

SPORTS PAGE

By Gary Nager

COLLEGE HOOPS DIVIDES THE NETS

The 1985-86 network college basketball season is under way and CBS-TV has beaten NBC-TV to the punch, both with its preseason special and its first game. CBS' hour-long preview on November 23 scored an excellent 5.8 national rating in Nielsen. NBC's half-hour preseason special didn't do quite as well, garnering a 3.1, down from a 3.7 last year. And, CBS' attractive first game that saw Michigan beat top-ranked Georgia Tech, got an impressive 5.3 rating.

CBS plans to air 28 regular-season college games, including six doubleheader telecasts, for a total of 22 exposures. Last season, the net had 35 games and 23 exposures, which averaged a 4.7 rating. NBC has 26 telecasts on tap; its 26 regular-season games last season averaged a 4.2 rating. CBS will again have exclusive broadcast rights to NCAA Championship contests, which in 19 exposures last year scored a 9.8 average rating for the net. The NCAA Championship contract reportedly cost CBS a total of \$55 million over the last three years.

In addition to the network college hoop schedule, ESPN, USA

MAJOR COLLEGE BASKETBALL SYNDICATORS

SYNDICATOR/ LOCATION	GAMES
Raycom Sports, Charlotte, N.C.	40 Atlantic Coast Conference 30 Southwest Conference 30 Big-8 Conference 30 Metro Conference 30 Pacific Coast Athletic Association
Lorimar Sports Network, Culver City, California	25 Pacific-10 Conference 23 Big-10 Conference 23 Southeastern Conference
Jefferson Pilot Teleproductions, Charlotte, N.C.	33 Atlantic Coast Conference 7 ACC Championship Tournament
Television Enterprise Network, New York, N.Y.	10 Notre Dame University
Mizlou Television Network, New York, N.Y.	15 Big Apple NIT (preseason) 31 NIT (postseason)

Network, Financial News Network and Chicago-based super station WGN-TV will cablecast college games nationally, but most of these games will be produced by syndication companies and not the nets themselves (see chart above).

ESPN will air a total of 118 regular-season and up to 28 NCAA Championship games (not carried by CBS-TV) this year. USA again will show approximately 30 games this season, FNN's SCORE service kicks off its first college basketball schedule of 16 games in January and WGN's 41-game slate began November 26.

MUCH HOOP-LA OVER 1985-86 NBA SEASON

For 1985-86, there will again be only two national TV outlets for NBA basketball, CBS-TV and SuperStation WTBS. CBS will air 12 regular-season NBA contests this year, one more than it aired in 1984-85, when non-playoff pro basketball on the net averaged a 6.4 rating in Nielsen.

Some insiders say 1985-86 may be CBS' last season of NBA basketball. NBA commissioner David Stern is reportedly seeking a 250 percent increase in rights

fees (\$55 million a season) when the CBS pact expires at the end of this season. Neil Pilson, executive VP of the CBS Broadcast Group, says his net probably can't go that high and some published reports say CBS' top figure is \$42 million a year. ABC-TV, which will no longer air United States Football League games because that league has switched to a fall season to compete directly with the NFL, now has a first-quarter sports deficiency and may seek to pull out the NBA plum. CBS' first telecast this year, a Philadelphia 76ers-New York Knicks match-up on October 26, out-rated the previous year's first telecast, 4.3-3.5.

