

CableFAX Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Rainbow Tour: NFL's Goodell New Ambassador to Cable

Given the acrimony between **Comcast** and **NFL Net** over the years, it's impossible not to comment on new BFFs *Brian Roberts* and *Roger Goodell*. Speaking to reporters Tues, NFL commish Goodell said Comcast's long-term deal for the net would probably have been impossible had Roberts not been involved. "He was involved with every major discussion. He took my calls and he called me... It's a relationship that's just beginning, and we think that's a positive." The Comcast CEO also was digging the bromance. "If Roger had not personally taken the reins, it would have taken longer and may not be the happy and proper outcome that we're at today," Roberts said. "I think this really is the beginning of an opportunity for us to start over." Get ready *Jim Dolan*, *Glenn Britt* and *Neil Smit*. You're likely to get your own 'Facebook friend request' from Goodell, who pledged to "engage just like I did with Brian" as he works on securing similar deals with **Cablevision**, **Time Warner Cable** and **Charter**. Nonetheless, he noted that NFL Net now has strong distribution with 4 of the top 5 distributors. "Nothing has changed from our perspective," a Charter spokesperson said following the deal's announcement. "Charter continues to believe that the most productive way to achieve results is to seek a resolution through negotiation. Our priority is always to provide value to our customers through exceptional programming and a quality customer experience." It's unclear what this change in course means after NFL Net head *Steve Bornstein* dug his heels in and penned anti-Comcast columns for much of last month. Goodell said he didn't think anything was personal, and Roberts added that employees from both organizations realized there was a new page once they saw their CEOs making headway. Under the deal, Comcast will move NFL Net from its sports tier to digital classic. A full launch will occur by Aug 1, reaching nearly 2/3 of the company's total digital sub base. Will Comcast subs pay more because of the deal? "We haven't said anything specifically, but I don't think we plan on having a specific charge as such," Roberts said. Comcast also gets access to the NFL's **RedZone Channel** offering peeks of Sun live games, once it launches. Roberts suggested the channel could replace NFL Net on the sports tier. Meanwhile, an administrative law judge dismissed NFL Net's program access complaint at the FCC Tues afternoon. The deal also settles pending litigation in NY. Terms weren't disclosed, but reports have Comcast paying 40-50/sub for 10 years. It puts NFL Net in 10.8mln Comcast homes vs about 2mln on the sports tier, Goodell said.

Carriage: NFL Net will receive some new company on Comcast's digital classic service, as the MSO inked a distribution deal with **ESPNU**. Comcast plans to launch the net in the majority of its footprint in time for college football season, when the net will count more than 46mln subs. The deal allows Comcast to move **ESPN Classic** to its sports tier, said evp, US affil sales and marketing, Disney/ESPN Nets *David Preschlack*. Also, **ESPN360.com** will launch on **Comcast.net** for no additional charge to the MSO's HSD customers. The addition will bring 360's distribution to nearly 41mln homes. Preschlack is particularly pleased about this deal, which he said places the service in the majority of US HSD homes and vindicates the initial decision to include partners in distribution. "We executed on something we set out to do more than 10 years ago," he said. "This deal puts us over the edge." Discussions are ongoing with several other ops.





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At the Portals: ION Media is using the FCC's inquiry into content blocking technologies and parental controls to push for a NOI on "the bottleneck in getting quality children's programming" carried by cable and satellite. Specifically, ION wants carriage of its digital net **Qubo**. ION complains that multichannel video providers don't have the same children's programming requirements as broadcasters, leaving little incentive to work with indie producers and distributors of kids content.

