

**A CHRONOLOGY OF PRO FOOTBALL ON  
TELEVISION: Part 4**

by Tim Brulia

**1990:** ABC, CBS, NBC, ESPN and Ted Turner's TNT cable outlet sign a four year \$3.6 billion dollar deal as the \$\$\$ keeps in a comin'. The details:

CBS: All Sunday NFC games. Interconference games on Sunday: If NFC team plays at AFC team (example: Philadelphia at Pittsburgh), CBS has rights. CBS has one Thanksgiving Day game. CBS has one game each of late season Saturday game. CBS has one NFC wild card game and both NFC divisional playoff games. CBS has the NFC Championship game. CBS has Super Bowl XXVI. CBS 35th season of NFL coverage.

NBC: All Sunday AFC games. Interconference games on Sunday. If AFC team plays at NFC team (example: Pittsburgh at Philadelphia), NBC has rights. NBC has one Thanksgiving Day game. NBC has one AFC wild card game and both AFC divisional playoff games. NBC has the AFC Championship game. NBC has Super Bowl XXVII (and would later add Super Bowl XXVIII in a separate contract). NBC 26th season of AFC coverage, 40th season with some form of pro football coverage.

ABC: Has 16 Monday Night games. No restrictions on conference games (e.g. does NFC, AFC, and interconference games. ABC has two wild card games – one AFC and NFC. ABC has Super Bowl XXV. ABC's 21st season of Monday Night Football.

ESPN: Has 8 Sunday night games and a Saturday night game, starting halfway thru the season. Like ABC, no restrictions on conference games. ESPN has rights to 1990, 1991, 1992 and 1993 Pro Bowls.

TNT: Has 8 Sunday night games and a Thursday night game, starting at beginning of season and ending at midpoint of season. Also with no restrictions on conference games.

Main commentary crews:

CBS: Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC: Dick Enberg, Bill Walsh.

ABC: Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

TNT: Skip Caray, Pat Haden.

Pre game shows:

CBS: The NFL Today. Greg Gumbel, Terry Bradshaw. Complete panel overhaul as long time host Brent Musberger was fired in the off-season. Irv Cross went back to the booth, and Dick Butkus was terminated. Bradshaw left the analyst position with Verne Lundquist to move into the studio.

NBC: NFL Live. Bob Costas, O.J. Simpson.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC (AFC): Kansas City Chiefs at Miami Dolphins; Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf. (NFC) Washington Redskins at Philadelphia Eagles; Brent Musberger, Dick Vermeil.

CBS (NFC): New Orleans Saints at Chicago Bears; Verne Lundquist, Dan Fouts.

NBC (AFC): Houston Oilers at Cincinnati Bengals; Don Criqui, Bob Trumpy.

Divisional playoff crews:

CBS (NFC): Washington Redskins at San Francisco 49ers; Dick Stockton, Merlin Olsen. Chicago Bears at New York Giants; Verne Lundquist, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Miami Dolphins at Buffalo Bills; Marv Albert, Paul Maguire. Cincinnati Bengals at Los Angeles Raiders; Dick Enberg, Bill Walsh.

Championship Game commentary crews:

CBS (NFC): New York Giants at San Francisco 49ers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Los Angeles Raiders at Buffalo Bills; Dick Enberg, Bill Walsh.

Super Bowl XXV (ABC): Buffalo Bills and New York Giants; Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

Pro Bowl (ESPN): Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

**1991:** Year two of the four year deal with ABC, CBS, NBC, ESPN and TNT.

CBS: Same as 1990.

NBC: Same as 1990.

ABC: Same as 1990.

ESPN: Has 8 Sunday night games starting halfway thru the season.

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TNT: Has 8 Sunday night games and a Thursday night game, starting at beginning of season and ending at midpoint of season.

Main commentary crews:

CBS: Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC: Dick Enberg, Bill Walsh.

ABC: Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

TNT: Skip Caray, Pat Haden.

Pre game shows:

CBS: The NFL Today. Greg Gumbel, Terry Bradshaw

NBC: NFL Live. Bob Costas, O.J. Simpson, Bill Parcells, Will McDonough. NBC added retired Giants coach Bill Parcells, and elevated contributor Will McDonough to panel status.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC (AFC): Los Angeles Raiders at Kansas City Chiefs; Brent Musberger, Dick Vermeil. (NFC)

Atlanta Falcons at New Orleans Saints; Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

CBS (NFC): Dallas Cowboys at Chicago Bears; Verne Lundquist, Dan Fouts.

