

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Batting Practice: Diamond to Shave ACC Deal Ahead of MLB Deadlines

Diamond Sports is shaving another rights deal from its portfolio, and more teams are bracing for potential disruption.

In a Wednesday motion for entry of an order, Diamond said it has been conducting an ongoing analysis of contracts to identify which are burdensome and/or otherwise unnecessary for the company's go-forward business operations. Through that, it determined that an agreement with **Raycom Sports Network** should be put on the chopping block.

Diamond Sports' Raycom agreement gives it certain exclusive distribution rights to broadcast athletic events and ancillary programming tied to the **ACC** within a specific geographic area in exchange for rights fees.

The current deal extends through the 2026-27 season and includes select football games and men's and women's regular season basketball games.

"The last payment due to Raycom was due after the final ACC games the Debtors were scheduled to broadcast for the 2022-23 ACC basketball season. The Debtors determined, in their business judgment, to not make a prepetition payment due to Raycom prior to the Petition date," Diamond said in the filing. "Recently, Raycom requested that the Debtors promptly reject the Raycom Agreement so that Raycom could initiate the process of seeking a new partner for broadcasting future ACC events. The parties' respective counsel have worked closely with one another in preparing this motion, and Raycom sup-

ports the relief requested in this motion."

There's a potential for Diamond Sports to lose more rights over the next month, and it all starts tonight. The Texas Rangers are due another rights payment Thursday, and a ruling from the Southern Texas Bankruptcy Court requires Diamond to pay the full amount due to the team as it moves through its Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings or risk losing the right to distribute games.

Diamond has already proven that it isn't afraid to say goodbye to an **MLB** team. Earlier this month, it lost the right to distribute San Diego Padres games after failing to make an overdue payment before the end of a two-week grace period. MLB stepped in to take over production and distribution of local Padres games after that and distributors adjusted their channel lineups to provide the games with a new home, and the expectation is that similar actions would follow for other teams impacted by Diamond's suspension of payments.

According to *Sports Business Journal*, four other teams are also owed payments over the next month. Diamond owes payments to the Arizona Diamondbacks, Cleveland Guardians and Minnesota Twins on July 1, and the Cincinnati Reds will be asking for their rights payment on July 15.

The Reds are in a slightly different position from the other teams. They didn't file suit with the other teams and MLB against Diamond Sports, and they own an equity stake in **Bally Sports Ohio**.



THE INDEPENDENT SHOW 2023

> MORE THAN EVER

WHERE AND WHEN
July 30 - Aug. 2
Minneapolis

FOR MORE INFO AND REGISTRATION

www.theindependentshow.org







CEDC GROUP RECOMMENDS FCC OPEN RETRANS NOI

A working group of the **FCC's** Communications Equity and Diversity Council has recommended the agency open a Notice of Inquiry on retransmission consent that it could report on to Congress. "We simply are encouraging strongly that the FCC opens an NOI and collects the data. Information is power. Let's take a look at how it's working, if it needs to be modified to keep it in tune with streaming companies and minority companies," said committee member and **Strong Women Alliance** Founder *Ellen Schned*. The working group found that retrans consent rules developed in 1992 are unevenly applied and disadvantage minority and independent networks. The NOI recommendation got an amen from **ACA Connects Chair** and **Boycorn Vision** President *Patty Boyers*, who attended Thursday's CEDC meeting. "I want to jump in and echo retransmission consent is long overdue... When you start thinking about the differences in how everything is running today compared to 1992—and broadcasters themselves are preaching 'help us out' with this unregulated streaming coming into play," Boyer said. Broadcasters have been pushing the agency to apply retrans rules to virtual MVPDs such as **YouTube TV** and **Fubo**, while traditional MVPDs have argued that retransmission consent payments to broadcasters and carriage obligations have gotten out of control. Boyers and Circle City Broadcasting CEO *DuJuan McCoy* debated retransmission consent rules at the Council's February [symposium](#). While the two were on different pages for many retrans issues, both agreed that big networks are hurting local broadcasters by selling content over the top. Other working group recommendations included that the FCC work with Congress to help minorities and women gain greater access to capital through existing and emerging funding opportunities and ad dollars to support diverse owners in acquisitions, operations, carriage and marketing.