Immersive History: While the modern explorers attempting to re-live the trip to Africa of Henry Stanley—"Dr Livingstone, I presume?"—will have only a compass and maps to guide them, **Comcast, Cox** and **Time Warner Cable** viewers watching them on **History's** "Expedition: Africa" will be far better equipped. Following initial interactive and online deployments (**Cfax**, 12/16/08), History will add to its biggest summer series a slew of VOD and broadband extras, some of which go live Thurs. In addition, the pieces urge viewers to explore even more material on other MSO-provided platforms. While the 8-part series premieres on History May 31 (10pm), subs can see the pilot and original shorts on VOD beginning May 21. Subsequent eps will get to VOD after their linear showing. **Mark Burnett** of "Survivor" and "The Apprentice" fame produces Expedition: Africa. "It's what we're looking for from the networks... it's concrete proof we provide great cross-platform content," says **Nancy Heffernan**, Cox's dir of video marketing mgmt. "It promotes our multi-platform experience, and that brings value." The campaign aims to provide viewers "with an immersive experience... we're not just replaying the show online," says **Mark Garner**, **AETN** svp, distribution, marketing and biz dev. "We're providing extra content so viewers will know even more about what it was like for Stanley and Livingstone in 1871." Some elements will be shared by the cable partners; others will be unique to an MSO. For example, a Comcast sub would see exclusive short-form VOD features on getting water and shelter while **Road Runner** and **cox.net** users can access an Expedition survival quiz. The larger trend is marketers getting involved earlier in program development. While Garner's marketing team is not yet seated at the program development table, "we're getting to that point... I foresee the day, not too long from now, where we are at that table."

Customer Care: Despite a slight dip in customer satisfaction across the overall cable & satellite TV sector, **Comcast** and **Cox** delivered solid improvement in the metric, according to Univ of MI's **American Customer Satisfaction Index**. Though still below the industry avg (63), Comcast earned a 9% YOY jump to 59, while Cox's score rose 5% to a historical high of 66 to again lead cable. **Time Warner Cable** (59) was flat, and **Charter** (51) fell 6%. **DirectTV** led the sector with a 71 and used 4% growth to easily outdistance **DISH** (64). Among fixed-line phone service providers, who paced by smaller ops averaged a score of 72 (-1%), Cox led the big boys with a 74 (flat), and was followed by **AT&T's** 71 (-5%), **Qwest's** 71 (-3%), **Verizon's** 71 (+1%), **Embarq's** 68 (-3%) and Comcast's 67 (-3%).

VOD: **Cablevision** added HD VOD movies, docs and original series from **Starz On Demand** and **Encore On Demand**. -- **Comcast's** Eastern Div partnered with the **Pentagon Channel** for on-demand features of this year's US Service Academy graduations. Set for next week, the ceremonies will be offered throughout Jun.

Upfronts: Fresh off its pickup of the US Spanish-language rights to the UEFA Champions League, **Fox Sports en Espanol** touted its nearly 1,500 scheduled hours of live and premiere soccer matches in '10, when the net will also bow sports talk show "Tribuna Fox Sports." Also, the net launched at FSEAdSales.com a place for affils to stay informed about programming, ratings and creative executions. -- **Discovery en Espanol** said it delivered more growth among 18-49s over the last 2 years than any other Spanish language broadcast and cable net. New announced content includes: 6-part oceanic series "South Pacific," natural history doc "Werewolves" and original "Maras the



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Series," centered on Latin American gangs.

Ratings: **NBA Playoffs** action of-fered **TNT**—what else?—a sizable skyward bounce in prime viewership to a 2.7/2.69mIn, the highest weekly avg for a net this year. Furthermore, the net's game 7 coverage of the Celtics-Magic series won the week with a 6.0/5.89mIn, and its 8.38mIn total viewers outdrew **CNN's** Jan coverage of Pres *Obama's* Inauguration Day festivities. 7 playoff games (2 on **ESPN**) hit the weekly telecast top 10. **USA** (2.1/2.03mIn) notched 2nd among nets, and was followed by **Disney Channel** (1.7/1.65mIn), **Fox News** (1.6/1.52mIn) and **ESPN** (1.4/1.36mIn).

People: Following *Henry Schleiff* out of **Crown Media**, effective May 31, is evp, programming *David Kenin*, who the company said was the driving creative force behind the dev and launch of **Hallmark Movie Channel**. Until a replacement is named, svp, original programming *Barbara Fisher* and svp, acquisitions and scheduling *Michelle Vicary* will share Kenin's duties. -- **Weather Channel** picked up *Helen Swenson* from the broadcast world to become vp, live programming.