NBC (AFC): New York Jets at Houston Oilers; Marv Albert, Paul Maguire.

Divisional playoff crews:

CBS (NFC): Atlanta Falcons at Washington Redskins; Verne Lundquist, Dan Fouts. Dallas Cowboys at Detroit Lions; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Houston Oilers at Denver Broncos; Charlie Jones, Todd Christensen. Kansas City Chiefs at Buffalo Bills; Dick Enberg, Bill Walsh.

Championship Game commentary crews:

CBS (NFC): Detroit Lions at Washington Redskins; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Denver Broncos at Buffalo Bills; Dick Enberg, Bill Walsh.

Super Bowl XXVI (CBS): Washington Redskins and Buffalo Bills; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

Pro Bowl (ESPN): Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

**1992:** Year three of the four year deal with ABC, CBS, NBC, ESPN and TNT.

CBS: Same as 1990.

NBC: Same as 1990.

ABC: Same as 1990.

ESPN: Has 8 Sunday night games and a Thursday night game, starting halfway thru the season.

TNT: Has 8 Sunday night games and a Thursday night game, starting at beginning of season and ending at midpoint of season.

Main commentary crews:

CBS: Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC: Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy. Bill Walsh leaves to become head coach at Stanford.

ABC: Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

TNT: Gary Bender, Pat Haden. Bender replaces Caray. Bob Neal also calls a couple of games.

Pre game shows:

CBS: The NFL Today. Greg Gumbel, Terry Bradshaw

NBC: NFL Live. Bob Costas, O.J. Simpson, Will McDonough. Parcells left to work games as an analyst..

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC (AFC) Kansas City Chiefs at San Diego Chargers; Brent Musberger, Dick Vermeil. (NFC)

Washington Redskins at Minnesota Vikings; Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

CBS (NFC): Philadelphia Eagles at New Orleans Saints; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Houston Oilers at Buffalo Bills (THE comeback); Charlie Jones, Todd Christensen.

Divisional playoff crews:

CBS (NFC): Washington Redskins at San Francisco 49ers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

Philadelphia Eagles at Dallas Cowboys; Verne Lundquist, Dan Fouts.

NBC (AFC): Buffalo Bills at Pittsburgh Steelers; Marv Albert, Bill Parcells. San Diego Chargers at Miami Dolphins; Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy.

Championship Game commentary crews:

CBS (NFC): Dallas Cowboys at San Francisco 49ers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Buffalo Bills at Miami Dolphins; Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy.

Super Bowl XXVII (NBC): Buffalo Bills and Dallas Cowboys; Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy.

Pro Bowl (ESPN): Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

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**1993:** Year four of the four year deal with ABC, CBS, NBC, ESPN and TNT.

CBS: Same as 1990.

NBC: Same as 1990.

ABC: Same as 1990.

ESPN: Same as 1992.

TNT: Same as 1992.

Main commentary crews:

CBS: Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC: Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy.

ABC: Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

TNT: Gary Bender, Pat Haden.

Pre game shows:

CBS: The NFL Today. Greg Gumbel, Terry Bradshaw

NBC: NFL Live. Jim Lampley, O.J. Simpson, Will McDonough, Mike Ditka. Lampley replaces Costas, who returns to the booth and Ditka comes on board, mostly to try and boost ratings.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC: (AFC) Pittsburgh Steelers at Kansas City Chiefs; Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf. (NFC)

Green Bay Packers at Detroit Lions; Brent Musberger, Dick Vermeil.

CBS (NFC): Minnesota Vikings at New York Giants; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Denver Broncos at Los Angeles Raiders; Charlie Jones, Todd Christensen.

Divisional playoff crews:

CBS (NFC): New York Giants at San Francisco 49ers; Pat Summerall, John Madden. Green Bay Packers at Dallas Cowboys; Jim Nantz, Randy Cross.

NBC (AFC): Los Angeles Raiders at Buffalo Bills; Marv Albert, Paul Maguire. Kansas City Chiefs at Houston Oilers; Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy.

Championship Game commentary crews:

CBS (NFC): San Francisco 49ers at Dallas Cowboys; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Kansas City Chiefs at Buffalo Bills; Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy.

Super Bowl XXVIII (NBC): Dallas Cowboys and Buffalo Bills; Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy.

