

# Cablefax Daily™

Friday — August 30, 2019

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 30 / No. 167

## Home Run: Yankees and Co Buy Back YES Network

All of the 22 **Fox** RSNs have found new ownership with the sale of **YES Network** back to the **New York Yankee's** parent company as well as a group of investors in a deal valued at \$3.47bln. The deal is for the 80% of the RSN that the Yankees didn't already own. **Yankee Global Enterprises** will be the majority owner with 26% of the network. **Sinclair** will own 20%, **Amazon** will receive 15% with the rights to buy more in the future, while financial investors **Blackstone Tactical Opportunities**, **RedBird Capital** and **Mubadala Capital** will roughly split 39% ownership. The deal was approved by the **DOJ** earlier in the week and closed Thursday afternoon. NY Yankees pres **Randy Levine** called the group a "dream team of partners," adding that "getting through this agreement has been incredibly collegial." YES Network pres **Jon Litner** will stay on in his current role to ensure continuity at the net and has signed a new contract with the deal's closure. Not many details were offered as to how the partners would work together with Levine shying away from shedding light on Amazon's role in particular. "The specifics will come in the future as we start to roll out new programs," Levine said during a press call Thursday. He highlighted Amazon's expertise in the world of digital and technology. It was confirmed that Sinclair will play a role in YES Network's distribution discussions in the future. Sinclair has majority ownership of the other 21 Fox Sports RSNs that Disney sold. The environment for RSNs has been somewhat tumultuous recently. **DISH** chmn **Charlie Ergen** made it clear on the company's 2Q19 earnings call that it was likely that regional sports would permanently be dropped from the company's lineup. It all comes down to carriage fees and justifying paying a higher price for the sports content. Levine said that the partners understand the environment and the changing perceived value of the RSNs, but they still feel confident in YES Network's place in a distributor's lineup and its difference from the other RSNs on the market. Sinclair pres **Scott Ripley** shared Levine's confidence and was unafraid of blackouts coming in YES Network's future. "These are some of the most-watched programs on the dial, which are really vital to any distributor's offering," Ripley said. "And when you compare the price of each channel or RSN versus any in-person entertainment option, you're getting an incredible value delivered right to your living room day in and day out."

**Nexstar, AT&T Reach Retrans Pact:** More than 120 **Nexstar** stations returned to **AT&T/DirectTV** on Thursday. The stations had been dark on the providers' lineups since July 4 due to a retrans impasse. The deal came ahead of Week 1

**Cablefax Selected by SCTE•ISBE  
as Exclusive Partner for the Official Show Daily**



## Supercharge Your Exposure!

“As the only official publication of cable's premier trade event, our **Cablefax SCTE•ISBE Cable-Tec Expo Show Daily** editions and video coverage will give advertisers and audiences new opportunities to connect with key decision-makers in the industry”

- Cablefax Publisher Michael Grebb.

**Featuring Expanded Coverage in  
Print, Online & Video Show Dailies**



**Space is selling quickly! Contact Olivia Murray at [omurray@accessintel.com](mailto:omurray@accessintel.com) or 301.354.2010**

Cablefax Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC ● www.cablefax.com ● 301.354.2101 ● Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, amaclean@accessintel.com ● Publisher: Michael Grebb, 323.380.6263, mgrebb@accessintel.com ● Senior Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, swinegardner@accessintel.com ● Associate Editor: Mollie Cahillane, 212.621.4951, mcahillane@accessintel.com ● Acct. Exec: Olivia Murray, 301.354.2010, omurray@accessintel.com ● Director of Marketing: Kate Schaeffer, kschaeffer@accessintel.com ● Prod. Mgr: Joann Fato, jfato@accessintel.com ● Kerry Smith, Divisional President, Marketing & Media Group, ksmith@accessintel.com ● Group Subs or Subscription Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, clientservices@accessintel.com ● Annual subscription price: \$1,749.00/year ● Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

