

available to the public from TV stations in the market.

An additional 20 individual broadcast licensees echoed the network's sentiment that the FCC should act immediately on the blackout question before cable grows to the proportion that would foreclose any chance of rules that might take away some of cable's present leeway in importing distant signals.

The National Hockey League and the American Hockey League filed comments last week generally supporting the suggestions of the commissioner of baseball (BROADCASTING, April 21). Basically, they favored a set-up in which cable systems could not retransmit any games of any sport within 75 miles of the home site, within 20 miles of the home site of minor league contests and within 35 miles of a TV station carrying the local or regional telecast.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association was even more urgent in its plea to the FCC for the adoption of the proposed rules at the "earliest possible time." Since perhaps less than 10% of all NCAA member clubs are currently self-supporting, the association warned that the increasing extent of CATV carriage might force colleges to forego telecasting their events. What is on the line, NCAA concluded, is not the mere profits of a business enterprise, but the continued existence of programs for student athletes.

Four students at the Indiana University School of Law noted that most comments failed to consider the issue of viewer access. Filing under the name of "four

interested viewers," the students proposed three modifications which they said would take into account the interests of the "stay-at-home fan." First, they would limit to same game rather than game of the same sport any restrictions on cable carriage; second, they would limit the zone of protection to a 25-mile radius of the home site; and third, the students suggested that only major league protection be afforded.

Before magic in space comes mundane at FCC

UA-Columbia, first in line for Home Box Office's pay cable network, plans to file this week for FCC's earth station approval; ATC will be second in legal line; Jones Intercable third to announce

Next step toward realization of Home Box Office Inc.'s plans for a satellite-interconnected pay cable network (BROADCASTING, April 21), should come this week with UA-Columbia Cablevision's application to the FCC for a construction permit to build a ground receive station.

Marvin Jones, vice president of operations at UA-Columbia, expected the company to file early this week for a facility to serve its cable systems at Fort Pierce,

Fla. Target date for operation is Oct. 1. Mr. Jones does not anticipate any difficulty in gaining FCC approval and noted that he was "assured informally" that the commission is welcoming such applications.

A chief factor in hoping for a non-obstructed path through the FCC lies in the configuration of the earth station "dish," or receiving antenna. Anything smaller than a 10-meter dish (32½ feet in diameter) would probably be held up, Mr. Jones noted, until the FCC has concluded its orbital spacing pattern assignments for the various satellites now in operation.

That task should be completed sometime this fall, according to Ronald Lepkowski of the FCC Common Carrier Bureau's satellite division. Reason for reluctance on smaller antenna configurations: the larger the ground antenna, the closer satellites can be placed. He noted that the reverse is also true: Smaller antennas require satellites to be placed farther apart in order to yield the same degree of interference, which in turn results in a less efficient use of available orbit patterns.

That is not to say that smaller receiver dishes (less than 10 meters) are automatically precluded, Mr. Lepkowski added. However, applications that specify use of a smaller dish will be granted only after the commission has concluded its orbital assignments and only after a showing has been made that proves no more interference will result, Mr. Lepkowski said.

UA-Columbia's applications for the five other earth stations in its initial package will follow in order. The second will be for Laredo, Tex., which is targeted for operation in January 1976, following launch of RCA Global Communications's 24-transponder satellite that will be the primary vehicle for the Home Box Office network. (RCA will use one transponder on the existing Anik or Westar satellites until its own bird is aloft. The second transponder will be needed to accommodate the western time zones.) After that, UA-Columbia plans to make other earth stations operational on a one-a-month basis: Fort Smith, Ark., in February; El Centro, Calif., in March; Yuma, Ariz., in April and Pasco-Kennewick, Wash., in May. It may also build earth stations to serve its systems in Wayne, N.J., and Brookhaven, Long Island, which presently receive service via terrestrial microwave.

Monroe Rifkin, president of American Television and Communications, is also looking toward this fall to begin operation of an earth station at Orlando, Fla. At present, ATC is in the "procuring process," said Mr. Rifkin, adding that the company was comparing technical specifications offered by different hardware manufacturers and surveying potential sites. With respect to when ATC might file at the FCC, Mr. Rifkin suggested "within a six week" time frame.

Mr. Rifkin, who called the satellite venture the "dawn of a new era," said the company was considering the prospects of building other earth stations besides Orlando, although no specifics have

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