Pro Bowl (ESPN): Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

**1994:** The shocking news actually happened during the 1993 playoffs. It was the biggest NFL TV story in ages. Fox, a rather struggling network known mostly for the antics of cartoon kid Bart Simpson, and funded almost solely by media mogul Rupert Murdoch's endless billions, snags the cream of the crop; CBS's NFC package. And when NBC kept CBS at bay to hang onto its AFC package a few days later, the network that had brought the NFL to glory in the sporting public's eye – no pun intended – was on the sidelines. The massive 4 year, \$5 billion plus deal is outlined:

Fox: All Sunday NFC games. Interconference games on Sunday: If NFC team plays at AFC team (example: Philadelphia at Pittsburgh), Fox has rights. Fox has one Thanksgiving Day game. Fox has one game each of late season Saturday game. Fox has one NFC wild card game and both NFC divisional playoff games. Fox has the NFC Championship game. Fox has Super Bowl XXXI. Fox's 1st season of NFL coverage. In fact, this is Fox's first sports contract EVER.

NBC: All Sunday AFC games. Interconference games on Sunday. If AFC team plays at NFC team (example: Pittsburgh at Philadelphia), NBC has rights. NBC has one Thanksgiving Day game. NBC has one AFC wild card game and both AFC divisional playoff games. NBC has the AFC Championship game. NBC has Super Bowls XXX and XXXII. NBC 30th season of AFC coverage, 44th season with some form of pro football coverage.

ABC: Has 16 Monday Night games. No restrictions on conference games (e.g. does NFC, AFC, and interconference games. ABC has two wild card games – one AFC and NFC. ABC has Super Bowl XXIX. ABC also has the 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997 Pro Bowls. ABC's 25th season of Monday Night Football.

ESPN: Has 8 Sunday night games and a Thursday night game, starting halfway thru the season. Like ABC, no restrictions on conference games. ESPN's 9<sup>th</sup> season of NFL coverage

TNT: Has 8 Sunday night games and a Thursday night game, starting at beginning of season and ending at midpoint of season. Also with no restrictions on conference games. TNT's 5<sup>th</sup> season of the NFL.

Main commentary crews:

Fox: Pat Summerall, John Madden. They made the switch from CBS (as did many other crews).

NBC: Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy.

ABC: Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

TNT: Gary Bender, Pat Haden.

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Pre game shows:

Fox: Fox NFL Sunday. James Brown, Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long, Jimmy Johnson. J.B. and Terry are brought over from CBS, Long and ex-Cowboys coach Johnson comes along. The show expands from 30 minutes to an hour long, and is done live from Hollywood, as opposed to New York City.

NBC: NFL Live. Greg Gumbel, Ahmad Rashad, Mike Ditka, Joe Gibbs. Except for Ditka, a total overhaul. Lampley leaves to concentrate on golf and other sports at NBC. Simpson is terminated for something that occurred in the off-season. McDonough leaves the panel to become a contributor. Gumbel comes over from CBS, Rashad and Gibbs come in from the booth. Except for the first weekend, NFL Live stays at 30 minutes.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC: (NFC) Detroit Lions at Green Bay Packers; Brent Musberger, Dick Vermeil. (AFC) Kansas City Chiefs at Miami Dolphins; Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

Fox (NFC): Chicago Bears at Minnesota Vikings; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): New England Patriots at Cleveland Browns; Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy.

Divisional playoff crews:

Fox (NFC): Chicago Bears at San Francisco 49ers; Dick Stockton, Matt Millen. Green Bay Packers at Dallas Cowboys; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Cleveland Browns at Pittsburgh Steelers; Marv Albert, Paul Maguire. Miami Dolphins at San Diego Chargers; Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy.

Championship Game commentary crews:

Fox (NFC): Dallas Cowboys at San Francisco 49ers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): San Diego Chargers at Pittsburgh Steelers; Dick Enberg, Bob Trumpy.

Super Bowl XXIX (ABC): San Diego Chargers and San Francisco 49ers; Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

Pro Bowl (ABC): Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

Notes: Fox created the innovative "Fox Box" in the upper corner of the screen, which acted as a mini-scoreboard throughout the game. It listed the score, and time remaining and the quarter. It seemed intrusive to viewers at first, but as the season progressed, it was like an old friend. When ESPN began their coverage, they adopted the time/score box as well.