of college football, as well as potentially bad weather with Dorian predicted to hit the US as a Category 4 hurricane this weekend. Nexstar's broadcast portfolio includes Tampa NBC affiliate WFLA and Panama City station WMBB. On Thursday, Florida Gov *Ron DeSantis* expanded the state of emergency to include all 67 counties in the state because of the storm's uncertain path. **DISH** is on Day 45 of a retrans skirmish that has **Meredith** stations dark on its lineup, including Mobile-Pensacola's WALA. AT&T remains in a retrans stalemate with **Northwest Broadcasting** as well as several independent stations groups representing 20 stations in 20 cities, including Mobile, AL/Pensacola, FL's WPMI. Dorian caused some last-minute change-ups to Week 1 of college football. Boise State vs Florida State is moving to noon Saturday, with the game now being played on **ESPNEWS** and moving to Tallahassee from Jacksonville. The change had the ripple effect of moving UGA-Vanderbilt to **ESPN** from **SEC Network**, and Georgia Southern-LSU to SEC Net from **ESPNU**.

**Altitude Loses First of Potentially Three Distributors:** **Altitude Sports** hit the first of a number of distribution bumps, being dropped from **DISH**'s lineup late Wednesday. The blackout affected customers in nine states including Colorado, Utah, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, South Dakota and Wyoming. DISH claims that Altitude Sports is asking for unreasonable rates for its channels and is demanding payment on a guaranteed minimum number of subscribers. "We're no longer going to support the broken regional sports TV business model that seeks to have the majority of pay-TV customers pay for the few who watch," DISH svp, programming *Andy LeCuyer* said in a statement. Altitude could see greater struggles on Saturday as its deadlines for carriage on **DirectTV** and **Comcast** expire. DirectTV holds that it has made a very fair offer to Altitude. "Our goal is to offer Rapids, Nuggets and Avalanche games to anyone who wants them most at a value that makes sense to our customers overall," **AT&T** said in a statement. "But we will do bad deals on behalf of our customers, even if it means no longer carrying certain content." Altitude covers the Colorado Avalanche, Denver Nuggets, Colorado Mammoth and Colorado Rapids.

**MSG Networks Ups Buyback:** A week after rattling some investors with a 6.5% sub decline in 4Q earnings, **MSG Networks** is showing it has faith in the RSN business by authorizing a \$300mln increase to its existing stock repurchase program. That puts the total available authorization at \$436mln. It's also planning to commence a "modified Dutch auction" tender offer to buy up to \$250mln of its outstanding Class A common stock, par value \$0.01 per share (the "Class A Shares"), at a price per Class A Share of not less than \$15.00 and not greater than \$17.50. "MSG Networks has a strong balance sheet and generates robust free cash flow, which we will use to execute a stock repurchase program that provides us with flexibility to take advantage of market opportunities. We understand the media landscape is evolving, but remain confident in the long-term prospects for our business and our continued



**NAMIC**  
NAMIC.COM

33RD ANNUAL NAMIC CONFERENCE

# Breaking Barriers: *The Multicultural Media Agenda*

SEPTEMBER 17-18, 2019 · NEW YORK, NY

REGISTER NOW AT [CONFERENCE.NAMIC.COM](http://CONFERENCE.NAMIC.COM)

ability to create value for shareholders,” pres/CEO *Andrea Greenberg* said in a statement.

**Regulatory Rates Rise for Video Providers:** The **FCC** approved an order for collecting FY19’s required \$339mln in regulatory fees, with \$67.02mln of that slated to come from cable TV systems, IPTV providers and DBS operators. Once again, DBS will pay more as the Commission has steadily increased its obligations to bring satellite up to par with other operators. DISH and DirecTV have fought fee parity, but have been unsuccessful with rates steadily increasing since FY16. For FY19, DBS ops will pay 60 cents per sub per year, 12 cents more than they paid last year. Other MVPDs will pay 86 cents per sub per year, up from 77 cents in FY18. **ACA Connects** applauded the DBS increase, but added the FCC would have been justified to raise it more. ACA urged the Commission to complete “its long journey” to fee parity in FY20.

**Ready for Kick Off:** For those hoping for a last-minute **ACC Network** carriage deal ahead of Thursday’s Clemson/Georgia Tech game (8pm), don’t hold your breath. **Cox**, **Comcast** and **DISH** didn’t have deals as of press time, so customers cheering on the Yellow Jackets or the Tigers may need to head to a friend’s or a bar to watch the matchup. The network has carriage on **DirecTV**, **Altice USA**, **Charter/Spectrum** as well as through various **NCTC** members and streaming services including **YouTube TV**, **Hulu Live** and **PlayStation Vue**.

