

# CableFAX Daily™

Friday — March 20, 2009

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 20 / No. 052

## Frenzied: Cable Nets, Ops and Subs Demand March Madness Content

March Madness tipped off Thurs, and the astounding breadth of multiplatform tourney coverage seems even more pandemoniac than the games themselves. But as TV and the Web enjoy most of the related ink, **CBS College Sports** and cable ops continue to enhance VOD content at tourney time. This year the net, **CBS Sports** and the **NCAA** upped to 40 from 16 the number of historical tourney vignettes—*Magic vs Bird* in '79, for example—offered through more than 20 distribution partners including **Comcast** and **Charter**. Also featured are free on-demand game highlights and a nightly CBS Sports Net tourney show, which cohere with the vignettes to help drive the net's mission "to make the sports VOD category successful," said evp, distribution **Bob Rose**. Key to this goal, he said, is creative and localized programming that helps ops differentiate and increase penetration. "Assets that are in the [March Madness] VOD offering are unique for our partners," said Rose, noting that game highlights are cut geographically. "You can't just slap a game up and tell people to go watch it." Comcast rolled out the vignettes on Mar 2, excited about the initiative's 2nd year. "We love it," said vp, video content **Diana Kerekes**. "It performed really well last year... and really drives the views." The highlights do fairly well too, she said, but don't garner nearly the usage the vignettes do, a point underscoring what some ops see as the VOD's true strength. "We use on demand as a promotional powerhouse," said Kerekes. That same idea helps explain why an increasing number of sports properties use the VOD space, including **UFC** and the **Olympics**. Pre-event content "builds excitement and anticipation," said **TVN Ent** svp, strategy and business development **Matt Cohen**. And the demand is certainly there. "We're overall seeing uptake increases in [content surrounding] quick turnaround sports events," he said. Back to CBS College Sports, which partnered last summer with 23 ops including **Cox** to deliver free on demand content dedicated to the **Collegiate Nationals**, an event featuring championship sports competitions. The initiative was a success, said Rose, and the net is now considering on-demand high school sports, a field on which a few ops already play. Make no mistake, though. CBS College Sports says it's committed to linear growth and beams that 15 ops such as **Time Warner Cable** are lending it 20mln incremental linear subs through free net previews during the tourney. But VOD content allows the net to forge creative and symbiotic relationships with operators, said Rose, particularly during March Madness. "The coverage is so encompassing and the engagement so great that it doesn't compare to anything else," he said.

**Stimulus Package:** Additional evidence that VOD is more than a place for subs to watch old movies and shows they missed. For the first time, **IFC Films** let cable subs watch films on VOD as they were premiering at a film festival—in this case **South by Southwest** (SXSW), in Austin. SXSW started Mar 13; it ends Sat. Perhaps as important, IFC Films was able to parlay this distribution story into getting 1 film—"Alexander the Last"—reviewed in *The NY Times* and *The New Yorker*. Leading film critics routinely review cinema films, not VOD pieces. Alexander and other films at SXSW are available on VOD at "IFC Festival Direct." Viewing Alexander costs \$6.99, says **Lisa Schwartz**, who leads IFC Films' VOD

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 Japan                       The Netherlands  
 USA                             Mexico
- The Sunday night game on March 8th between USA and this country achieved a 2.0 rating, the highest in the history of *World Baseball Classic™*, ranking it as the most watched sports event on basic cable that week.  
 Canada                       Panama  
 Cuba                             Venezuela
- ESPN Deportes and Time Warner Cable are partnering on an exclusive promotion in support of the Todo Lo Mejor bundle package in this major Hispanic market.  
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 Boston                         San Diego
- Of the 39 *World Baseball Classic* games, how many will air on ESPN Deportes - the exclusive home of the *World Baseball Classic™* in Spanish?  
 15                               38  
 39                               25

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business. "It attracted critics' attention that readers could see [Alexander] at home as its world premiere was taking place at a festival," Schwartz said. For nearly 4 years, subs have watched select theatrical films on demand through the "IFC in Theaters" VOD offering. Normally, IFC Festival Direct offers films on demand after they've been shown at festivals.