**1995:** Year two of the four year deal with Fox, NBC, ABC, ESPN and TNT.

Fox: Same as 1994

NBC: Same as 1994

ABC: Same as 1994.

ESPN: Same as 1994.

TNT: Seven Sunday night games and two Thursday nighters.

Main commentary crews:

Fox: Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC: Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire. Trump would switch to another partner. Simms comes over from ESPN, and Maguire leaves Marv Albert to link up with Enberg and Simms.

ABC: Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

TNT: Verne Lundquist, Pat Haden. Lundquist after a year without football at CBS, replaces Gary Bender.

Pre game shows:

Fox: Fox NFL Sunday. James Brown, Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long, Jimmy Johnson.

NBC: NFL Live. Greg Gumbel, Mike Ditka, Joe Gibbs, Joe Montana.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC: (AFC) Miami Dolphins at Buffalo Bills; Brent Musberger, Dick Vermeil. (NFC) Detroit Lions at Philadelphia Eagles; Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

Fox (NFC): Atlanta Falcons at Green Bay Packers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Indianapolis Colts at San Diego Chargers; Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

Divisional playoff crews:

Fox (NFC): Philadelphia Eagles at Dallas Cowboys; Pat Summerall, John Madden. Green Bay Packers at San Francisco 49ers; Dick Stockton, Matt Millen.

NBC (AFC): Buffalo Bills at Pittsburgh Steelers; Marv Albert, Cris Collinsworth. Indianapolis Colts at Kansas City Chiefs; Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

Championship Game commentary crews:

Fox (NFC): Green Bay Packers at Dallas Cowboys; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Indianapolis Colts at Pittsburgh Steelers; Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

Super Bowl XXX (NBC): Dallas Cowboys and Pittsburgh Steelers; Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

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Pro Bowl (ABC): Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

Notes: TNT adopts the time/score box, joining Fox and ESPN with the on-screen device. ABC and NBC don't use it...yet.

**1996:** Year three of the four year deal with Fox, NBC, ABC, ESPN and TNT.

Fox: Same as 1994

NBC: Same as 1994

ABC: Same as 1994.

ESPN: Same as 1994.

TNT: Same as 1994.

Main commentary crews:

Fox: Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC: Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

ABC: Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

TNT: Verne Lundquist, Pat Haden.

Pre game shows:

Fox: Fox NFL Sunday. James Brown, Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long, Ronnie Lott. Jimmy Johnson leaves the crew to coach the Miami Dolphins.

NBC: NFL Live. Greg Gumbel, Mike Ditka, Joe Gibbs, Cris Collinsworth. Collinsworth leaves the booth to replace Montana, who didn't pan out too well. NFL Live goes from 30 minutes to a full hour, two years after Fox.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC (AFC): Jacksonville Jaguars at Buffalo Bills; Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann. (NFC) Minnesota Vikings at Dallas Cowboys; Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

Fox (NFC): Philadelphia Eagles at San Francisco 49ers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Indianapolis Colts at Pittsburgh Steelers; Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

Divisional playoff crews:

Fox (NFC): San Francisco 49ers at Green Bay Packers; Dick Stockton, Matt Millen. Dallas Cowboys at Carolina Panthers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Jacksonville Jaguars at Denver Broncos; Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

Pittsburgh Steelers at New England Patriots; Marv Albert, Sam Wyche.

Championship Game commentary crews:

Fox (NFC): Carolina Panthers at Green Bay Packers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Jacksonville Jaguars at New England Patriots; Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

Super Bowl XXXI (Fox): New England Patriots and Green Bay Packers. Pat Summerall, John Madden. While Pat and John had worked many a Super Bowl before, this was Fox's first Super Bowl, and the first with a time/score box on the screen

Pro Bowl (ABC): Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

Notes: ABC adopts the time/score box this season, joining Fox, ESPN and TNT with the on-screen device.

NBC is the last holdout.

**1997:** Year four of the four year deal with Fox, NBC, ABC, ESPN and TNT.

Fox: Same as 1994

NBC: Same as 1994

ABC: Same as 1994.

ESPN: Same as 1994.

TNT: Same as 1994.

Main commentary crews:

Fox: Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC: Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

ABC: Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann.

TNT: Verne Lundquist, Pat Haden, Mark May. May makes it a three-man booth for TNT.

