

COLLEGES/NBA

ACC TV pact includes more sports, programs

By LEONARD LAYE
OF THE NEWS STAFF

Eight events in sports other than basketball, a 25-week series of news-feature programs and two specials will be a part of an expanded Atlantic Coast Conference television package for the 1982-83 school year.

The main attraction of the package will, as in past years, be the telecast of a 38-game basketball schedule, 31 games during the regular season and seven during the ACC's post-season championship tournament.

For at least the next three years, however, the conference will get television exposure in other, traditionally non-revenue producing sports.

The package, thought to be the first of its kind for any conference, is being put together as a joint venture of Raycom, Inc. and Jefferson Productions, both of Charlotte.

"We wanted to be more than just a basketball supplier," said Rick Ray, president of Raycom. "We believe it is in the long-term interest of the conference to expand."

"There's a limit to the number of basketball games you can put on and the amount of revenue that can produce."

Here's a capsule look at the features of the package which will supplement the basketball telecasts:

• The eight, non-basketball events to be telecast will be picked by ACC officials. Sports most likely to be involved are baseball, soccer, women's basketball, lacrosse and swimming.

Terms of the agreement call for telecasts of eight events, not necessarily eight different sports.

Live telecasts of football games are not part of the package, since the NCAA controls rights to all Division I football games. But Ray said tape-delay football telecasts are possible in

the future.

• Features, news and scores of all ACC events will be a part of the format for Sports Center, a 30-minute program to be telecast on Saturdays for a 25-week period.

"This program will have two functions, information and magazine-style features," said Dee Ray, Rick's wife, who is executive vice-president of Raycom.

"Sports Center will air prior to the Saturday games during basketball season. We will also have this on at pre-game, halftime and post-game."

"This will be produced completely separate from the basketball telecast, at Jefferson Productions, and will have its own director and announcer."

Sports Center will continue after basketball season, providing news and features on spring sports and recruiting for basketball and football. • Raycom/Jefferson now plans two

specials, both related to basketball.

The first will be a preseason show, taking a look at each of the ACC's eight teams.

The second will be a one-hour ACC tournament special, which will be televised before the start of the championship game in March. Included will be highlights of the regular season and the first two rounds of the tournament.

The scope of the package and the amount of the rights fee for three years — not announced but reported by ACC sources to be \$18 million, with \$5 million for the first year, \$6 million for the second and \$7 for the third — show just how much the conference has gone "big business" in the past two years.

C.D. Chesley, who initiated ACC basketball telecasts and produced them for 24 years, paid \$600,000 for the rights in the 1980-81 season and

had a contract for the 1981-82 rights for \$1 million.

The conference, however, purchased the last year of Chesley's contract, put the rights up for bid and awarded the 1981-82 package to MetroSports of Rockville, Md., for a reported \$3.75 million.

Raycom and Jefferson Productions were among the companies bidding for the rights last year, but they bid separately. This year, they got together for the ACC package only.

"We couldn't have found a better partner," said Dee Ray.

Jefferson is a major company with longtime experience in all forms of production. Raycom, started in 1979 by the Rays, is not as experienced but has produced a variety of college basketball radio broadcasts and telecasts for the past three years.

Their marriage has produced plans

Continued on Pg. 16C, Col. 1

Continued from Page 4C

for a package that some university officials believe could become a model for future college telecasts.

"I don't think there are any other conferences developing other sports like this," Rick Ray said.

"Our goal is to become a year-round network. So we had been looking at developing other programming."

The Rays are now in the process of selling the programming to sponsors and lining up commercial stations to telecast all or part of the package. One of the major cable companies, most likely ESPN, is also expected to take the ACC telecasts.

"We're placing this on a market-by-market basis," said Rick Ray. "Some markets will take the whole package while others may take just part of it."

ACC games in Charlotte have traditionally been shown by WBTV, Channel 3, though other stations picked up a few of the MetroSports games last season when WBTV had difficulty clearing network programming in some prime time positions.

That may not be a problem next season, since week-night games will be scattered on a Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday schedule to avoid repeatedly bumping network shows on the same night through an entire season. Most week-night games were televised on Wednesdays in past seasons.

Prime time games are expected to begin at 9 p.m. next season, one hour later than the starting time set by MetroSports last year.

Saturday TV games, most of them doubleheaders, will remain in an afternoon time slot.

ACC TV
(CONTINUED) -- THE ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE HAS REPORTEDLY
SIGNED A MULTI-YEAR AGREEMENT WITH THE CHARLOTTE-BASED RAYCOM
NETWORK FOR ITS BASKETBALL TELEVISION RIGHTS. THE THREE-YEAR
AGREEMENT IS REPORTEDLY ON AN ESCALATING SCALE BETWEEN FOUR (M)
MILLION AND SIX (M) MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR. THE CONTRACT ENDS THE
-YEAR REIGN OF METROSPORTS, WHICH TELEVISED THIS SEASON'S GAMES.
-C COMMISSIONER BOB JAMES HAS NOT CONFIRMED REPORTS OF THE
AGREEMENT. HE SAYS IT MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITIES IN
TIMING AND RATIFIED BY THE INSTITUTIONS BEFORE THE A-C-C CAN DISCUSS
PUBLICLY.
BA-03-05-82 1242EST

MORE
↓

ACC's TV Package Worth \$18 Million

With N.C. State leading Maryland 13-11 halfway to a 40-28 win over the Terrapins in Friday's first round of the Atlantic Coast Conference basketball tournament, a media wag took note of a cascade of boos from the sell-out crowd and cracked: "Poor Rick Ray; I feel sorry for that guy."

The wag was referring to the chief executive officer of Raycom Sports Network, whose \$18 million bid for the regional TV rights to ACC basketball for the next three years was accepted Thursday by the conference's athletic directors.

Judging from the dubious entertainment value of the State-Maryland game, neither the crowd nor the wag evidently felt Ray had made a wise investment.

As reported earlier by the Daily News, the bid was estimated at \$15

million. It was learned Friday that that figure fell below the actual size of the bid entered jointly by the Charlotte-based Raycom network and Jefferson Standard Broadcasting, a subsidiary of the Jefferson Pilot Co. and the owner of WBTV in Charlotte. The actual bid reached \$18 million on an escalating scale from \$5 million for the 1982-83 rights to \$6 million in 1983-84 and \$7 million in 1984-85.

MetroSports, the Washington-based production company which packaged the 1981-82 ACC network, lost out to Raycom despite a bid of \$15 million.

In spite of Friday's disclosure, ACC Commissioner Bob James and other conference officials would not confirm their acceptance of the agreement, pending its submission to the hierarchy of the eight-member institutions for their approval.