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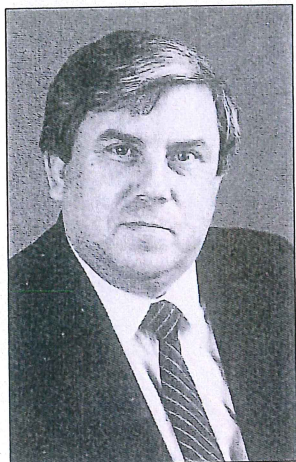
Reaching 113,000 readers every week

59th Year 1990

Raycom Sports and Entertainment has also "based its success on regionalization and home team appeal," said Ken Haines, executive vice president of the Charlotte-based syndicator which can offer advertisers 75% of the nation through a network of five regional broadcast networks.

Raycom is "in a very secure position" in college basketball, said Haines, as it enters the first year of new five-year agreements with the Southwestern and Metro conferences; the second of six years with the Big Ten; the second of five years with the ACC and the first of four years with the Big Eight.

All told, 155 stations, 85 of them network affiliates, carry Raycom productions of conference games in their regions. The "home team appeal" in the 1989-90 season generated 10.1 average ratings for the Big Eight; 9.8 for the Metro; 9.1 for the ACC; 6.4 for the Big Ten; 4.9 for the SWC and 3.2 for the Pac-10 (where ESPN and Prime Ticket hold sway over broadcast syndication with second pick after ABC's first pick).



ESPN's Matthews



Raycom's Haines

Providing some local avails to affiliates, Raycom's advance sales of national advertising are "very, very good" again this year, said Haines, who noted that, unlike the fourth quarter—which spreads ad dollars out among professional football and baseball and college football—the first quarter is "very secure" for college basketball, since it faces little competition for sports ad budgets.

College schedules: Prime time venues

Whether national or local, broadcast or cable TV, only a handful of notable changes appear between last season and this season's college basketball schedules.

On the national network level, NBC will drastically reduce its schedule from 20 games last season to only four—three Notre Dame and one Big Eight—this season, attributable mainly to NBC's acquisition of the NBA, which it will air on both weekend days. ESPN, with the loss of early NCAA Tournament rounds, will drop from 225 games to around 208. And on the local level, WWOR-TV New York has wrested rights to two regular season Big East games and to the conference quarterfinals from Madison Square Garden Network.

Although CBS paid big for the NCAA tournament, its signature will remain, and even expand a bit, on the regular season as well, thanks to a new \$20 million four-year rights extension with the Big East and a one-year \$1.9 million deal with the ACC. Big East appearances on CBS will increase from 22 to 24 and, combined with 11 ACC appearances and then the NCAA tournament, will fill gaps left by the NBA on Sundays, January through March. The ACC had appeared on

NBC through last season.

Otherwise, the largest TV players will virtually stand pat. ABC's 25-30-game schedule will continue to feature the Big Ten and Pacific-10. (Next year, however, the Big Ten will jump to CBS, which last summer agreed to pay approximately \$4.7 million per season for 20 annual team appearances, 1991-1994-95.)

Although the network schedules will be concentrated in weekend dayparts, national cable and regional syndication and cable will focus on weeknight prime time.

ESPN last season added a third night to a strategy predicated on placing each conference in a consistent weeknight prime time window. Beginning in the first quarter of 1991, "Big Monday" will again comprise 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. ET doubleheaders featuring Big East, then Big Ten, games (and, sometimes, tripleheaders, with Big West teams starting at 11:30 p.m. ET, 8:30 p.m. PT). "Big Tuesday," created last season, is another doubleheader night showcasing SEC and Big Eight teams. The Big East is also featured on Wednesday nights, along with the ACC. Thursday nights will feature teams from a variety of conferences. In the fourth quarter of 1990, ESPN will, for the second consecutive year, present the Big East-ACC Challenge, a single-elimination tournament between the two conferences telecast as four doubleheaders, Monday through Thursday, the first week of December.

Raycom will again provide the second largest number of games—about 170—through its regional syndication rights to five of the top seven conferences, with most games also appearing in weeknight prime time.

Through a long-term agreement with ESPN, Raycom also sells some of its inventory to national cable. And, through expanding co-ventures with Prime Network, a national consortium of co-owned or affiliated regional cable sports channels, Raycom and Prime Productions also have access to approximately 20 million cable homes.

In most cases, a Prime affiliate unable to gain rights to a conference near home, will, for example, in the Northeast carry Raycom games from the Southeast, Midwest and West Coast—and vice versa—an arrangement, said Haines, that "protects our over-the-air broadcasters" from cable competition in their markets, while also extending conference reach and filling out regional cable schedules. In other cases, Prime takes conference games not taken by Raycom and delivers them to the home audience in the conference's region.

National cable networks other than ESPN and Prime Network planning to cablecast anywhere from 25 to 80 games this season include SportsChannel America (featuring Notre Dame, UNLV and Atlantic 10 games); USA Network (featuring the Diet Pepsi Tournament of Champions in early December); Black Entertainment Television (featuring black college conferences), and superstation WGN-TV Chicago (with DePaul and Illinois University).

Although in a few isolated cases regional cable has wrested second pick positions from national cable and regional broadcast—Prime Ticket and ESPN share second pick of Pac-10 games, and Turner Broadcasting's new SportSouth retains rights to a dozen Southeast Conference games—most regional cable channels have gained rights to some last pick games from individual schools, rather than making deals with the conferences.

Minneapolis-based Midwest Sports Channel (MSC), for example, holds no rights to the Big Ten, but does hold rights to games played by a Big Ten team, the University of Minnesota—after ABC, ESPN and Raycom have taken their Big Ten picks. MSC also cablecasts Big Ten, Pac-10 and other conference games provided through Prime Network.

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