Pre game shows:

Fox: Fox NFL Sunday. James Brown, Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long. Lott moves to the booth as an analyst, making this a three man panel for the first (and so far only) time at Fox.

NBC: NFL Live. Greg Gumbel, Mike Ditka, Joe Gibbs, Cris Collinsworth.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC (NFC) Minnesota Vikings at New York Giants; Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann. (AFC) Jacksonville Jaguars at Denver Broncos; Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

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Fox (NFC): Detroit Lions at Tampa Bay Buccaneers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Miami Dolphins at New England Patriots; Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

Divisional playoff crews:

Fox (NFC): Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Green Bay Packers; Pat Summerall, John Madden. Minnesota Vikings at San Francisco 49ers; Dick Stockton, Matt Millen.

NBC (AFC): Denver Broncos at Kansas City Chiefs; Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire. New England Patriots at Pittsburgh Steelers; Tom Hammond, Randy Cross.

Championship Game commentary crews:

Fox (NFC): Green Bay Packers at San Francisco 49ers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

NBC (AFC): Denver Broncos at Pittsburgh Steelers; Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

Super Bowl XXXII (NBC): Green Bay Packers and Denver Broncos. Dick Enberg, Phil Simms, Paul Maguire.

Pro Bowl (ABC): Al Michaels, Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf.

Notes: NBC stays steadfast in not using the time/score box.

**1998:** The NFL signs a mammoth deal for eight years and \$17.8 billion (with an option after five years). Two networks are gone (TNT after eight years, NBC after 47 years with at least one pro football game). For NBC, it also marks the end of AFL/AFC games with the peacock since 1965, a span of 33 years. And a dear old friend, CBS, returns. The poop:

Fox: All Sunday NFC games. Interconference games on Sunday: If NFC team plays at AFC team (example: Philadelphia at Pittsburgh), Fox has rights. Fox has one Thanksgiving Day game. Fox has one game each of late season Saturday game. Fox has one NFC wild card game and both NFC divisional playoff games. Fox has the NFC Championship game. Fox has Super Bowls XXXIII, XXXVI and XXXIX. Fox's 5th season of NFL coverage.

CBS: All Sunday AFC games. Interconference games on Sunday. If AFC team plays at NFC team (example: Pittsburgh at Philadelphia), CBS has rights. CBS has one Thanksgiving Day game. CBS has one AFC wild card game and both AFC divisional playoff games. CBS has the AFC Championship game. CBS has Super Bowls XXXV and XXXVIII. CBS, after a four year layoff, is back for its 39th season of NFL coverage, but its first of AFC coverage.

ABC: Has 16 Monday Night games. No restrictions on conference games (e.g. does NFC, AFC, and interconference games). ABC has two wild card games – one AFC and NFC. ABC has Super Bowls XXXIV, XXXVII and XL. ABC also has the 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 Pro Bowls. ABC's 29th season of Monday Night Football.

ESPN: Has the full Sunday night package (16 games) and two Thursday night games, no longer sharing Sunday nights with TNT. Like ABC, no restrictions on conference games. ESPN also has the 2003, 2004, and 2005 Pro Bowls. ESPN's 13<sup>th</sup> season of NFL coverage. The fact that ESPN gets the full Sunday night deal is a major irritant with Major League Baseball, which has a contract with ESPN to carry Sunday Night Baseball into September. ESPN simply thought they could switch those games to ESPN2. No deal, says baseball Commissioner Bud Selig, who then pulls the September Sunday night games from ESPN altogether.

Main commentary crews:

Fox: Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS: Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms. Gumbel leaves the host position of NFL Live to be the lead play by play man at CBS. Simms goes from lead analyst at NBC to the same spot at CBS.

ABC: Al Michaels, Dan Dierdorf, Boomer Esiason. After 27 years in the Monday Night Football booth, Giff is reduced to a rather demeaning intro role with the program.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire. Maguire returns to ESPN for a second stint (he covered USFL and CFL in his first go round at ESPN) after his two stints at NBC.

Pre game shows:

Fox: Fox NFL Sunday. James Brown, Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long, Cris Collinsworth. Collinsworth moves from NFL Live to the zany crew at Fox.

CBS: The NFL Today. Jim Nantz, Brent Jones, Marcus Allen, George Seifert. CBS holdover Nantz is joined by a trio of newcomers; former 49er Jones, future hall of famer Allen, and Super Bowl champ coach Seifert. The foursome are no match for the Fox NFL Sunday crew.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC: (NFC) Arizona Cardinals at Minnesota Vikings; Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire; (AFC) Buffalo Bills at Miami Dolphins; Al Michaels, Dan Dierdorf, Boomer Esiason.

