smith	6-0	Sr	Chapel Hill, NC
Steve Smith	6-5	Sr	Kettering (OH) Alter
Jon Sewell	6-10	So	Kokomo (IN) Northwestern
Kevin Strickland	6-5	Sr	Mt. Airy (NC) North Surry
Johnnie Thompson . . .	6-7	Sr	Lawrenceville (VA) Brunswick
Carlton Valentine . . .	6-6	Sr	Hyattsville (MD) De Matha
Kevin Walls	6-1	Sr	Camden, NJ
Chris Washburn	6-11	Sr	Fork Union (VA) Prep
John Williams	6-8	Sr	Los Angeles Crenshaw
Bobby Worthington . .	6-6	Sr	Zion (IL) Benton/r

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