**At the Portals:** The FCC's tentative agenda for its Apr 8 open meeting includes a notice of inquiry on developing a national broadband plan and a supplemental NOI on the FCC's annual video competition report. The Commission previously announced it will issue a single report on the state of competition in video programming covering '07, '08 and '09 because it is so far behind on issuing the annual reports. Also on the agenda is a rulemaking on improving data collection on minority and female broadcast ownership.

**Media Summit Notebook:** With tens of thousands of hours of content and just 1 linear net in the US, the BBC may be a prime example of a content provider ripe for digital. "Digital opens all sorts of new doors for us, but how to monetize that is the issue," said Luke Bradley-Jones, BBC Worldwide America evp, digital media and biz dev. Of course, that's the question everyone is asking, including digital rich MTV Networks. MTVN strategy & biz dev evp Richard Kang told the panel that he thinks consumer expectations can be misleading. "Look at the grocery store. I'm sure everyone would like to carry all the goods they can out the door... just because a consumer wants something one way doesn't mean it's economically viable," he said. Like most, the BBC is trying a combination model of advertising and pay. "But I think increasingly we're focusing on the pay model," Bradley-Jones said, pointing to success on iTunes and the BBC's passionate fan base. He believes the key will be finding innovative, new ways to package content, rather than just seeing broadband as another window of distribution. Think Netflix, which has no original content but an innovative way of packaging.

**Carriage:** Time Warner Cable's Desert Cities and Barstow, CA, systems, and Cox Middle GA will carry Pentagon Channel.

**Getting Creative:** MTVN formed the "Creative Music Integration" team to oversee integration of music within all of MTV and VH1's long-form programming. Joe Cuello, vp, creative music integration for MTVN Music Group, will oversee the team. Such creative integrations are already taking place. For instance, Little Jackie was the featured artist in VH1's "New York Goes to Hollywood," which included song placement as the theme song to the series, IDs in several eps, free MP3 and ringtone offers, and an appearance as a vocal coach on the series. Album sales increased 100% the week following the show's premiere; throughout the series' run, digital single sales increased by 1500%.

**On the Hill:** As expected, Sen Commerce backed former WA gov Gary Locke, voting unanimously Thurs to confirm him as the new Commerce Secretary. Commerce chmn Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) urged quick action by the full Sen.

**VOD:** Comcast isn't the only MSO making fan fave "Twilight" available at 12:01am Sat, the same day of its DVD release. Time Warner Cable, Cox, Bright House, Bresnan and many indie ops will offer the vampire tale through In Demand.

**Deals:** Cisco will buy privately held digital camcorder maker Pure Digital Technologies for \$590mln. S&P said the acquisition aligns nicely with Cisco's strategy of embedding video into the communication network and moving closer to the consumer desktop arena. -- Nielsen bought The Cambridge Group, a strategy consulting firm to Fortune 500 companies.

**Programming:** EWTN will air coverage of Pope Benedict's historic trip to the Holy Land, May 8-15. -- Comcast, Cablevision and Bresnan are among MSOs offering a free preview (Sat) of iN Demand Nets' MLS Direct Kick TV package,



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which for \$79 features all 130 league games and select playoff contests.  
 -- **Animal Planet** picked up a 2nd season of "Jockeys" (summer) and signed 2 additional jockeys for feature, including Jockey of the Year *Garrett Gomez*. -- The 100th ep of **HDNet's** "Dan Rather Reports" (Tues) looks at problems facing the Obama Administration in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

**Affiliate Relations:** **Bravo** kicks off its 2nd "Top Chef" tour on Mar 27, with plans to stop in 21 cities. First up is NYC. Partnership opportunities for affils at each stop include a cooking demo, meet and greet with contestants from the show, a trivia wheel, logo placements and a sampling of affiliate products. Additionally, affiliates will provide 150 on-air spots, which include 75 "Top Chef: The Tour 2" promotional spots, as well as 75 spots for designated Bravo programming.

**On the Circuit:** Rep *G.K. Butterfield* (D-NC) and **Univision** anchor *Jorge Ramos* will be featured at **NAMIC's** annual award breakfast, Apr 3, 7am.  
 -- Sen *Jim DeMint* (R-SC) will address the **Christians in Communications** breakfast during the **Cable Show**, Apr 2, 7:30am. -- Nearly 30 sr level IT execs headline "CIO.IT," the 4th such special program track at the **Cable Show**. The CIOs of **Comcast, Rogers, TWC, Bright House, CNN, HBO** and **Discovery** are among speakers.

