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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Technical Foul: Fragmentation

'A Real Priority' as New NBA Deal Begins

The **NBA** is entering a new era when it tips off the 2025-26 season Tuesday. The Thunder will defend their first-ever NBA championship, 15-time All-Star *Kevin Durant* will make his debut with the Rockets and *LeBron James* will begin the chase for another ring alongside *Luka Doncic*. Off the hardwood, however, the league is turning the page and embarking on a [new 11-year media rights deal](#)—but it's one that closes the book on a partnership that stretches back nearly four decades.

While the NBA and **Warner Bros. Discovery** will still work together in an [adjusted manner](#), the league will no longer air games on **TNT** for the first time since 1989. Instead, its deals are split among **Disney**, **NBCUniversal** and **Prime Video** for a reported total value of \$75 billion. It's Prime Video's rookie season with the NBA as the **Amazon**-owned streamer marks its largest sports investment since obtaining Thursday Night Football. **ESPN**, meanwhile, is the lone incumbent rights holder, though NBCU returns after a 23-year hiatus and a new pet **Peacock**.

By now, sports fans are familiar with the array of platforms and subscriptions needed to catch all of the games, but fragmentation is still a prevalent issue that drives viewers away from tuning in (and others toward illegal streaming alternatives). It'll take time for most fans to get used to the new cadence of nationally televised NBA games, but ESPN SVP, Sports Production *Tim Corrigan* said it'll be vital for the league and its three partners to keep fans informed on where to find broadcasts.

"I think that's going to be a real priority for all of us, just making sure that people know where to go," Corrigan said on a call with media Thursday. "There's 40% more national games than there were last year, which is great, but people need to know where to go to get them. And I think that's really going to be a big responsibility on all three of the partners, as well as the league, to beat that drum and make sure people know where to go to get this, because the additional over-the-air on NBC and **ABC** is a big deal, and it's going to be more available. And then some of the [streaming services] ... we need to drive folks and let them know where to go."

Disney will carry 80 regular-season games per season, with up to 60 airing on ESPN and the remaining 20 or so on ABC. ABC and ESPN will carry one of the two Conference Finals in 10 of the 11 years part of the deal. ABC will remain the host of the NBA Finals throughout the duration of the pact, extending a run that first began in 2003.

Prime Video will get 66 regular-season games, including Thursday night doubleheaders beginning in January, Friday evening doubleheaders, select Saturday afternoon games and at least one game on Black Friday. It'll get a handful of games from the in-season NBA Cup competition as well as all six of the Play-In Tournament's matchups. Additionally, Prime Video will rotate with NBCU for a Conference Finals series across six years, starting with the 2026-27 season.

NBCU has a little bit of a head start from its existing widespread presence in sports—not to mention it's had multiple stints broadcasting the NBA, the latest running from 1990-2002.

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Still, it'll juggle games between NBC and Peacock, adding another layer to the fragmentation problem. That's where it helps that NBCU's rights come in orderly fashion: Peacock will have an exclusive doubleheader on every Monday of the season, followed by two games on NBC on Tuesdays. Once Sunday Night Football ends in February, that slot will move to the NBA.

"It's a pretty simple pattern. We're very fortunate [with] the parts of the schedule we have," *Sam Flood*, NBC Sports' Executive Producer, said in a separate media call Thursday. "Like the other partners, we'll be happy to promote the full schedule of NBA and make people aware of where to find the great NBA product across the other two partners, Amazon and ESPN. So we're ready to work as one to make that happen."

Most importantly, in Flood's view, is that NBCU has been in a full-court press to promote its imminent NBA coverage. He praised *Jennifer Storms*, CMO of NBCU Television & Streaming, for "making a lot of noise about how this is going to work." It was appropriate that a live activation was happening at 30 Rockefeller Plaza simultaneously with NBCS' media call. NBCS showcased a custom LED halfcourt alongside 30 NBA team-inspired basketballs, offering fans the opportunity to take photos with *Michael Bubl  *, *Maria Taylor* and others, in addition to 3-point competitions, youth clinics and immersive art.

Changes Beyond the Games

Fans will notice an NBA staple also has a new home. "Inside the NBA" departed TNT and will wear the jersey of ESPN moving forward. The show originally premiered during the 1989-90 season and currently boasts the cast of *Ernie Johnson*, *Charles Barkley*, *Kenny Smith* and *Shaquille O'Neal*. Despite the basketball prowess of the group, its notoriety primarily stems from the comedic aspect of Inside the NBA's analysis.