Fox (NFC): Green Bay Packers at San Francisco 49ers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS (AFC): New England Patriots at Jacksonville Jaguars; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms

Divisional playoff crews:

Fox (NFC): Arizona Cardinals at Minnesota Vikings; Pat Summerall, John Madden. San Francisco 49ers at Atlanta Falcons; Dick Stockton, Matt Millen.

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CBS (AFC): Jacksonville Jaguars at New York Jets; Verne Lundquist, Randy Cross. Miami Dolphins at Denver Broncos; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Championship Game commentary crews:

Fox (NFC): Atlanta Falcons at Minnesota Vikings; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS (AFC): New York Jets at Denver Broncos; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Super Bowl XXXIII (Fox): Denver Broncos and Atlanta Falcons. Pat Summerall, John Madden.

Pro Bowl (ABC): Al Michaels, Dan Dierdorf, Boomer Esiason.

Note: CBS adopts the clock/score box, giving all networks covering the NFL the on-screen device.

**1999:** Year two of the 8 year contract with Fox, CBS, ABC and ESPN.

Fox: Same as 1998.

CBS: Same as 1998.

ABC: Same as 1998

ESPN: Same as 1998. ESPN still embroiled with MLB on the September issue.

Main commentary crews:

Fox: Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS: Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

ABC: Al Michaels, Boomer Esiason. Dierdorf, not on good terms with Boomer, is let go by ABC.

Dierdorf eventually returns to CBS, whom he left for ABC in 1987.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire.

Pre game shows:

Fox: Fox NFL Sunday. James Brown, Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long, Cris Collinsworth.

CBS: The NFL Today. Jim Nantz, Jerry Glanville, Craig James, Randy Cross. Except for the steady

Nantz, the crew is redone.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC (AFC) Buffalo Bills at Tennessee Titans (the "Music City Miracle"); Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire; (NFC) Detroit Lions at Washington Redskins; Al Michaels, Boomer Esiason.

Fox (NFC): Minnesota Vikings at Dallas Cowboys; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS (AFC); Miami Dolphins at Seattle Seahawks; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms

Divisional playoff crews:

Fox (NFC): Minnesota Vikings at St. Louis Rams; Pat Summerall, John Madden. Washington Redskins at Tampa Bay Buccaneers; Dick Stockton, Matt Millen.

CBS (AFC): Miami Dolphins at Jacksonville Jaguars; Dick Enberg, Dan Dierdorf. Tennessee Titans at Indianapolis Colts; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Championship Game commentary crews:

Fox (NFC): Tampa Bay Buccaneers at St. Louis Rams; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS (AFC): Tennessee Titans at Jacksonville Jaguars; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Super Bowl XXXIV (ABC): St. Louis Rams and Tennessee Titans. Al Michaels, Boomer Esiason.

Pro Bowl (ABC): Al Michaels, Boomer Esiason.

**2000:** Year three of the 8 year contract with Fox, CBS, ABC and ESPN.

Fox: Same as 1998.

CBS: Same as 1998.

ABC: Same as 1998

ESPN: Same as 1998. ESPN settles MLB issue. Baseball agrees to have their Sunday Night games transferred to ESPN2.

Main commentary crews:

Fox: Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS: Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

ABC: Al Michaels, Dan Fouts, Dennis Miller. ABC, citing sagging ratings, takes a bold gamble. Football man Fouts is brought over from ABC's college football ranks, and is joined by "highbrow" stand-up comic Miller. Perhaps trying to revive the Gifford-Meredith-Cosell heyday, the experiment is rather bizarre.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire.

Pre game shows:

Fox: Fox NFL Sunday. James Brown, Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long, Cris Collinsworth.

CBS: The NFL Today. Jim Nantz, Jerry Glanville, Craig James, Randy Cross, Mike Ditka. Ditka is brought on to make for a rather crowded 5-man panel; some of which is shot outside in the streets of NYC.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC (AFC) Indianapolis Colts at Miami Dolphins; Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire; (NFC) St. Louis Rams at New Orleans Saints; Al Michaels, Dan Fouts, Dennis Miller.

