

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Safe Wager: Betting Companies Capitalize on TV

Few industries are experiencing as much rapid growth as sports betting in the U.S. According to the American Gambling Association, 30 states and Washington, D.C. have legislation that [allows](#) betting through legal retail and/or online sportsbooks, five states have legalized it but it's not yet operational and one state (California) has active legislation.

Even with the majority of the U.S. states allowing for sports wagering, the industry's gain in popularity was epitomized by the news of **ESPN** and **DraftKings** being on the [verge of an exclusive partnership](#) that would rebrand the sportsbook to include the ESPN name. According to Action Network, the deal is worth up to \$3 billion but specific terms are still unknown. ESPN declined to comment on the potential agreement, but DraftKings noted its good standing with the sports network in a statement of its own. "We have a great, long-standing relationship with ESPN. However, we speak to a variety of companies on a regular basis and don't comment on the specifics of those conversations," the statement said. A **MoffettNathanson** research note claimed the move could help both companies in multiple ways.

"We do believe that sports betting is a very significant opportunity for [ESPN]," the note said. "It's driven by the consumer, particularly the younger consumer that will replenish the sports fans over time and their desire to have gambling as part of their sports experience."

The rumored partnership is the latest signal of an increase

in sports betting content on TV, whether it be including odds during live games or entire programs dedicated to talking about the best wagers to make on any given night. However, DraftKings—the No. 2 sportsbook in the U.S.—isn't the only one making a foray into TV.

In September, **FanDuel Group** shifted **TVG Network** to **FanDuel TV** and its OTT offering **Watch TVG** to **FanDuel+**. It was the first linear/digital network that was dedicated to sports betting content, with live sports taking up the other chunk of programming. The new-look network arrived with a weekday morning show hosted by former **NFL Network** anchor *Kay Adams* and content coming from *Pat McAfee* and *The Ringer's Bill Simmons*. While it's a lineup of well-known names in the sports world, the network's transition was met with some intricacies.

The idea to shift TVG to FanDuel TV came from *Kevin Grigsby*, SVP of TV at FanDuel and Executive Content Producer for the network and FanDuel+, back in January 2020. He told **Cablefax** the pitch was given the green light just weeks before COVID-19 shut the world down, putting most live sports in timeout as well. One of the only sports that was able to continue was horse racing—TVG's bread and butter.

The attention gained from that helped TVG's horse racing betting business go from \$1.5 billion in bets per year to \$3 billion, also boosting the network's notoriety. Grigsby, however, said it wouldn't have been the right move to make the transition during the pandemic, as it could have had an adverse effect on the momentum it built. Once things were trending toward normalcy,

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The screenshot shows the Cablefax website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'LOGIN', 'SUBSCRIBE', and 'SEARCH' options. Below that, the main header reads 'THE DAILY AWARDS & EVENTS THE MAGAZINE SPECIAL REPORTS THE LISTS JOBS'. The main content area is titled 'The Daily' and includes a date 'Wednesday—September 15, 2021'. A sidebar on the left has a 'PDF' icon and 'FULL ARCHIVES' link. The main content area features a 'Featured in this Issue' section with a list of companies: Amazon, AMC, AMC Networks, Apple, BBC America, BET, BET Studios, Charter, Comcast, Cox Communications, Disney, DOJ, Estrella TV, Evoca, Facebook, Fox Corp, Fox Deportes, Fox Nation, FTC, Galavision, Goldman Sachs, Google, Hisense, Hotwire Communications, Hulu, iFC, Locast, Microsoft, MSNBC, NAB, NBC, NBC News, NBCUniversal, Netflix, NFL RedZone, Pantaya, Peacock, SCTE, Show, Sony Cine, SundanceTV, Telemundo, Tubi, UniMás, Univision, ViacomCBS, WE tv, YouTube, YouTube TV. Below this is a 'SHOW FEATURED' section with a headline 'Still Assisting: Charter Looks to Aid Community Centers, Job Training' and a small image of a computer screen.

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the transition planning resumed in March 2021, which was around the same time sports betting's popularity saw a spike.

"As it scales from state to state across the country, we're finding that the FanDuel brand is definitely number one in the gaming space," Grigsby said. "The performance of our sports betting company, our daily fantasy business or casino business—for us to be able to attach a brand like that to a nationwide TV network really was a no-brainer."

Of course, TVG had a horse-racing-crazed audience it had been building since 1999. Grigsby said the average watch time for horse racing viewers is in the three-hour range, so when news of changes to TVG Network came, there was an initial reaction of fear from some viewers that FanDuel TV would leave behind horse racing. So far, that pillar of the network has remained intact.

"The programming plan that we have in place right now, it preserves racing's window that essentially is 91% of our betting business," Grigsby said. "So the races that feed into our betting business that feed into 91% of the dollars that are bet, those hours have not been touched, nor will they be touched for a long time."

While the network doesn't plan on entering the lucrative media rights ring, it does want to give more options for a multi-faceted way of delivering a broadcast. That includes letting viewers watch a telecast that's built for making live bets all in one stop.