That's why ESPN has no plans to make large-scale adjustments. "In Atlanta, same studio, same set, same cast, same graphics, same music, same animation, same producer," Corrigan said.

ESPN will make minor tweaks and enhancements, but for the most part, the network wants to maintain "an all-time great product." As a tip-off show, Inside the NBA will be an hour before each ESPN telecast and 30 minutes ahead of ABC-televised games. Post-game on ESPN will be at least an hour and 30 minutes on ABC, but it'll go to the ESPN app once that half-hour window is closed.

COMCAST DIVISION LAYOFFS

More details are trickling out on **Comcast's** reorg that will see its [division structure retire](#) in January. Instead of reporting to division presidents, regions will report to *Amy Lynch*, who takes the newly created role of President, Regional Operations.

With the changes come some layoffs, and we're starting to hear some numbers. The *Atlanta Journal Constitution* [reports](#) that 240 job cuts are coming to Comcast's Central division HQ near Atlanta, per a filing in accordance with the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act. *Denver Business Journal* [reports](#) that another 302 cuts are set for Comcast's West Division. And we expect there will be more at the Northeast Division that Lynch previously headed. A memo last month from Comcast Connectivity & Platforms CEO *Dave Watson* and COO *Steve Croney* telegraphed that the restructure would result in some job losses: "Our Division teams that directly support our customers and frontline employees will continue in their roles. Other responsibilities will transition into HQ teams. This change is not a reflection of anyone's contributions—it is about simplifying how we work so we can compete more effectively and position the company for the future. We are deeply grateful for the impact these teams have made, and for the professionalism they continue to bring to Comcast every day." Affected division positions include roles in communications, government relations, finance and employee communications. The AJC reports that "many affected employees" will be able to continue their careers at Comcast in different positions, and that those who don't transfer to new roles will be entitled to severance. With the elimination of divisions, Comcast's regions, which include Big South and Beltway, will report into Lynch, who reports to Croney.

PEACOCK-APPLE TV BUNDLE

Yet another streaming bundle has entered the chat. **Apple TV** and **Peacock** are partnering for a new bundle, available beginning Oct. 20. Customers in the U.S. can save over 30% with the bundle that combines Apple TV with Peacock Premium for \$14.99/month, or \$19.99/month if they want Peacock Premium Plus. Apple One subs on the Family and Premier plans can also now subscribe to Peacock Premium with a special 35% discount. As part of the new partnership, Apple TV and Peacock users will be able to sample a selection of shows from each service. Peacock subs can check out three eps of "Slow Horses," "Silo," "Foundation" and more, while Apple TV users can watch episodes of "Law & Order," "Love Island Games" "Bel-Air" and others.

CNN ALL ACCESS DETAILS

Warner Bros. Discovery revealed more details about **CNN's** new DTC streamer, which will launch on Oct. 28 with two sub tiers. Users who sign up for the service's \$6.99/month All

Access tier will get the news net's live US and international programming, as well as a VOD library and access to all CNN.com articles and subscriber-only content. Current Pay TV customers can authenticate to watch programming on app at no additional cost, but will need to sub to the \$3.99/month Basic tier if they also want to read CNN.com articles as well. Subscribers who sign up for an annual plan by Jan. 5 will be able to do so at a promotional rate of \$41.99 for the first year. It's \$69.99/year after that. The announcement follows the news that CNN's live programming will no longer be available on **HBO Max** beginning Nov. 17.

TRUSTY: FCC ALL IN ON WIRELESS

FCC Commissioner *Olivia Trusty* didn't make the trip to Las Vegas for **Mobile World Congress** this week, but she did record a video for the gathering, telling attendees the FCC is "all in" on U.S. leadership in wireless. Spectrum is top of mind for the mobile crowd, with the FCC prioritizing making at least 100 MHz of Upper C-Band spectrum available for licensed use within two years. "The bottom line is that spectrum policy is not just telecom policy anymore. It's technology policy, economic policy and national security policy rolled into one. Our allies look to the United States for leadership on secure, interoperable systems, and our adversaries look for opportunities to outpace or outmaneuver us. We must ensure the former and deny the latter," Trusty said.

SYNDEO INSTITUTE EXPANSION

The Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center released the 2025 Intrapreneurship & Innovation Report on Thursday. The theme of this year's [report](#) is "Then, Now, Next," including a look into the future of the Syndeo Institute, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. The organization announced plans to expand its efforts to the U.K. and Europe. That includes a partnership to provide training resources and expertise to members of the **Federation of Communication Services**, a nonprofit telecom industry association in the U.K. "Looking ahead, I'm energized by our potential to expand our impact," writes President/CEO *Diane Christman*. "The next five to 10 years will see us expanding our footprint globally, supporting colleagues in Europe and beyond with programs and resources tailored to their markets."

