

Emmy Awards for Sports

The Washington Post

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1988

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DAILY VARIETY DAILY

Hollywood, California 90028, Thursday, Feb. 4, 1988

Newspaper

The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS) and independent producers Raycom Inc.—which specializes in regional sports hookups—yesterday announced that the ninth annual Sports Emmy Awards will be telecast on an ad hoc national network the night of Tuesday, April 19 . . .

The two-hour live event—the first telecast of the sports Emmys ever—will be aired on Channel 20 here, starting at 8 p.m. . . .

The awards will be presented at ceremonies in the Sheraton Centre in New York. . . .

Ken Haines, executive vice president of Raycom, said yesterday, "The networks have told us they will cooperate totally" in the awards . . .

Network cooperation would be something of a switch. Over the years, the sports Emmys have been dogged by controversy, with various of the three big networks, year-to-year, refusing to give official backing to the awards, because they were still mad about something that had happened at the awards the previous year . . .

(Who can forget the year the ABC and CBS sports divisions were enraged when NBC Sports won the top technical award for using a microphone in a golf match to enable viewers to hear the ball drop into the cup?) . . .

The major complaint is usually over the method used by NATAS to come up with the finalists. A sorehead network attacks either the makeup of the annual jury picking the winners, the total number of awards, or the guidelines the jury uses to pick winners . . .

And typically, the biggest annual complaint is over selection of the big cheese—the top sportscaster of the year. It goes without saying that the losing networks always believe somebody in their shop deserved the prize ever so much more . . .

But yesterday, Haines said details on jury selection, etc., are still to be worked out by NATAS and the networks, but he doesn't expect any trouble this time around . . .

He predicted that 85 percent of the country will be covered by the telecast and said that besides WDCA in Washington, stations in Miami, Houston, Dallas and New Orleans yesterday signed up for the show within hours of the announcement . . .

RAYCOM WINS TV RIGHTS TO SPORTS EMMYS

By MORRIE GELMAN

Raycom Inc., the nation's largest producer of indie sports programming, has acquired the rights from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences to televise the ninth annual Sports Emmy Awards as a primetime, two-hour, syndication tv special on April 19.

Raycom has an option to televise at least four more Sports Emmy Awards through 1993. This year's event will mark the first time the Sports Emmys have been telecast; in the past, the awards presentation has been held as part of a nontelevised dinner event in New York City. (Last year's Sports Emmys were held in September as part of a dinner at New York's Sheraton Centre Hotel.)

Telecast this year will be carried live from 8-10 p.m. (EST) and will be fed to the Coast for viewing at 8 p.m. (PST).

According to Peter Lenz, executive producer and operational head of Raycom Entertainment, the Sports Emmy telecast will be marketed on a barter basis to stations across the country, with a 50-50 split of commercial availabilities between Raycom, which will distribute as well as produce, and the participating stations.

Charlotte, N.C.-based Raycom is confident of reaching more than 80-85% of the nation's television audience. Early indications, though, suggest that because of the late start on the marketing, the station lineup

may be heavy in indies as opposed to network affils.

Lenz says there will be dual hosts, recognizable in name and prestige, but still to be determined. He also says the awards presentation will cover at least 15 categories and each category will be "clip-intensive."

Categories will range from low-profile achievements as best technical team on a remote to the big awards of outstanding sports analyst and sports host/play-by-play. Similar to other Emmy Awards, Sports Emmys are given to programs and individuals for outstanding achievement.

In the 1976 rift splitting NATAS from its Hollywood chapter and bringing about the formation of the Los Angeles-based Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, NATAS, with headquarters in New York, retained control of the Emmy awards for sports as well as for news and local programs and daytime tv.

Since Raycom's sports division produces more than 200 events annually, including live coverage of most of the nation's major college basketball and football conferences, the nominations and balloting process will be strictly under the control of NATAS.

Raycom Entertainment, responsible for the Sports Emmy telecast, was formed less than a year ago with the acquisition and syndication of "Elvis' Graceland," hour special hosted by Priscilla Presley. It has since developed six other projects, all of which will be on the division's menu at the upcoming National Association of Television Program Executives conference in Houston Feb. 25-29.