"We're going to find some dayparts in which there's not substantial domestic horse racing going on. We're going to fill it with hours that include sports that we can acquire rights to that we offer wagers on ... The game is purely a live betting event for you to sit there and watch and transact on in the middle of the viewing experience," Grigsby said.

MOVES STILL DOWN, IMPACTING CABLE ADDS

Moves were down sequentially again in September, and while that will continue to hurt cable providers, it may not be as much of a pain as expected. According to **New Street Research's** estimates, moves remain 400,000 below its adjusted benchmark for the month. It follows a trend that has moves between April 2021 and Sept. 2022 falling 4.3 million short of their adjusted benchmark. The potential reasons behind the depressed moves are numerous, ranging from high housing costs, inflation, remote work and lingering impacts from the pandemic. And while the lower moves hurt cable in markets where those providers are taking share from DSL, it helps them in markets where they are losing share to fiber. "The reverse is true for the telecom companies—depressed moves hurt them in fiber markets and help them in DSL markets. The analysis is slightly different for them though. Fiber connections are worth 4-5x copper connections. As such, depressed moves likely hurt the telecom companies deploying fiber too," New Street Research said in a note. "Depressed moves may also be slowing the pace of FWB adds by some amount, though the drivers of adoption may be slightly different for households taking FWB than those choosing between DSL, Cable and Fiber."

HISPANICS UNDERREPRESENTED IN MEDIA

This week Rep *Joaquin Castro* (D-PA) released the second of two **GAO** reports on the underrepresentation of Latinos in American media and the findings show that there is plenty of work to do. From 2010 through 2019, Hispanic representation in the media workforce grew at a slower pace (11% to 12%) than Hispanic representation in the non-media workforce (15% to

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18%). The GAP report also revealed that Hispanic women have much lower representation than Hispanic men (accounting for 3% of all media occupations vs 7% for men) and that Hispanic media workers are significantly more likely to work in service roles than management roles. GAO recommendations include having the EEOC work with FCC to develop a new memorandum of understanding that includes a plan for EEOC to routinely share data with FCC regarding discrimination charges filed against broadcasters and cable and satellite television operators.

RATINGS

Anne Rice's "Interview with the Vampire" is taking over **AMC**. Some 1.2 million viewers watched the series premiere on AMC, including 493,000 A25-54, according to **Nielsen** L+3 ratings. On **AMC+**, it ranks as the best new series launch ever in viewership and acquisition, tripling the early activity that was seen for previous recordholder "Dark Winds." The streamer saw 75% of first streams Sunday tied to new customers watching "The Walking Dead" and/or Interview with the Vampire premieres.

NAMIC UNVEILS ELDP CLASS XXII

NAMIC revealed [Class XXII](#) of its Executive Leadership Development Program Friday. The cohort of 38 strong will be the 10th class to take part in the program since it has partnered with the University of Virginia Darden School of Business.

DOING GOOD

Spectrum is awarding Orlando's Creative City Project with \$10,000 through **Ovation TV's** Stand for the Arts Awards. Since the partnership began in 2017, Ovation TV and Spectrum have doled out 50 awards totaling \$500,000 for art education. – Twenty teachers will each receive \$1,500 from **Cable One's** "A Stronger Connection" social media campaign honoring teachers in its 24-state footprint.

PROGRAMMING

ID is bringing back fan favorite "Who the (Bleep) Did I Marry?" on Oct. 15 at 10pm ET. Episodes from the six seasons of the original show are streaming on **discovery+**. – **HBO** doc "Year One: A Political Odyssey," covering *Biden's* first year in office, debuts Oct. 19 at 9pm.

CABLEFAX DASHBOARD

Twitter Hits



Research

(Source: [NTIA Internet Use Survey](#))

- > 58% of the 24 million offline households express no interest or need to be online, and 18% say they can't afford home internet.
- > Households that cited "too expensive" as their barrier to getting online were more likely to have school-age children at home and identify as racial and ethnic minorities than those who weren't interested in getting online.
- > The mean price offline households wanted to pay for internet was \$10/month.

Up Ahead

- OCTOBER 10-11:** [The WICT Network's Annual Leadership Conference](#), NYC
- OCTOBER 11-12:** [36th Annual NAMIC Conference](#), NYC
- OCTOBER 12:** [Kaitz Dinner](#), NYC
- OCTOBER 17-20:** [NAB Show New York](#), NYC
- OCTOBER 18-20:** [NetworkX](#), Amsterdam
- NOVEMBER 3:** [Fiber Broadband Association Regional Fiber Connect](#), Columbus, Ohio

Quotable

"A Category 4 hurricane is an extremely challenging, dangerous and exhausting assignment and we are grateful to everyone involved for their incredible work. After launching less than a year ago, Fox Weather did an outstanding job focusing on every aspect leading up to the magnitude of landfall and the aftermath of this historic storm with the ultimate precision. Every facet of the team was prepared, and it showed throughout all levels of coverage, components of which outdid competitors that have been on the air for 40 years... Thank you again to all our journalists for their extremely hard work and dedication in covering this story."

– Fox News Media CEO Suzanne Scott and Fox President/Executive Editor Jay Wallace in a memo to staff following Hurricane Ian's landfall