OOKLA'S T-SATELLITE REPORT

Internet speed analytics firm **Ookla** published a new report that provides a look into the early usage of **T-Mobile's T-Satellite** direct-to-device service. The paper looks at Android smartphone usage data across T-Mobile, **AT&T** and **Verizon** as well as FirstNet, the public safety network powered by AT&T, from December 2025 to September 2025. Ookla found that AT&T customers accounted for about a third of all T-Satellite

connections during this period, with T-Mobile accounting for roughly 60%. Los Angeles County, California, was the most popular location for T-Satellite activity, partly due to T-Mobile deploying free access to the service to 198,000 users during the wildfires earlier this year. Overall, national forests and national parks are top locations where users connect to the service. But connections to T-Satellite are still rare, according to Ookla, as U.S. users are in reach of a cellular network a majority of the time, compared to the 2.79% of the time when they aren't. That said, Ookla argues that, while this is indeed a small slice of time, in an emergency, it's also when access to satellite service may be the most useful, citing a TD Cowen survey that found that 60% of participants would pay at least \$5 per month for satellite service. T-Satellite is currently offered at no extra cost to customers on T-Mobile's Experience Beyond plan. Other T-Mobile customers, as well as those of AT&T and Verizon, can sign up for an extra \$10/month.

FDSN CONTENT BOOST

As **FanDuel Sports Network** works to expand after a few years of turbulence, its owner **Main Street Sports Group** (formerly Diamond Sports) is investing more into the content that appears across the FDSN portfolio. Main Street signed a deal with **Omaha Productions** to co-develop and co-produce premium sports content for FDSN's linear, streaming and digital platforms. Omaha, the media company created by two-time Super Bowl champ *Peyton Manning*, is responsible for programs such as **ESPN's** "Manningcast" and Netflix's "Quarterback." Main Street, meanwhile, will launch Main Street Sports Productions, a new division that'll focus on creating and producing content for both its owned channels and third-party partners. Leading the unit will be *Norby Williamson*, the former longtime ESPN executive and current President, Production and Programming for Main Street. – **FanDuel Sports Network Ohio** enjoyed a season of improved ratings for the MLB's Reds. The RSN averaged a total audience delivery of 132,800 viewers per game this season, up 21% from 2024. Linear TV viewership went up 6% YOY to an average of 38,000 households per game in the Cincinnati DMA. It saw a sizeable jump in streaming engagement via the FDSN app or **Prime Video** as well. Reds coverage saw approximately 137,000 unique streamers in 2025. The average streamers per game spiked by 278%, while the number of minutes viewers spent watching each game stream was 86.5 per game—up 13%. Total streaming minutes increased by 347% to 361 million.

MINT MOBILE DEBUTS 'MINTERNET'

Get ready to see a lot of *Ryan Reynolds* commercials full of "MINTernet" quips. **T-Mobile** is expanding **Mint Mobile's** offerings, adding 5G home internet service to the list. Starting today, customers who already have a Mint phone plan can sign up for their first three months of internet service for \$30/month,

while those without Mint mobile service can pay \$40/month. After the three-month intro rate, customers can either lock in that \$30/month rate by renewing on a 12-month plan or renew on another three-month plan for \$40/month if they have a phone plan. It's \$50/month if they don't.

BRAVOCON SPONSORS

NBCUniversal announced the list of 19 new and returning brand sponsors for this year's **BravoCon**, which will be held on Nov. 14-16 at Caesars Forum in Las Vegas. The event, which will include over 150 "Bravolebrities" and more than 50 live events, counts on **T-Mobile** and State Farm as its presenting sponsors, with the T-Mobile Signature store, located on the Vegas Strip, hosting a free Bravo event with a DJ and exclusive merch on Nov. 13. Additional partners include Carnival Cruise Line, Hilton, Lexus, Nexxus, TRESemme, Vaseline, Wayfair, Wendy's, Clorox and TJ Maxx.

MEDIACOM INTERNSHIP SUCCESS

Mediacom's long-running summer internship program is bearing fruit. The company announced that two of its former summer interns have recently been promoted to VP roles. *Ruben Martino*, who joined as an intern in 2013, is now VP, Finance at Mediacom. Meanwhile, *Manvinder Singh* is now VP, Data Warehouse, leading Mediacom's enterprise data strategy. Over 150 students have participated in Mediacom's paid internships.