**FCC Releases Internet Stats:** Total internet connections increased by about 4% between December 2016 and December 2017 to 421mln, according to the most-recent stats released by the **FCC**. During the period, mobile internet connections increased 4.5% YOY to 313mln, while fixed connections grew to 108mln—up about 2% from December 2016. The report, released Thursday, also broke down speeds, finding that as of December 2017, 38% of fixed connections were at least 100Mbps. Just 3% came in slower than 3Mbps, while 32% were at least 25Mbps downstream. The remaining 17% were at least 10Mbps down.

**Amobee, 4C and Adobe Lead Cross-Channel Ad Pack:** While cross-channel video advertising may be an emerging market, it’s already a crowded one. Research company **Forrester** dove into the market by examining 13 of the top providers in the category — **4C**, **Adobe**, **Amobee**, **Cadent**, **Centro**, **dataxu**, **MediaMath**, **Mediaocean**, **Simulmedia**, **The Trade Desk**, **Verizon Media**, **VideoAmp**, and **Xandr**. The report found that Amobee, 4C and Adobe are currently leading in the space. The research firm ranked dataxu, The Trade Desk, VideoAmp, and Xandr as strong performers; Mediaocean, Cadent, MediaMath, Simulmedia, and Verizon Media as contenders; and Centro as a challenger. To compile the report, Forrester evaluated 13 vendors across 10 criteria including: plan/schedule building, buying: traditional linear, buying: set-top box, buying: OTT / CTV, audience discovery and building, buying: online video, measurement, company vision, product vision and product roadmap. The report states that Amobee “leads with robust planning and portfolio management capabilities” and says the company combines real-time (programmatic) and futures-based (such as TV upfronts) planning and buying tools for cross-channel audience-based buying and portfolio management, and says it’s the best fit for multi-brand companies investing heavily in linear and digital video. The report found 4C is strongest of all 13 with extensive linear and OTT/CTV inventory. Adobe came in top with an “integrated story across audience, analytics, and activation.” The report cites Adobe’s partnership with **Roku** for two-way deterministic ID matching.

**Tennis Fans Trending Down:** We may be in the middle of the US Open, but that doesn’t necessarily mean everyone cares about tennis. Data from **Kantar** found that just 10% of Americans consider themselves a fan of pro tennis. Only two other sports had fewer self-reported fans: esports (10%) and professional soccer (8%). However, the sport is seeing growth in some demographics, with 18% of African Americans saying they are fans of professional tennis, ranking it above NASCAR, NHL Hockey, pro golf, soccer and esports. The sport is also popular with Gen Z, with 17% of that generation identifying as a fan, compared to just 7% of Millennials. None of that seemed to affect US Open ratings though. After three days of exclusive live coverage, **ESPN**’s overnight ratings for the US Open are up 33% compared to 2018, to a 0.8 rating (including **ESPN2** telecasts). Wednesday night’s rating on was a 1.1, the best so far and equaling the best achieved in the first or second round on record (back to 2009).

**NAMIC Announces Headliners:** Former RNC chmn *Michael Steele* and *April Reign*, creator of the viral hashtag-turned-movement #OscarsSoWhite, will headline the annual **NAMIC** Conference taking place Sept 17-18 in NYC. The conference theme is “Breaking Barriers: The Multicultural Media Agenda.” **NAMIC** and **WICT** will also release the results of their biennial Workforce Diversity Survey, which provides metrics on ethnic and gender diversity in the cable industry.

**People:** **Viacom** and **CBS** are continuing to prepare for their pending merger, this time naming *Julia Phelps* as evp, chief communications and corporate marketing officer at ViacomCBS upon closing of the deal. Phelps has served as evp, communications, culture and marketing at Viacom since April 2017. She first joined Viacom in 2005 from **Devries Public Relations** in NY.