FCC DIVES DEEPER ON DATA CAPS

FCC Chairwoman *Jessica Rosenworcel* wants to launch a Notice of Inquiry on broadband data caps. The agency also has opened a new [portal](#) for consumers to share how data caps have affected them. Some ISPs use data caps or usage limits to restrict how much bandwidth a HSD customer can use on a monthly basis, often charging overage fees for exceeding the limit. The proposed NOI would seek info on the current state of data caps, their impact on consumers, and whether the Commission should consider taking action to ensure that data caps do not

cause harm to competition or consumers' ability to access broadband Internet services. Data caps have been vilified by Democratic lawmakers in particular. Last year, Senators *Ben Ray Lujan* (D-NM) and *Cory Booker* (D-NJ) introduced legislation that directed the FCC to create definitions for when a data cap is created for network management. The Commission would also be granted enforcement authority to take action against providers that violate those conditions.

DISH MEETS NEXT FCC WIRELESS BUILDOUT COMMITMENT

DISH scored a success in its efforts to build out a nationwide 5G wireless network, announcing it is now serving 70%

Cablefax Executive Round Up

What are the keys to keeping programming centered on sports betting fresh?



Talaya Gaines

Vice President, Content Strategy and Original Programming
MSG Networks

"Sports betting programming needs to consistently provide engaging, timely and informative entertainment for the casual bettor. To keep our shows fresh, we've always put an intentional focus on having a diversified lineup of energetic talent, as well as an array of sports beyond the four major leagues, including horse racing, darts, tennis, boxing, golf, UFC, WNBA and more. Our BetCasts (alternate broadcasts) also provide a unique and enjoyable way for viewers to watch select Knicks and Rangers games throughout the season."



Kevin Grigsby

Executive Producer & SVP
FanDuel TV

"One of the core values at FanDuel TV is to provide purposeful content that organically weaves sports betting narratives into all-important daily news cycles. Keeping up with the fast-moving news cycles is of utmost importance for our producers at 'Up & Adams,' 'Run It Back' or our live horse racing. We use the daily reporting that impacts sports bettors and develop creative storylines around those narratives to keep our viewers engaged for prolonged periods of time."



Michael Mulvihill

EVP, Head of Strategy and Analytics
FOX Sports

"Betting can either be social or anti-social. When it's social, as in fantasy football or a March Madness pool, it's great for media engagement. When it's anti-social, it doesn't necessarily help us. The sports industry has an opportunity to present betting as a social activity—something we're trying to address in our horse racing programming. For FOX's coverage of the Belmont Stakes, we positioned horseplaying as a fun challenge that people can do with their friends."

of the U.S. population. It had to do so by June 14 to meet commitments it made to the **FCC** as part of **T-Mobile's** acquisition of **Sprint**. The provider has also launched more than 15,000 5G sites and will file an official buildout report with the agency by July 14. In addition to the expansion of coverage, DISH has expanded its 5G voice service, called voice over new radio, to more than 70 million people through both Boost Mobile and Boost Infinite. It plans to continue rolling out that service as the network becomes more optimized for that technology. "This is a positive step for DISH's network economics, as DISH customers have to date typically had to rely on the MVNOs for all usage in markets lacking VoNR, because of the difficulty of hand offs between DISH's 5G standalone network and the other carrier networks," **New Street Research** told clients in a note.

SENATE COMMERCE TO CONSIDER GOMEZ NOMINATION

We're one step closer to a full five-member **FCC**, with **Senate Commerce** set to hold a full committee nomination hearing Thursday at 10am ET on *Anna Gomez's* nomination to the agency. The committee hearing also will consider the renominations of *Geoffrey Starks* and *Brendan Carr* to the FCC as well as *Fara Damelin's* nomination as Inspector General of the FCC. Biden nominated Gomez to the FCC last month after his previous nominee, *Gigi Sohn*, bowed out after it became apparent she couldn't get the votes.

