

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Press Start: More Cable Players Paying Attention to Esports

Some of cable's biggest names will be watching the same big game this weekend, but the players won't be throwing around a ball. Members of the San Francisco Shock and Vancouver Titans will wield only a mouse and keyboard as they compete in the **Overwatch League** Grand Finals, airing on **ABC**, the **ESPN** app and livestreaming on **Twitch** at 3pm Sunday (9/29). **Xfinity** is the presenting sponsor of the finals, to be held at Philadelphia's Wells Fargo Center, and **Comcast Spectacor** has an Overwatch League team of its own in the Philadelphia Fusion. But Comcast isn't the only MVPD paying attention to the growth of esports. **Cox Communications** sponsors the Georgia-based Atlanta Reign. The Reign is owned and operated by ATL Esports Ventures, a partnership between **Cox Enterprises** and **Province, Inc.** "We actually went to Los Angeles and took in some esports competitions in person," Cox Enterprises senior manager, strategy & corporate development **Matthew Kogan** told **CFX**. "Witnessing that really drove home how real this is and the fan base, the diverse young demographics, the excitement around it, the growth potential... that was really what sold us on the opportunities within the space." The influence of the space is only growing as Overwatch League teams prepare to host matches in their home cities next season. Some team owners, like Comcast, have begun building their own dedicated gaming stadiums while others, including Cox, are still hunting for a place to play. For inaugural season, all the teams played in L.A. "A big milestone for us will be moving the team and any supporting operations to the local market from Los Angeles. Once that happens, we want to continue to engage the fans locally," Kogan said. "We hosted a homestand in July for the League... and we sold that event out." These gaming arenas are state-of-the-art entertainment venues and the need for strong networks and connectivity can't be overstated. "In the future, they won't just rely on cutting-edge technology to power live, esports competitions," **Arris** director of marketing and brand management **Bethany Hiitola** said. "They'll need a futureproof network to enable their thousands of spectators to interact with the experience over WiFi, VT, AR and more." Arris signed on as a sponsor of Comcast's Philadelphia Reign in January, a move that Hiitola said allows the company to showcase the capabilities of its broadband technology in spaces where speed and performance are "mission critical." "The combination of Arris, **CommScope** and **Ruckus** gives us a uniquely broad perspective and portfolio in the many types of connectivity—across the network, cloud, home and

Again and again and again and again
and again and again and again and
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and again and again and again and
again and again and again and again
and again. We did it again.

For the 27th consecutive season, Univision finished as the #1 Spanish-language network. We also ended the season as the 5th largest broadcast network in primetime, and outperformed USA, TBS, TNT, Bravo and A&E. And as America's Hispanic Superbrand, we were the #1 network for Hispanics in any language.

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beyond,” she added. Playing video games and even watching them may not be for everyone, but the new technology being developed to power next-gen gaming experiences will have an effect on more of the population than you’d expect. “The high-availability, high-reliability demands of esports can be generalized to many other crucial applications in residential, enterprise and smart city scenarios,” Hiitola said. “For example, as our home networks become increasingly responsible for security applications—like live streaming HD video from perimeter cameras to monitoring companies or to our phones—the expectation for fast, seamless, and dependable wireless broadband continues to rise.”

At Our Deadline: Sinclair stations were still on **AT&T/DirectTV** at 5pm Friday, the deadline for a contract renewal between the two. The fact talks were continuing is seen as a sign that they are closer to a deal covering Sinclair’s 136 stations and **Tennis Channel**. We’ll keep you updated on any developments over the weekend at **Cablefax.com**.