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

## 'Keeping Faith' in the Human Race

What would you do to keep your family together? That question is at the center of "Keeping Faith," a thriller whose sophomore season is coming to **Acorn TV** Friday. Season 2 begins 18 months after the events of the first season's finale, and the older Faith (*Eve Myles*) is far tougher than the woman audiences met in Season 1. Still, a softness remains that allows her to keep her heart open to those that have wronged her. "But the big question is: why is Faith still keeping faith with the man who let her down so badly? It's because she believes in family, in forgiveness, in giving the benefit of the doubt," creator/writer *Matthew Hall* and director/producer/writer *Pip Broughton* said in a joint interview. "The series explores the question: are innocence, honesty and optimism about the human condition enough?" While so much has changed, one thing has stayed the same. More than ever, Faith is dedicated to her children and being the perfect working mother. Still, it can't erase the damage done. "The performances by the kids and Eve's relationship to them is... part of the success of the series together with the hyper realistic acting style, the landscapes and the music. It's immersive, it's intimate. And key to that intimacy is the children," the duo said. "This season, they are more aware, more articulate, more conflicted." The two oldest children react differently to the trauma they've experienced. Megan expresses the hurt and confusion while the older Alys shows more of the fury and the kickback with the turn her life has taken. Season 2 has plenty to live up to. The first season took home three Welsh BAFTAs, including Best Actress for Myles, Best Writer for Hall and a win for original music. But that hasn't placed any extra pressure on the show's creative team. It's just continuing to explore Faith's storyline. "The delight of doing a second season is that all the cast know their characters so well and can play them with such subtlety and relish the contradictions," they said. — *Sara Winegardner*

**Reviews:** "No One Saw a Thing," series finale, 11pm, Thursday, **Sundance**. An oft-heard phrase among TV fans is, "I want to watch that [series] from the beginning." A fair claim when contemplating a multi-season series loaded with plot twists and nuanced characters. Not so with this six-part doc from *Avi Belkin*. In fact, it might have been a more effective presentation had its story been told in three installments. In addition, tuning in for next Thursday's very good finale, new viewers are in the dark about the story's basics for seconds only. In short, the bully of Skidmore, MO, (population 300), *Ken Rex McElroy*, was murdered in what seems a coordinated assault. Tired of McElroy's reign of terror, the town allegedly planned the killing. Though 40 people witnessed the 1981 incident, the case remains unsolved, hence the series' title. Following the killing, Skidmore has experienced far more than its share of gruesome crimes. Is this punishment or coincidence? The series finale includes several compelling story lines, including a description of one of the terrible crimes and a segment about how McElroy's family continues to cope with his death. -- "Maigret," series premiere, 7pm ET, Saturday, **Ovation**. It requires effort to accept *Rowan Atkinson* as 1950s French detective Jules Maigret instead of Mr. Bean. The reward is worth the trouble. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings* (8/19/19-8/25/19)		
Mon-Sun	MC US	MC US AA (000)
FNC	0.763	2,330
MSNBC	0.486	1,483
HGTV	0.413	1,262
ESPN	0.407	1,245
USA	0.378	1,154
HALL	0.360	1,100
TLC	0.356	1,087
A&E	0.345	1,053
HISTORY	0.317	967
DIS	0.286	873
ID	0.281	859
FOOD	0.268	818
CNN	0.265	809
TBS	0.239	731
TNT	0.222	678
ADSM	0.205	627
TVLAND	0.200	612
NICK	0.198	603
HMM	0.194	594
INSP	0.192	587
FX	0.192	585
BRAVO	0.182	555
DSNY	0.170	519
NAN	0.169	516
FRFM	0.161	492
LIFE	0.160	489
WETV	0.158	482
VH1	0.155	475
APL	0.155	472
AMC	0.151	461
NF	0.149	455
SYFY	0.149	454
PARA	0.148	453
HBO	0.135	411
DSJR	0.130	398
MTV	0.127	388
TRAVEL	0.125	382
GSN	0.123	376
NKJR	0.116	354
NATGEO	0.114	349
WGNA	0.108	330

\*P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.



## CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE HONOREES!

Cablefax's 2019 Top Ops Magazine is tipping its hat to the operators that have hit it out of the park this year.

Read the digital version and check out the shareable profiles at

[www.CablefaxTopOps.com](http://www.CablefaxTopOps.com)