GREAT AMERICAN MEDIA, PURE FLIX TIE THE KNOT

Great American Media and **Sony Pictures Television's Pure Flix** completed their previously announced merger to combine the two companies. The deal sees Great American's family-friendly linear and FAST channels and the Pure Flix faith and family SVOD service combined into a consolidated entity. Terms of the deal weren't announced. Great American Media retains a majority interest in the merged company and oversees day-to-day management under the leadership of CEO *Bill Abbott*.

CARRIAGE

Fubo's partnership with *Ryan Reynolds* is bearing some fruit. It's gearing up to launch the **Maximum Effort Channel** on June 20. The channel, a partnership between Fubo and Ryan Reynolds' **Maximum Effort**, will feature original and classic TV and movies. Its first original show is "Bedtime Stories with Ryan," a 15-episode series that features the actor reading new and classic bedtime stories "in an attempt to soothe your mind and soul." Maximum Effort Channel will be available on Fubo and more streaming platforms to be announced. – **Brit-Box** is now available widely across **Comcast's** entertainment platform, including X1, Xfinity Flex and Xumo TV. The British

entertainment streamer had been in a trial with Comcast over the past few months. Pricing remains the same as it is for other destinations—\$7.99 per month/\$79.99 per year. BritBox recently surpassed 3 million global subscribers.

CANADA INVESTS \$71 MILLION IN EXPANDING BROADBAND ACCESS

Canada is also taking the issue of broadband availability seriously, announcing more than \$71 million in federal and provincial funding for **Bell Canada** and **Cogeco** to build out to more than 22,000 homes in Ontario. The move is part of an existing partnership between the province and Canada supporting fiber-based projects to bring broadband to more than 280,000 homes. The Government of Canada has set a goal of bringing broadband to 100% of the country's residents by 2030.

PROGRAMMING

ABC News Studios will premiere four true crime docuseries exclusively on Hulu: "The Ashley Madison Affair" (July 7), "Betrayal: The Perfect Husband" (July 11), "Mother Undercover" (July 27) and "Demons and Saviors" (Aug 3). – "Ultimate Cowboy Showdown" returns to **INSP** for Season 4 on Sept 6 with an all-star edition of the competition series. – **Peacock** will stream five hours of live daily coverage of all five days of the Royal Ascot horse racing meet beginning Tuesday at 8:30am ET. – "Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom Protecting the Wild" will return to **NBC** after more than 30 years. The educational series will debut Oct 7 on NBC's "The More You Know Programming" block as well as NBC.com and NBC VOD. – **National Geographic** greenlit "The Cancer Vaccine," a documentary special on the latest efforts to cure cancer. – **Disney** is celebrating its 100th anniversary with the debut of 28 newly restored Walt Disney Animation Studios classic shorts on Disney+ starting July 7. The short films include lesser-known titles such as 1927's "Trolley Troubles" starring Oswald the Lucky Rabbit along with Silly Symphony classics such as "The Skeleton Dance."

PEOPLE

Disney CFO *Christine McCarthy* is stepping down and taking a family medical leave of absence. *Kevin Lansberry*, EVP and CFO of Disney Parks, Experiences and Products, will serve as the company's Interim CFO, effective July 1. McCarthy will continue as a strategic advisor to the company during her leave and will assist with the process of identifying and onboarding a long-term successor. "Christine McCarthy is one of the most admired financial executives in America, and her impact on The Walt Disney Company during 23 years of dedicated service cannot be overstated," Disney CEO *Bob Iger* said in a statement. – After a decade at **CableLabs**, *Belal Hamzeh* is joining **Comcast** as VP, Technology and System Engineering. He most recently was SVP, CTO for CableLabs.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