**People:** **TV Land** appointed *Eliot Goldberg* as svp, development and original programming.

## CableFAX Daily Stockwatch

Company	03/19 Close	1-Day Ch	Company	03/19 Close	1-Day Ch
<b>BROADCASTERS/DBS/MMDS</b>					
AMDOCS:	17.37	(0.58)	AMPHENOL:	28.33	0.10
BRITISH SKY:	26.50	(0.09)	APPLE:	101.62	0.10
DIRECTV:	22.07	(0.09)	ARRIS GROUP:	7.54	(0.16)
DISH:	10.73	(0.23)	AVID TECH:	9.84	(0.1)
DISNEY:	17.70	(0.41)	BIGBAND:	5.96	(0.39)
GE:	10.13	(0.19)	BLNDER TONGUE:	0.98	0.00
HEARST-ARGYLE:	2.04	0.24	BROADCOM:	19.69	(0.23)
NEWS CORP:	7.03	(0.3)	CISCO:	16.23	(0.27)
<b>MSOS</b>					
CABLEVISION:	12.95	(0.15)	CLEARWIRE:	4.20	(0.17)
CHARTER:	0.05	0.00	COMMSCOPE:	9.56	0.12
COMCAST:	13.05	(0.52)	CONCURRENT:	3.14	0.03
COMCAST SPCL:	12.37	(0.29)	CONVERGYS:	7.22	0.00
GCI:	5.79	(0.28)	CSG SYSTEMS:	13.49	(0.26)
KNOLOGY:	4.00	(0.04)	ECHOSTAR:	14.63	0.29
LIBERTY CAPITAL:	6.20	0.10	GOOGLE:	329.94	(3.16)
LIBERTY ENT:	19.02	0.20	HARMONIC:	6.16	(0.16)
LIBERTY GLOBAL:	12.93	0.14	INTEL:	15.15	(0.09)
LIBERTY INT:	3.26	0.16	JDSU:	3.33	0.05
MEDIACOM:	4.52	(0.28)	LEVEL 3:	0.72	0.05
SHAW COMM:	15.62	(0.2)	MICROSOFT:	17.14	0.18
TIME WARNER CABLE:	25.78	(1.37)	MOTOROLA:	4.07	(0.08)
VIRGIN MEDIA:	5.27	0.30	OPENTV:	1.43	0.00
WASH POST:	348.75	(8.33)	PHILIPS:	15.73	(0.43)
<b>PROGRAMMING</b>					
CBS:	4.32	(0.02)	RENTRAK:	9.14	(0.03)
CROWN:	2.00	0.01	SEACHANGE:	6.00	0.07
DISCOVERY:	16.27	(0.89)	SONY:	20.52	(0.35)
EW SCRIPPS:	1.57	(0.36)	SPRINT NEXTEL:	3.79	0.04
GRUPO TELEVISA:	12.97	(0.37)	THOMAS & BETTS:	24.21	(0.29)
HSN:	4.65	(0.13)	TIVO:	6.97	(0.25)
INTERACTIVE CORP:	15.08	0.18	TOLLGRADE:	5.83	0.00
LIBERTY:	22.87	0.42	UNIVERSAL ELEC:	17.18	(0.32)
LODGENET:	0.93	0.06	VONAGE:	0.40	(0.04)
NEW FRONTIER:	1.24	(0.27)	YAHOO:	13.74	0.32
OUTDOOR:	6.11	(0.39)	<b>TELCOS</b>		
PLAYBOY:	1.70	0.00	AT&T:	25.60	(0.1)
RHI:	1.25	(0.31)	QWEST:	3.54	0.04
SCRIPPS INT:	21.37	(0.25)	VERIZON:	30.25	(0.52)
TIME WARNER:	7.87	(0.69)	<b>MARKET INDICES</b>		
VALUEVISION:	0.39	(0.03)	DOW:	7400.80	(85.78)
VIACOM:	17.69	(0.29)	NASDAQ:	1483.48	(7.74)
WWE:	10.84	(0.18)	<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>		
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>					
3COM:	2.74	0.05			
ADC:	3.67	(0.17)			
ADVANTAGE:	1.60	(0.09)			
ALCATEL LUCENT:	1.65	0.00			

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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

**5Qs with WE tv's Steve Cheskin**

We talked with **WE tv's** svp programming & production Steve Cheskin about "The Locator" (season II premieres Mar 21, 9pm), where Troy Dunn finds and reunites missing loved ones.

