‘20/20’ captures top spot, but can’t shake CBS loose

ABC’s newsmagazine is No. 1 show in week ended June 1, but CBS takes week by half a point

Thanks to a well-promoted piece on sexual fantasies and other reports on Mount St. Helen and gifted children, ABC News’s 20/20 came out at the top of the ratings list for the week ended June 1. The Thursday 10-11 p.m. slot, the ABC newsmagazine demolished both a CBS-TV Bob Newhart special and an NBC-TV documentary to earn a 2.7 rating and 41 share. It was 20/20’s first time in first place.

Over all, however, the balance was tipped in CBS’s favor. For the seven nights of prime time, the reigning network continued to hold onto top honors besting ABC’s 14.3/26.9 average with a 14.8/28.0. Still trailing was NBC, with a 13.7/25.8.

During the week, ABC won Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. CBS took Friday and Sunday. NBC won Wednesday, and Saturday was a ratings dead heat between ABC and CBS.

After 20/20, other programs in the top-10 were CBS’s JefTorken (22.6/39), Dallas (21.0/40) Alice (20.9/37), 60 Minutes (20.7/44) Dukes of Hazzard (20.7/44), and Trapper John M.D. (20.4/36). ABC’s Three’s Company (20.2/34), NBC’s Bob Hope Birthday Show (19.7/33), and ABC’s Taxi (19.3/32).

Although 20/20’s performance at 22.7/41 against a repeat of CBS’s Ladies and Gentlemen, Bob Newhart (14.3/26) and NBC News’s To Be A Doctor (8.4/15) was unbeatable for the week, it was not the highest score the newsmagazine has achieved.

Two other broadcasts, both presented during weeks when viewing levels are higher (and therefore ratings are higher) topped the May 29 performance. 20/20 did best when it devoted last fall’s premiere show to the circumstances surrounding Elvis Presley’s death, earning a 25.7/43 on Sept. 13. Next highest in attracting an audience was a 22.8/39 from last Dec. 27’s show which featured a follow-up on the Elvis story, an interview with rock star Michael Jackson and a piece on the movie, “Star Trek.”

Elsewhere in the ratings, but outside prime time, ABC also was claiming success with its World News Tonight, said to have beaten the NBC Nightly News and earned second place for the fifth consecutive week.

Sorry about that

Lady Plowden, head of Britain’s Independent Broadcasting Authority, the controlling agency for the commercial television network, ITV, has expressed regret for the offense given to some people by the