Business/Finance: **Macrovision** intends to change its name to **Rovi**, part of the company's new brand identity featuring a fresh corporate visual design. Shareholders will vote on the change Jul 15.

CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	05/20 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	05/20 Close	1-Day Ch
BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS					
BROADCASTERS/DBS/			AMPHENOL:	33.44	0.55
BRITISH SKY:	29.32	0.16	APPLE:	127.45	0.80
DIRECTV:	24.66	(0.22)	ARRIS GROUP:	11.03	0.20
DISH:	17.22	(0.12)	AVID TECH:	13.20	0.33
DISNEY:	23.82	(0.39)	BIGBAND:	5.29	0.04
GE:	13.70	0.23	BLNDER TONGUE:	1.73	0.07
HEARST-ARGYLE:	4.47	0.00	BROADCOM:	22.09	0.36
NEWS CORP:	10.55	0.02	CISCO:	18.88	0.16
MSOS					
CABLEVISION:	19.94	0.29	CLEARWIRE:	4.68	(0.09)
COMCAST:	15.00	(0.16)	COMMSCOPE:	25.37	1.33
COMCAST SPCL:	14.00	(0.18)	CONCURRENT:	4.32	(0.24)
GCI:	6.85	(0.44)	CONVERGYS:	9.39	(0.11)
KNOLOGY:	8.42	0.12	CSG SYSTEMS:	13.34	(0.05)
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	13.65	0.04	EHOSTAR:	16.12	(0.36)
LIBERTY ENT:	24.61	(0.39)	GOOGLE:	398.88	2.04
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	15.68	(0.04)	HARMONIC:	5.28	0.07
LIBERTY INT:	6.10	0.21	INTEL:	15.65	0.13
MEDIACOM:	6.08	0.34	JDSU:	4.98	0.06
SHAW COMM:	16.37	0.04	LEVEL 3:	1.06	(0.01)
TIME WARNER CABLE:	32.47	0.17	MICROSOFT:	20.31	(0.16)
VIRGIN MEDIA:	7.28	(0.25)	MOTOROLA:	6.24	0.09
WASH POST:	368.43	(7.76)	NDS:	62.93	0.00
PROGRAMMING					
CBS:	7.22	(0.1)	OPENTV:	1.51	(0.03)
CROWN:	3.02	(0.03)	PHILIPS:	19.35	(0.03)
DISCOVERY:	20.58	0.52	RENTRAK:	10.39	0.02
EW SCRIPPS:	1.88	0.01	SEACHANGE:	6.67	0.05
GRUPO TELEVISA:	17.77	0.20	SONY:	26.05	(0.18)
HSN:	9.72	0.72	SPRINT NEXTEL:	5.50	0.18
INTERACTIVE CORP:	15.31	0.04	THOMAS & BETTS:	31.22	(0.49)
LIBERTY:	26.49	(0.39)	TIVO:	7.40	(0.23)
LODGENET:	5.38	0.18	TOLLGRADE:	5.04	(0.3)
NEW FRONTIER:	2.20	0.10	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	20.16	(0.17)
OUTDOOR:	6.94	(0.45)	VONAGE:	0.47	(0.02)
PLAYBOY:	2.78	0.01	YAHOO:	15.18	0.01
RHI:	3.32	(0.07)	TELCOS		
SCRIPPS INT:	28.75	0.32	AT&T:	24.67	0.08
TIME WARNER:	24.06	(0.82)	QWEST:	4.21	(0.15)
VALUEVISION:	0.68	(0.02)	VERIZON:	29.65	(0.05)
VIACOM:	22.62	(0.05)	MARKET INDICES		
WWE:	11.69	(0.16)	DOW:	8474.85	(29.23)
TECHNOLOGY					
3COM:	4.21	(0.03)	NASDAQ:	1734.54	2.18
ADC:	6.69	(0.58)			
ADVANTAGE:	1.70	0.05			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	2.39	0.09			
AMDOCS:	21.58	0.27			

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