

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Clear Picture: Some MVPDs Sit Out 4K Olympics, Comcast NBCU is All In

When the Winter Olympics kicks off Friday, **NBCUniversal** will be offering 4K Ultra HD coverage, but that doesn't necessarily mean viewers will be able to see it. Distributors must opt to carry the feed and are carrying the footage in different ways.

For some providers, such as **DirecTV** and **Cox**, they'll offer the feed, but not until the next day. **YouTube TV** is offering a full simulcast of the 4K HDR footage, which could help the vMVPD push its \$19.99/month add-on 4K Plus package (the first year of the service is discounted to \$9.99/month through a current promo). Others on board the 4K Beijing simulcast train include **Verizon Fios**, **fuboTV** in its largest markets (NYC, L.A. and Boston) and **Altice USA's Optimum**.

Charter, **DISH** and **Mediacom** told **CFX** they do not have plans to offer the 4K HDR footage. A Mediacom representative said there just aren't a lot of 4K boxes in the field at this point. 4K continues to be a chicken-and-egg game, with distributors saying they need programmers to offer a full slate of UHD content versus one-off events, while networks need distribution commitments to make a 4K commitment.

Of course, **Comcast** will offer all the NBCU 4K content available to its customers. For the first time, the operator will autotune eligible customers directly to the channel when 4K coverage is airing if they have a 4K-capable set-top box and a 4K TV. It works the same way autotune from SD to HD does. Consumers can also say "4K" into their voice remotes

to launch a dedicated 4K page where Olympics coverage will be prominently featured.

NBCU's 4K Ultra HD programming includes the Opening Ceremony live on **NBC** and each night's NBC primetime show, which will include sports such as figure skating, Alpine skiing and snowboarding. The Winter Games will also be more accessible to viewers, with closed captioning available for all digital livestreams as well as programming airing across NBCU's broadcast and cable networks. Additionally, audio description services, in which broadcast audio is interspersed with skilled voices describing Olympic and Paralympic scenes and context, will be available for viewers who are blind or visually impaired.

While the Opening Ceremony will air live Friday morning on NBC and **Peacock**, it will repeat during primetime. The Games actually kick off before the ceremony. USA Network will have curling at 6pm ET and Men's Alpine Skiing at 10pm, followed by Switzerland taking on Canada in a women's preliminary hockey game at 11:10pm. Peacock, the home base for every minute of Olympics action, has live events all day Wednesday.

NBCU is already looking forward to future Olympic opportunities and how it can monetize the global event through its One platform. NBCU Advertising Chief **Linda Yaccarino** on Monday announced the promotion of **Dan Lovinger** to President, NBC Advertising Sales and Partnerships. He'll be responsible for monetizing all of the company's Olympic and Paralympic interests, including leading media sales for all Games through 2032. "To capitalize on this enormous opportunity and priority



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for our company, we've decided to create a dedicated leadership role focused on merging our sponsorship and media opportunities to create a truly One Platform experience for our Olympic and Paralympic partners. In other words, this newly created role is essential for our future—and Dan is the perfect person for the job,” Yaccarino wrote in a memo to staffers. With Lovinger's promotion, the remainder of the NBC Sports portfolio sales will continue to report into Mark Marshall.

QUESTIONS REMAIN ON OPEN INTERNET RULES

The Ninth Circuit's decision to deny an ask for a preliminary injunction on California's Senate Bill 822 Friday may have produced more questions than real answers on net neutrality. The legislation would put in place a statewide policy banning ISPs from slowing access to websites or discriminating between different websites or applications. **NCTA, ACA Connects, CTIA** and **USTelecom** now have the option to appeal the decision to a full panel, but no decision about an additional appeal has been made by the telecom lobbying groups. The Ninth Circuit decision was being closely watched by those tied to the battle over Vermont's net neutrality law, which was largely put on ice until a decision was made in California. Time will tell whether other states will now move to adopting their own versions of California's principles, but the road to do so won't get any simpler. There's also some that question if the Supreme Court will get involved and invoke the major questions doctrine, which holds that courts should not defer to any agency's statutory interpretations that concern questions of major economic or political significance. Things could get even more complicated if **FCC** Chair *Jessica Rosenworcel* begins proceedings to reclass

sify broadband under Title II. Real answers may only arrive if Congress agrees on net neutrality legislation, but when and if that comes is anybody's guess. “Now both sides have the risk that their own action can lead to a result they don't want; for those favoring Title II, they have to fear the Supreme Court throwing out the policy on ‘major question’ grounds,’ while for those favoring Title I (most importantly, industry), the fear is a material number of states, including some of the largest, proceeding with regulation on net neutrality and other issues,” **New Street Research** said in a note. “This increases the odds of a long-sought compromise to finally resolve the issue, but DC is not very adroit at compromise these days.”

FINAL COUNTDOWN FOR SOHN VOTE

Add former **Disney** lobbyist *Preston Padden* to the list of supporters who back *Gigi Sohn's* nomination as an **FCC** commissioner. “I strongly disagree with Gigi on some issues. We have fought vigorously on many industry panels over more than 35 years. But I never found Gigi to be disagreeable. She is a great human being and an effective advocate for competition and new market entrants—all in the service of consumers,” Padden penned in an op/ed Monday for [InsideSources](#). He wrote on Twitter that he wrote the piece after the *WSJ* rejected his letter in support of Sohn. Over the weekend, the *WSJ* ran [an editorial](#) that said Sohn agreeing to recuse herself from retrans or broadcast copyright issues for the first three years of her term because of her involvement with the now shuttered streamer **Locast** isn't enough. The editorial questioned why Sohn didn't correct the record that Locast agreed to pay \$700,000 instead of \$32 million to settle its copyright lawsuit

Mark Your Calendars!