Fox (NFC): Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Philadelphia Eagles; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

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CBS (AFC): Denver Broncos at Baltimore Ravens; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Divisional playoff crews:

Fox (NFC): Philadelphia Eagles at New York Giants; Pat Summerall, John Madden. New Orleans Saints at Minnesota Vikings; Dick Stockton, Matt Millen.

CBS (AFC): Miami Dolphins at Oakland Raiders; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms. Baltimore Ravens at Tennessee Titans; Dick Enberg, Dan Dierdorf.

Championship Game commentary crews:

Fox (NFC): Minnesota Vikings at New York Giants; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS (AFC): Baltimore Ravens at Oakland Raiders; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Super Bowl XXXV (CBS): Baltimore Ravens at New York Giants. Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms. CBS's first Super Bowl in 9 years.

Pro Bowl (ABC): Al Michaels, Dan Fouts, Dennis Miller

**2001:** Year four of the 8 year contract with Fox, CBS, ABC and ESPN.

Fox: Same as 1998.

CBS: Same as 1998.

ABC: Same as 1998

ESPN: Same as 1998.

Main commentary crews:

Fox: Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS: Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

ABC: Al Michaels, Dan Fouts, Dennis Miller. In spite of near unanimous jeers from critics and fans alike, ABC stays the course with Miller in the booth

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire.

Pre game shows:

Fox: Fox NFL Sunday. James Brown, Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long, Cris Collinsworth.

CBS: The NFL Today. Jim Nantz, Jerry Glanville, Randy Cross, Mike Ditka. James is dropped to return to the booth. Later in the season, flashy Deion Sanders comes on board. Ditka, whose dislike for Sanders is common knowledge, clams up the rest of the way.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC: (NFC) Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Philadelphia Eagles; Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire; (AFC) New York Jets at Oakland Raiders; Al Michaels, Dan Fouts, Dennis Miller.

Fox (NFC): San Francisco 49ers at Green Bay Packers; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS (AFC): Baltimore Ravens at Miami Dolphins; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Divisional playoff crews:

Fox (NFC): Philadelphia Eagles at Chicago Bears; Dick Stockton, Troy Aikman, Daryl Johnston. Green Bay Packers at St. Louis Rams; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS (AFC): Oakland Raiders at New England Patriots; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms. Baltimore Ravens at Pittsburgh Steelers; Dick Enberg, Dan Dierdorf.

Championship Game commentary crews:

Fox (NFC): Green Bay Packers at St. Louis Rams; Pat Summerall, John Madden.

CBS (AFC): New England Patriots at Pittsburgh Steelers; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Super Bowl XXXVI (Fox): St. Louis Rams and New England Patriots. Pat Summerall, John Madden. After 21 years in partnership (13 at CBS, 8 at Fox), Summerall and Madden work their last game together with this Super Bowl.

Pro Bowl (ABC): Al Michaels, Dan Fouts, Dennis Miller

Notes: Starting with the divisional playoffs, the NFL slates playoff games for prime time for the first time ever. The rating success motivates the NFL to do more of this in the future.

**2002:** Year five of the 8 year contract with Fox, CBS, ABC and ESPN. The NFL waives the 5 year option, so the contract does go the full 8 years.

Fox: Same as 1998.

CBS: Same as 1998.

ABC: Same as 1998

ESPN: Same as 1998.

Main commentary crews:

Fox: Joe Buck, Troy Aikman, Cris Collinsworth. Summerall teams up with Brian Baldinger on regional games. Madden goes to ABC with Al Michaels. Buck, Fox's lead baseball commentator with Tim McCarver, becomes the top man in the football booth. Aikman is promoted to the top crew, and Collinsworth leaves the pre-game show (2 at NBC, 4 at Fox) to join Buck and Aikman.

CBS: Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.



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ABC: Al Michaels, John Madden. ABC licks their wounds and after several attempts in past years, finally reels in Madden. Fouts returns to college football at ABC, joining legendary Keith Jackson, and Miller goes back to his true calling, stand-up comedy on HBO.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire.

Pre game shows:

Fox: Fox NFL Sunday. James Brown, Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long, Jimmy Johnson. The original crew is reunited.