**The Locator was WE tv's highest-rated series (0.7HH, per Nielsen). Did you make changes for season 2?** We tweaked it a bit, but it's basically the same Locator it was last year. We never hear about how Troy locates people, only that he does.

**Why?** Great question. That came up in both our focus groups. People wanted to know how he does it. So we asked [the show's production co **Asylum**] to include more about how Troy finds people. But it's not very interesting TV, so there's very little of it.

**So can you say how you located The Locator?** Asylum came to us with a pilot they had done for another network, and we loved it. We focus tested it, and I think it was the highest testing show I've seen in my career. So we knew we had to have it, even though it's the most expensive show we have [due to the travel involved in locating and reuniting people].

**Will The Locator's success inform future series?** Yes. We learned a show with such an incredible emotional hook will work on [WE]. It was a little bit different from the shows we had on at the time. So this year we will have a few more [like it] as well as transformational shows, where people's lives are changed. We'll again have "I Want To Save Your Life" (where people delve into why they gained weight and are assisted in losing it), and we're working on [an untitled] series with Asylum about open adoption, where you meet the mother who will be giving birth and who will decide who gets her baby. You'll meet the families who want to adopt and you'll see the baby being born. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Party Down," Fri, 10:30pm, **Starz**. Comedy's hard to do well. "Party's" premise is great: actors paying the bills as catering waiters. Yet only ep 3, at a seniors singles event, was outrageously funny, with *Ed Begley* and *Marilu Henner* in hilarious cameos. SA

**Notable:** A pair of farewells. First **Syfy's** "Battlestar Galactica" ends its magnificent run Fri, 9pm and so begins chatter with the inevitable: What will Syfy do now? Also ending, just for the season, is **HBO's** "Big Love" (Sun, 9pm). Sad to see it depart in what was its best season. Yet HBO eased the pain for some with news that "In Treatment" returns Apr 5, 9pm, albeit altered slightly (new patients and just 2 new shows/wk). -- Loved the writing in **MTV's** release for a "House of Style" special (Sat, 3pm). "From the streets to the runway, style plays an important role—especially for the younger generation, who rely on fashion for self expression." Had no idea. -- Best wishes to *Dan Rather* and **HDNet** as they celebrate 100 eps of "Dan Rather Reports" (Tues, 8pm ET). And it was 30 years ago yesterday that the House went on TV and cable had the good sense to back *Brian Lamb* on an idea called **C-SPAN**. SA

Basic Cable Rankings			
(3/09/09-3/15/09)			
Mon-Sun Prime			
1	USA	2	1987
1	DSNY	2	1909
3	FOXN	1.8	1735
4	TBSC	1.4	1438
4	ESPN	1.4	1412
4	NAN	1.4	1380
7	TNT	1.2	1225
8	A&E	1.1	1104
8	TOON	1.1	1079
8	HIST	1.1	1039
8	HALL	1.1	947
12	FAM	1	965
12	CMDY	1	953
12	LIFE	1	946
12	HGTV	1	938
12	AMC	1	902
17	FX	0.9	902
17	SCIF	0.9	898
17	DISC	0.9	861
17	TRU	0.9	810
21	SPK	0.8	829
21	CNN	0.8	748
21	FOOD	0.8	742
24	TLC	0.7	734
24	TVLD	0.7	683
24	VH1	0.7	682
24	MSNB	0.7	669
24	NOGG	0.7	514
29	ESP2	0.6	588
29	BET	0.6	543
29	LMN	0.6	437
32	MTV	0.5	534
32	HLN	0.5	510
32	BRAV	0.5	491
32	EN	0.5	454
32	NGC	0.5	342
32	OXYG	0.5	338
32	SOAP	0.5	325
39	TRAV	0.4	412
39	APL	0.4	402
39	NKTN	0.4	209
42	CMT	0.3	274
42	CNBC	0.3	254
42	GSN	0.3	240
42	WGNA	0.3	204
42	DHLT	0.3	198

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

**Head Case**

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