Disney Expands Distribution with Sony: Sony’s OTT service **PlayStation Vue** will continue to offer content from the **Walt Disney Company**, and a new deal greatly expands its offerings. The agreement expands the previous deal, and adds the **FX** and **Nat Geo** networks, which Disney acquired earlier this year during the **21st Century Fox** deal. Newly-launched **ACC Network** is also getting carriage, and fans will have a host of other sports offerings from the full **ESPN** suite. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Locast Files Counterclaims against Broadcasters: Free over-the-air broadcast streaming app **Locast** isn’t sitting back while broadcasters sue it. **Sport Fan Coalition**, the nonprofit that operates it, filed counterclaims Friday in a federal court, alleging broadcasters are failing to transmit over-the-air signals strong enough to cover local television markets, which forces consumers to pay for video services that include their programming. “The broadcasters have then colluded to abuse their copyrights and extend their market power in a manner not contemplated under the copyright laws, to collect billions of dollars from consumers by charging ‘retransmission consent’ fees to cable and satellite providers that carry their local television programs in each designated market area,” the suit said. The four major broadcast networks sued over the Locast service July 31—18 months after it launched. NAB has called Locast a “thinly disguised as a not-for-profit entity that mirrors failed predecessors Aereo and FilmOn in its bid to legitimize the theft of local TV broadcast signals.” Locast argues that it is legal because it’s a nonprofit digital translator service that fits under US Copyright law, which allows nonprofits to retransmit broadcasters’ signals.

WarnerMedia Signs Content Deal: WarnerMedia and **New Cadence Productions** signed a two-year, first look deal. This will give WarnerMedia Latinx content for mainstream English language viewers. NCP will initially

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CrownMedia



produce comedy specials for the new HA Comedy Festival in San Antonio, which WarnerMedia will sponsor.

Gracies Leadership Awards Honorees Announced: The **Alliance for Women in Media** announced the women execs that will be honored at the Gracies Leadership Awards. Honorees include **Mary Berner**, CEO, **Cumulus**; **Weezie Kramer**, COO, **Entercom**; **Rosemary Mercedes**, evp and chief communications officer, **Univision**; **Michelle Rice**, gm, **TV One**; **Michelle Vicary**, evp of programming and network publicity, **Crown Media** and **Danyelle Wright**, vp employment and labor law and chief diversity officer, **E.W. Scripps**. The awards will be presented Nov 21 at the Plaza Hotel in NY.

Ratings: Overall, college football games are up 44% YOY on **Fox Sports**, while viewership for games on **Fox** and **FS1** are up a combined 32%. Last Saturday's Big Noon telecasts averaged 3.82mIn viewers for Fox Sports, up 78% over its noon telecasts a year ago.

Programming: **HBO Max** and **Ellen DeGeneres** are partnering for four original series. The upcoming streaming service from **WarnerMedia** ordered three shows straight to series: "Ellen's Home Design Challenge," "First Dates Hotel" and "Little Ellen." A fourth series, docuseries "Finding Einstein," is in development and blessed by the Einstein estate.

Cablefax Dashboard

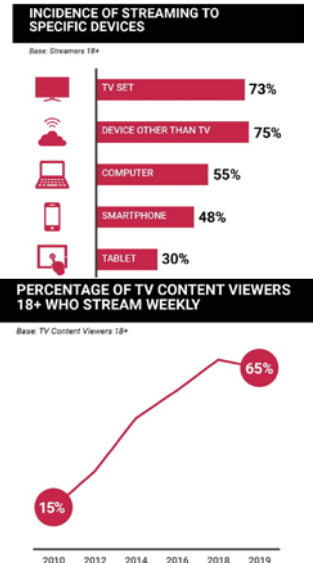
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Up Ahead

- Sept 30 - Oct 3:** SCTE-ISBE Cable-Tec Expo; New Orleans, LA
- Oct 14-17:** MIPCOM; Cannes, France
- Oct 15:** RampUp Chicago; Chicago
- Oct 16-17:** C2HR Conference; Philadelphia
- Oct 22-24:** MWC 19; Los Angeles
- Nov 4-5:** DC5G; Arlington, VA

Research



(Horowitz Research's FOCUS OTT & SVOD 2019 Report)

Quotable

"The good news for us is that in the space that we're in, we have the greatest chefs... We do not really have a competition. For somebody to try and aggregate the greatest chefs on Earth and be able to promote it the way that we can promote it and to be able to shoot it when we're already shooting in the kitchens... when it comes to the brand that we're in, we own almost everything.

— **Discovery CEO David Zaslav** speaking to press on the upcoming launch of Food Network Kitchen



Cablefax is *thrilled* to be the *Official Show Daily*

For the first time ever, in addition to the morning print edition, Cablefax will produce a news-driven **EXPO Show Video Daily** highlighting all the major show developments.



Olivia Murray is ready to answer all your questions. Contact her at omurray@accessintel.com

Ad Space