CBS: The NFL Today. Jim Nantz, Dan Marino, Deion Sanders, Boomer Esiason. Yet another recasting at CBS. Marino and Esiason come on board to replace Ditka, Glanville and Randy Cross. And "Prime Time" (or "Neon" Deion, if you prefer) joins for a full season.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC (AFC): Indianapolis Colts at New York Jets; Brent Musberger, Gary Danielson, (NFC) Atlanta Falcons at Green Bay Packers; Al Michaels, John Madden.

Fox (NFC): New York Giants at San Francisco 49ers; Joe Buck, Troy Aikman, Cris Collinsworth.

CBS (AFC): Cleveland Browns at Pittsburgh Steelers; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Divisional playoff crews:

Fox (NFC): Atlanta Falcons at Philadelphia Eagles; Dick Stockton, Daryl Johnston. San Francisco 49ers at Tampa Bay Buccaneers; Joe Buck, Troy Aikman, Cris Collinsworth.

CBS (AFC): Pittsburgh Steelers at Tennessee Titans; Dick Enberg, Dan Dierdorf. New York Jets at Oakland Raiders; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Championship Game commentary crews:

Fox (NFC): Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Philadelphia Eagles; Joe Buck, Troy Aikman, Cris Collinsworth.

CBS (AFC): Tennessee Titans at Oakland Raiders; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Super Bowl XXXVII (ABC): Oakland Raiders and Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Al Michaels, John Madden. Pro Bowl (ABC): Al Michaels, Dan Fouts. Remember, John Madden doesn't like to fly, even if it is Honolulu!!

**2003:** Year six of the 8 year contract with Fox, CBS, ABC and ESPN.

Fox: Same as 1998.

CBS: Same as 1998.

ABC: Same as 1998

ESPN: Same as 1998.

Main commentary crews:

Fox: Joe Buck, Troy Aikman, Cris Collinsworth.

CBS: Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

ABC: Al Michaels, John Madden.

ESPN: Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire.

Pre game shows:

Fox: Fox NFL Sunday. James Brown, Terry Bradshaw, Howie Long, Jimmy Johnson.

CBS: The NFL Today. Jim Nantz, Dan Marino, Deion Sanders, Boomer Esiason.

Wild card playoff crews:

ABC (AFC): Tennessee Titans at Baltimore Ravens; Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire. (NFC) Dallas Cowboys at Carolina Panthers; Al Michaels, John Madden.

Fox (NFC): Seattle Seahawks at Green Bay Packers; Joe Buck, Troy Aikman, Cris Collinsworth.

CBS (AFC): Denver Broncos at Indianapolis Colts; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Divisional playoff crews:

Fox (NFC): Carolina Panthers at St. Louis Rams; Dick Stockton, Daryl Johnston. Green Bay Packers at Philadelphia Eagles (4<sup>th</sup> Down & 26); Joe Buck, Troy Aikman, Cris Collinsworth.

CBS (AFC): Tennessee Titans at New England Patriots; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms. Indianapolis Colts at Kansas City Chiefs; Dick Enberg, Dan Dierdorf.

Championship Game commentary crews:

Fox (NFC): Carolina Panthers at Philadelphia Eagles; Joe Buck, Troy Aikman, Cris Collinsworth.

CBS (AFC): Indianapolis Colts at New England Patriots; Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms.

Super Bowl XXXVIII (CBS): Carolina Panthers and New England Patriots. Greg Gumbel, Phil Simms

Pro Bowl (ESPN): Mike Patrick, Joe Theismann, Paul Maguire.

Notes: At halftime of the Super Bowl, there was an incident known as the "Wardrobe Malfunction". At the end of a song and dance number performed by pop stars Justin Timberlake and Janet Jackson, Mr. Timberlake grabbed a piece of Ms. Jackson's costume and pulled it off, revealing a bit more than CBS, the NFL, and the FCC would have liked. This incident totally overshadowed a very well played game...Pat Summerall, who had been a part of covering the NFL since 1962, retired from Fox.

Sources: The New York Times, 1948-1975.

USA Today. 1987-present. In particular, Rudy Martzke's columns.

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2003 Official NFL Record & Fact Book. NFL Properties. 2003  
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Personal documentation.

There are obvious holes and some guesswork involved with this chronology; in particular from 1948 thru 1986. Please, please, please if you see any errors or can fill in some missing information, do not hesitate to contact me. My e-mail address is: [coolbrul@yahoo.com](mailto:coolbrul@yahoo.com)

I hope you enjoy this study and it brings back some great memories. Thanks!