CARRIAGE

DirectTV is adding **Hallmark** channels and **AMC Networks** to its MyEntertainment Genre Pack and MyCinema Mini-Pack Add-on plans, starting today. Customers will now be able to access **Hallmark Channel**, **AMC**, **BBC America**, **IFC**, **SundanceTV** and **WE TV** on MyEntertainment, while **Hallmark Mystery** and **Hallmark Family** are joining MyCinema. Additionally, **AMCN** is launching its lineup of FAST channels—including **The Walking Dead Universe**, **Portlandia** and **All Reality by WE TV**—on the **MyFree DirectTV** platform on Nov. 18. In 2026, **AMC+** with Ads will join MyEntertainment and select Signature Packages, while **Shudder** will be added to MyCinema. – **Reelz+** is now available on the **Apple TV** device. This means Apple TV users can now sub to the streaming service for \$4.99/month to get on-demand access to episodes of "On Patrol: Live" and more.

RATINGS

A dramatic **MLB** postseason lifted **TBS** to the top spot of the weekly primetime rankings among cable networks. TBS' 2.33 million was enough to beat **Fox News** and **ESPN**, who were neck-and-neck with 2.29 million and 2.28 million, respectively. **Fox Sports 1** enjoyed the MLB Playoffs after posting 1.56 million viewers, followed by **MSNBC** with 814,000. Fox News maintained its first-place spot in total day with 1.48 million. ESPN (763,000), TBS (656,000), MSNBC (504,000) and FS1 (421,000) trailed behind. – **ESPN** wrapped up another noteworthy **WNBA** season, even with *Caitlin Clark* sidelined due to injury. Across 25 regular-season games, ESPN networks averaged 1.3 million viewers, up 6% YOY and marks the most-watched WNBA regular season for the company. The 24 Playoff games came in at 1.2 million viewers (up 5%) and the WNBA Finals on ESPN/**ABC** notched 1.5 million viewers, good for the second most-watched WNBA Finals ever (2024). – **Hallmark** is getting ready to kick off its annual "Countdown to Christmas" marathon Friday after wrapping up its "Fall into Love" autumnal event over the weekend. But before we put up our Xmas decorations, we have some numbers for the fall movie event, which ran every weekend from Sept. 6 to Oct. 12. Fall into Love's movie premieres were the most-watched entertainment cable program every Saturday throughout the entire event among Households and Women 18+, with the event as a whole reaching 15.4 million Unduplicated Total Viewers. Hallmark Channel was the most-watched entertainment cable network in Weekend Prime among Women 18+, and second most-watched in Total Day among Women 18+.

PEOPLE

Mediacom SVP, Programming *Glenn Goldsmith*, who oversees the company's national content acquisition strategy, has been appointed to the board of the **T. Howard Foundation**. "I look forward to working with fellow board members to support the Foundation's mission and help open doors for the next generation of talent," Goldsmith said in a statement. – *Jeremy Jurick* was promoted to VP Regulatory Policy at **Armstrong**. He's been with the operator for two years, previously serving as Director, Regulatory Policy. Jurick has helped Armstrong engage in public-private partnership across five states.

BASIC CABLE P2+ PRIME RANKINGS* (10/06/25-10/12/25)		
MON-SUN	MC US AA%	MC US AA (000)
ESPN	0.737	2373
FNC	0.699	2249
TBS	0.592	1907
MSNBC	0.246	793
TRUTV	0.147	472
HGTV	0.146	470
CNN	0.141	454
HALL	0.123	397
ESPN2	0.115	372
FOOD	0.115	370
TLC	0.112	361
USA	0.103	332
DISC	0.100	321
GSN	0.089	285
HIST	0.087	280
INSP	0.086	276
FS1	0.076	244
BRAVO	0.069	224
ID	0.069	222
HALLMYS	0.068	219
FRFM	0.067	215
TVLAND	0.066	214
A&E	0.066	213
LIFE	0.063	203
NAN	0.063	202
NWSMX	0.057	183
TNT	0.056	181
OXY	0.055	177
FX	0.055	177
REELZ	0.053	171
AMC	0.053	169
WETV	0.049	159
ADSM	0.045	145
PRMNT	0.044	143
NFL	0.043	137
BET	0.040	129
COM	0.040	128
FETV	0.037	119
LMN	0.037	119
NATGEO	0.037	118
TRAVEL	0.036	115
IFC TV	0.034	109
HLN	0.034	108
E!	0.034	108
NWSNTN	0.033	105
GAF	0.032	103
FXX	0.030	98

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