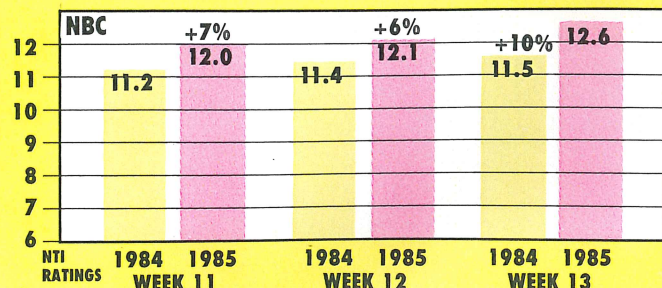
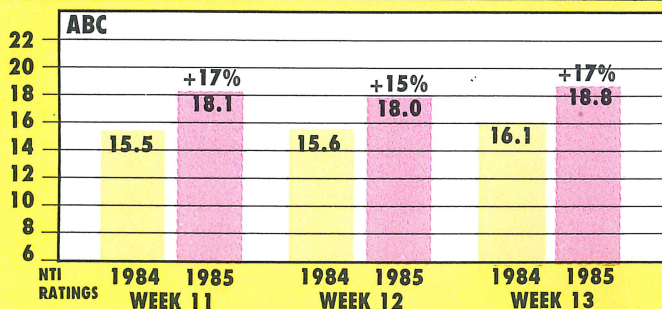
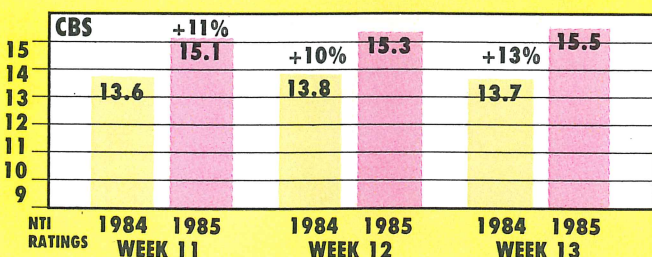
WTBS has also expanded by one its NBA coverage—the SuperStation will cablecast 55 contests this season. The 54 regular-season WTBS games last year averaged a 2.0 rating, and the cable service also carried 21 playoff contests not gobbled up by CBS, which averaged a 2.9 (WTBS will again show all playoff games that CBS chooses not to televise). The service paid about \$20 million for its two-season cable share of the TV rights package.

Chart II on page 28 lists the main NBA TV outlets and the games aired during both the 1985-86 and 1984-85 seasons.

BOX SCORE

Officials of all three major networks had to be enthused about ABC-TV's Miami Dolphins-Chicago Bears Monday Night Football rating, which is now the highest-rated non-playoff professional league sporting event in the history of television. The Dolphins surprising 38-24 victory scored a 29.6 national rating in Nielsen, walloping its nearest competitor, a 1978 *Monday Night* matchup between the Washington Redskins and the Dallas Cowboys which garnered a 26.8 rating.

ABC senior VP of sports Jim Spence says the sensational Dolphin upset of the previously undefeated Bears bodes well for all future network sports sales and NBC Sports president Art Watson echoed those sentiments. Watson received another bit of good news recently: all avails for Super Bowl XX were sold at full value (\$1.1 million per minute) more than a month before the big game. Anheuser-Busch is the only brewery who will be represented at the '86 Bowl and the only automaker that saw fit to buy air time was Japan's Nissan.

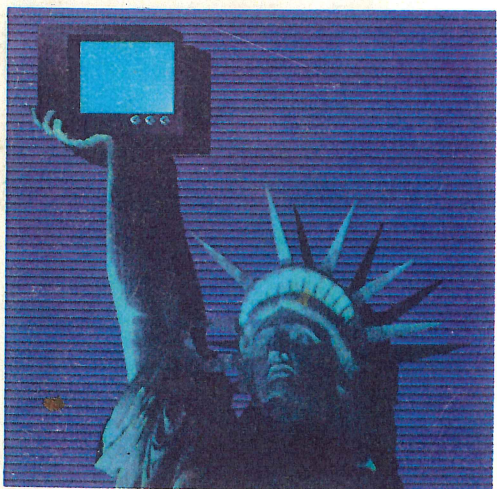


**FOX JOINS THE NEW PROGRAM GROUP
LUCIE SALHANY: PROGRAMMING PARAMOUNT**

VIEW 1/6

THE MAGAZINE OF TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

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Television networking in America is about to undergo a period of tremendous change. In a few years, the business will no longer be defined as it traditionally has been, nor will it be the sole province of three major suppliers. As many as a dozen companies—possibly more—will control tomorrow's network landscape.

Major station groups, both independent and affiliated, will hold enormous sway over the development of future programming power centers. Some are already active in program development. Others are just now testing its waters.

How do the largest and most active groups plan . . .

(continued on p. 63)