'Exposing Parchman' Inspiring Change in Mississippi

The American criminal justice system has been criticized for decades, but discussion around the need for reform rose to new heights in 2019 when footage from Mississippi's Parchman Prison was released and showed inhumane conditions. **Team Roc**, Jay-Z and Yo Gotti spearheaded a lawsuit against the Mississippi-based facility, and the DOJ found it violated the 8th and 14th Amendments of the Constitution. "Exposing Parchman," a documentary airing on **A&E** Saturday at 8pm ET, takes viewers into the three-year journey to tell the stories of those incarcerated, their families and systemic reforms. Filming began in Feb. 2020, but filming was paused during the pandemic. The project escalated when **ITV America** CEO David George learned about it, and talks began about turning it into an investigative film. When filming started again in March 2022, **Roc Nation** worked with ITV America's **Good Capers Content** to round out previously filmed content. Since the footage from Parchman went public, the facility has made improvements that persuaded Team Roc to drop the suit. Upgraded HVAC systems have been put into place, recreational activities are allowed, bathrooms have been renovated and mold has been removed. "In January 2023, our cameras were allowed into Parchman, with the legal team, and we were able to see and document those improvements firsthand," ITV America Head of Programming *Jordana Hochman* told **CFX**. "I think everyone agrees that further improvements are necessary but that the changes made to date were meaningful and significant." She hopes the film is a reminder not to turn a blind eye to tough issues, and encourages viewers to take action when they see injustice. "It may be easy for many to ignore what's happening in prisons across the country when it doesn't personally affect them, but the families who share their stories in this documentary personalize and humanize the issue in such a powerful way; it's hard to imagine anyone seeing the film and not being moved and outraged that something like this could happen in America today," Hochman said. — *Sara Winegardner*

REVIEWS

"The Idol," 9pm, Sunday, **HBO**. It's often a bad omen when behind-the-scenes media coverage explodes before a project debuts. Unfortunately, "The Idol" proves that rule. The series about exploitation in the music industry was set for a Nov. 2021 debut. Trailers appeared, but a pilot didn't. A dysfunctional relationship between co-creator Sam Levinson ("Euphoria") and Amy Seimetz, who was supposed to direct each ep, supposedly was the culprit. In April 2022, Seimetz walked, though much of the series was shot. Levinson entered and reportedly re-wrote and re-shot every episode. And today (June 15), as we write, unconfirmed reports have HBO ending the series at 1 season, after 6 eps. We're not as down on the series as some critics. As a director, Levinson knows his craft. Here he trains his lens on the visually intriguing *Lily-Rose Depp*, who plays pop star Jocelyn. While Depp's acting isn't yet on the level of her famous father's, the camera loves her intensely. But the series about exploitation goes too far, exploiting certain parts of Ms. Depp's physique in nearly every scene. Moreover, series co-creator and cast member Abel "The Weeknd" Tesfaye, who plays Jocelyn's love interest Tedros, seems lost. — Props to **Pluto TV** for celebrating Father's Day with dad-themed series, including a "Yellowstone" marathon, and Juneteenth, with "Michelle Obama: Life After the White House." — *Seth Arenstein*

BASIC CABLE		
P2+ PRIME RANKINGS*		
(06/05/23-06/11/23)		
MON-SUN	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
MSNBC	0.477	1489
FNC	0.475	1484
TNT	0.302	943
ESPN	0.272	849
INSP	0.257	802
HGTV	0.241	752
HIST	0.215	670
HALL	0.213	664
CNN	0.212	663
DISC	0.191	595
USA	0.186	580
TLC	0.183	572
FOOD	0.177	554
TBSC	0.177	553
BRAVO	0.171	535
TVLAND	0.165	514
ID	0.152	473
HMM	0.148	461
LIFE	0.125	392
A&E	0.124	387
FX	0.119	370
REELZ	0.115	358
WETV	0.114	357
BET	0.114	356
GSN	0.112	348
ESPN2	0.104	324
AMC	0.097	302
NWSMX	0.095	296
SYFY	0.087	270
OXYGEN	0.086	267
NATGEO	0.084	262
SNDNCE	0.078	242
COM	0.076	238
NAN	0.076	237

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