

Raycom hopes good fortune continues

As Raycom Sports begins its 1985 Southwest Conference television coverage, the company is out to knock off competing college football games. In the process, it's also taking aim at an unlikely foe: *Wheel of Fortune*.

Of about 400 different syndicated programs that aired around the country last year, the SWC series had the second-highest average audience rating. Yes, the goofy game show was No. 1. So Raycom, which has Miami (Fla.) at Rice Saturday (Channel 39, noon), is out to topple Pat Sajak & Co.

"We finished behind *Wheel of Fortune*, but hey, we beat *Women of Russia*," Raycom's Ken Haines said. "We knew Southwest Conference football was popular and our ratings obviously proved that. We're expecting a good showing again this year."

But the competition will be tougher as Raycom goes up against several CBS games. Last year, with CBS affiliate Channel 11 opting for Raycom's SWC package, the network's telecasts rarely were shown in this area.

The battle starts Saturday as CBS airs its opener, Notre Dame

at Michigan (12:30 p.m.). The telecast marks the debut of former Houston sportscaster Jim Nantz as co-host with Pat Haden of the *College Football Report* wrap-around show. They replace Pat O'Brien.

Nantz, 26, was picked over nearly 100 other applicants. He has given up his job with KSL-TV, the CBS station in Salt Lake City, to work full time for the network.

No blackout this time — The Oilers are on the road Sunday, which means their game against the Redskins will be televised in the Houston area (Channel 2, noon). NBC's top announcing team of Dick Enberg and Merlin Olsen will be on hand, but not because the network has jumped on the Oilers' bandwagon.

"They were assigned the game two weeks ago because of the Redskins, before Houston upset Miami (last Sunday)," NBC spokesman Kevin Monaghan said. "But if the Oilers turn out to be for real, they (Enberg and Olsen) will be working some of their games. That hasn't happened for several years."

Jay
Frank
TV/RADIO



The NFL '85 show preceding the game will include a forum on football injuries. The guests are William Andrews, Billy Sims and Kellen Winslow, all of whom are out with severe knee injuries, and Gale Sayers, whose great career was cut short by knee problems.

The other National Football League telecasts Sunday are Dallas-Detroit (Channel 11, noon) and Atlanta-San Francisco (Channel 11, 3 p.m.). The 49ers are on for the second consecutive week. That once was unusual, but the defending Super Bowl champs have become the new "CBS Team."

A glance at the TV schedule for Houston underscores the 49ers' star status. At least 11 of their 16

regular-season games will be shown here, including five of the first six. They could wind up getting more local air time than the Oilers.

TV down, radio up — More football: Thousands of fans used to participate in "The Great American Switchoff." That is, they turned down the sound on ABC's *Monday Night Football* and Howard Cosell, and instead listened to the excellent CBS Radio version of the game with Jack Buck and Hank Stram.

During the offseason, CBS lost the Monday night radio rights to NBC. But, based on last Monday's Washington-Dallas broadcasts on ABC-TV and NBC Radio (KPRC-AM), the switchoff remains highly recommended. Don Criqui and Bob Trumpy were easier on the ears and more informative than their big-name ABC counterparts.

In addition, the new *NFL Live* postgame talk show with Trumpy is a nice way to cap the day — if you can stay up past midnight. Listeners can call in using a toll-free number (1-800-NFL-LIVE).

Despite the late hour, Trumpy