Cablefax 2022 Award Submission Deadlines

The FAXIES Awards

Deadline: March 11
Final Deadline: March 18

Top Ops Nominations

Deadline: April 1

The Diversity List Nominations

Deadline: June 3
Final Deadline: June 10

Most Powerful Women Nominations

Deadline: August 12
Final Deadline: August 19

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with broadcasters. “Her recusal doesn’t excuse dishonesty. If she prevaricated about the Locast settlement, how can Senators believe her promise to regulate without bias?” the editorial board wrote. Sohn’s nomination is to be considered at **Senate Commerce’s** executive session Wednesday morning.

WHITE HOUSE RELEASES INFRASTRUCTURE GUIDE

The White House released the first edition of a Bipartisan Infrastructure Law guidebook, a resource the federal government hopes will serve as the primary resource for state, local, Tribal and territorial governments to be impacted by programs included in the infrastructure bill. The guidebook includes 12 chapters grouping programs covered under the infrastructure bill into different issue areas. Cover notes detail how stakeholders can prepare for the funding and additional resources they should be aware of in the months to come. Along with the guidebook, the White House has published a data file that allows users to sort programs funded under the law by fields including agency, amount, recipient or program name. It plans to release additional versions of the guidebook with updated dates and timelines for program implementation as well as case studies, best practices and links to key resources. It also intends to reach out to states, local governments, Tribal governments, territories and others in an effort to ensure technical assistance is delivered as fast as possible and capacity is deployed to underserved communities.

UNIVISION COMPLETES TELEvisa BUY

Univision completed its acquisition of **Televisa’s** media content and production assets Monday, resulting in the creation of combined company **TelevisaUnivision**. Assets acquired by Univision in the deal include four broadcast channels, 27 pay TV channels, the Videocine movie studio, SVOD **Blim TV** and the **Televisa** trademark. Univision owns the Univision and **UniMás** broadcast networks, nine Spanish-language cable networks, 59 television stations, 57 radio stations and AVOD streamer **PrendeTV**. *Wade Davis* will guide the combined company as CEO. *Alfonso de Angoitia*, the Executive Chairman of **Televisa’s** board, will hold the same role on **TelevisaUnivision’s** board. **Softbank International** CEO *Marcelo Claure* will serve as Vice Chairman. The company is still looking to launch a global streaming service in 2022 that will feature both a free and a premium subscription tier. It’s been promoted as having the largest offering of original Spanish-language content in the U.S. and Latin America, including sports, news and entertainment programming.

CARRIAGE

Comcast reached a multi-year distribution renewal with **AMC Networks** that includes all of the programmer’s linear networks and expanded distribution of its targeted streaming services to Xfinity TV, broadband and XClass customers. Comcast already carries **AMCN’s** streamers, so this is about expanding their availability to more customers and platforms. The two have a history of working together in streaming, with Comcast was where **AMC+** made its debut in 2020.

RATINGS

Viewers gave **Fox Weather’s** first simulcast on **Fox News Saturday** a warm welcome. “America’s Weather Weekend” at 5am drew in 442,000 viewers and 62,000 P25-54 thanks to its coverage of the weekend’s nor’easter. According to **Adobe Analytics**, last week was the second best ever for **Fox Weather** in terms of unique viewing devices.

COMCAST FIBER CABLES DAMAGED BY GUNSHOTS

Thousands of **Comcast** customers in the Bay Area were left without internet Sunday after gunshots damaged some of the company’s fiber cables. According to NBC Bay Area, Oakland police have footage of someone firing 17 rounds into the air at approximately 3am PT, some of which struck the cables. As of Sunday evening, anywhere between 15,000-20,000 customers were still experiencing service disruptions. It was especially bad timing given Sunday’s NFL action.

PROGRAMMING

Disney is embracing K-dramas with original series “Snowdrop” premiering on **Disney+** on Feb. 9. – “Adam Eats the 80s,” debuting on the **History Channel** on Feb. 27 at 10pm, takes another look at the forgotten foods of the 1980s. The third season of “The Food That Built America” will serve as the lead in to the new series. – **Food Network** has wrapped production on “The Taste Buds with Rhett & Link” featuring **YouTube** stars *Rhett McLaughlin & Link Neal* exploring America’s food brands. The series will premiere later this year on **Food Network** and **discovery+**. – The third season of “Ultimate Cowboy Showdown” will debut on April 21 at 8pm ET on **INSP**.

PEOPLE

Crown Media Family Networks named *Julia Rao* SVP, Finance. She’s spent more than 20 years in media and consumer products, previously serving as SVP/CFO for **National Geographic** U.S. Networks and **National Geographic Studios**. She’s also spent time at **Discovery** and media jv **3net**. – **FCC** Chair *Jessica Rosenworcel* announced a number of staff changes at the agency Monday. *Alejandro Roark* is joining the Commission as Chief of the **Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau**. *Debra Jordan*, who has served as the Deputy Chief of the **Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau**, will rise to the position of Chief of the bureau. *Holly Saurer*, *Rosenworcel’s* legal advisor on media for the past year, has been named Chief of the **Media Bureau**. Acting General Counsel *Michele Ellison* will permanently serve in the role and *Loyaan Egal* will lead the Commission’s Enforcement Bureau as Acting Chief.

ON THE CIRCUIT

BCAP’s [Cable Academy](#) is returning after a two-year COVID hiatus. The annual Pennsylvania regional gathering of broadband providers, cable operators, programmers and suppliers is set for April 27-28 at the Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square. – The [CFO Summit](#), **Media Financial Management Association’s** winter event designed to help the media industry’s financial leaders prepare for the challenges ahead, will return to an in-person experience, March 3-4, at the Grand Pelican Resort in Ft. Lauderdale.