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Pigskin Game Goes National : College football: NBC agrees to three-year deal to broadcast the bowl game from Anaheim Stadium.

May 03, 1990 | MIKE DiGIOVANNA | TIMES STAFF WRITER

NEWPORT BEACH — The Orange County Sports Assn. announced Wednesday that it has reached a three-year agreement with NBC to televise the Disneyland Pigskin Classic, a preseason college football bowl game to be held in Anaheim Stadium.

The inaugural Pigskin game, scheduled for Aug. 26 at noon, will match Colorado and Tennessee, teams that were both ranked among the nation's top 10 in final 1989 polls.

Raycom, an independent packager, will pay the OCSA \$550,000 a year for the rights to produce the telecast and then deliver it to NBC, which will air the game nationally. Raycom will retain all commercial rights, but an NBC broadcast team will call the action.

"It adds a lot of credibility to the game, to be sure," said Don Andersen, OCSA executive director.

The OCSA, which will administer the Freedom Bowl football game and the Disneyland/Freedom Bowl Basketball Tournament next winter, also said it plans to expand its athletic endeavors.

Among the events being considered are a McDonald's High School all-star basketball game, a professional or exhibition golf tournament, a Davis Cup tennis match and other college tournaments.

But the OCSA's main focus this month will be securing a date and a major corporate sponsor for the Freedom Bowl. The Pigskin game has a five-year title sponsorship commitment from Disneyland.

OCSA officials had hoped to stage the 1990 Freedom Bowl Dec. 29, but that date conflicts with the NFL, which extended its season a week and has two nationally televised games scheduled on that day.

Andersen said he will meet with Raycom and NBC officials next week to discuss alternatives. One possibility, he said, will be to start the game at 5 p.m. Saturday, thus creating a prime time telecast to the East Coast.

Another possibility is to play the game Dec. 31. The Freedom Bowl could work around the Rams-New Orleans Saints telecast, which is scheduled for 5 p.m. locally.

The OCSA has no intentions of attempting to crack the New Year's Day bowl lineup, which consists of eight games.

"We don't want to get into that," Andersen said.

But Andersen would like to reap some of the financial benefits that accompany most New Year's Day games. For a price, the OCSA will allow a sponsor to attach its name to the event as other bowl games have done. "With a title sponsorship package, we can increase our payouts (to participating teams) and attract better teams," Andersen said.

Freedom Bowl teams will receive \$600,000 in 1990, up from the \$500,000 that Washington and Florida received in 1989. Colorado and Tennessee will each get \$550,000 to play in the Pigskin.

NBC's presence at the Pigskin game and last year's Freedom Bowl has enhanced the national reputation of both games, but Jack Lindquist, vice president of marketing for Disney Attractions, is more concerned about with their local image.

"I'll trade good ratings in New York for tickets sold in Orange County," Lindquist said. "I want to fill that stadium."