

USFL scrambling for radio and TV coverage

Young football league is looking for national radio contract for next season as well as television deal for 1986's first fall kickoff

While the two-year old United States Football League continues to negotiate a network television package for 1986 when it switches from a spring to a fall schedule (BROADCASTING, Dec. 10), league officials have been busy trying to stir up interest in national radio coverage for the more immediate 1985 season, which opens in less than two months.

ABC Radio held the exclusive network radio rights for the USFL during the first two years at a cost of \$1.25 million ("Riding Gain," Dec. 13, 1982). However, ABC Radio Networks President Ed McLaughlin told BROADCASTING that the company's 1985 business plan was assembled with the assumption that there would be no carriage of the USFL. Over the past two years, USFL football turned out to be about a break-even proposition for ABC Radio. "If there was a new deal, there would have to be some changes," said McLaughlin.

The first year that ABC Radio carried USFL games it drew the interest of many advertisers and was nearly a sell-out. But the 1984 season was quite a different story. McLaughlin said it was between 40% and 50% sold out. And Stroh's, the official beer advertiser for the USFL's first season on ABC, did not renew in 1984 ("Riding Gain," Feb. 27).

McLaughlin said station clearances for USFL games also deteriorated during the second season. The pre-season station lineup numbered approximately 150, which during the regular season dropped to around 100 because many stations dumped coverage during the middle of the season. Affiliates of the ABC Information Network had the right of first refusal for USFL broadcasts with stations asked to carry two games per week, on Monday and Saturday evenings.

McLaughlin said that at a meeting three weeks ago, the USFL indicated it may come up with a proposal that calls just for coverage of the playoff games and league championship contest. "If they make such a proposal, we would be interested in looking at

it," he said. (ABC Radio has the right of first refusal for network broadcast rights.)

Over at CBS, Dick Brescia, senior vice president, CBS Radio Networks, acknowledged that CBS had preliminary conversations with the USFL and said that a proposal put forth by league officials, which would cover the next two seasons, is under review. Presently, CBS Radio offers stations a National Football League package of 37 games which has 27 regular season contests, most on Monday nights, and 10 post-season games including the Super Bowl and Pro Bowl.

Meanwhile, both NBC Radio and Mutual Broadcasting have, for now, nixed the idea of USFL coverage. "It just wasn't the right time for us to get involved," said Dick Penn, vice president and general manager, NBC Radio Networks.

Dominick Camera, marketing director for the USFL, said last week that he remains confident some kind of radio deal will soon be worked out.

On the television side, ABC, which also held the TV broadcast rights for the first two years, exercised its option to carry the USFL

CBS wins holiday weeks, edging ABC, NBC

Powered by *Monday Night Football* and its Sunday night movie, ABC won four out of seven nights for the week ended Dec. 23, pulling to within one-tenth of a rating point behind first-place CBS. It was the closest ABC has come to first place all season. During the 13th week of the 1984-85 prime time season, according to A. C. Nielsen, CBS averaged a 16.1 rating and 26 share, compared to a 16/26 for ABC and a 14.8/24 for NBC.

ABC, besides winning Wednesday and Saturday nights, was helped measurably on Monday by *Monday Night Football*, which featured the Dallas Cowboys and the Miami Dolphins. The telecast was the second-ranked program of the week, achieving a 25.1/40 and, according to ABC researchers, delivered the largest number of households (21,310,000 households per average minute) of any Monday night telecast since ABC began broadcasting the Monday night games in 1970.

The combined network rating/share totaled 48.5/77, compared to a 46.3/79 for the comparable week a year ago. And reversing a season-long trend, HUT levels were up over the comparable week last year, from 59 to 61.8. During the preceding week (Dec. 10-16), the combined network rating/share totaled 48.3/77, compared to a 49.4/79 for the comparable week a year ago.

For the week ended Dec. 23, CBS had four of the top 10 shows, ABC had three and NBC had three. ABC won Monday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday; CBS won Thursday and Friday; NBC won Tuesday.

During the previous week, ended Dec. 16, CBS won with an average 16.6/26, and was followed by NBC with a 16.1/26 and then ABC with a 15.6/25. During the 13 weeks of the 1984-85 prime time season, ABC has made it into second place in the weekly averages five times, although it has never been able to break the 16.0 average weekly rating level.

Rank	Show	Network	Rating/Share	Rank	Show	Network	Rating/Share	Rank	Show	Network	Rating/Share
1.	Dynasty	ABC	25.9/40	23.	Benson	ABC	16.4/27	46.	St. Elsewhere	NBC	12.9/22
2.	Dallas vs. Miami	ABC	25.1/40	24.	20/20	ABC	16.4/27	40.	T.J. Hooker	ABC	12.7/22
3.	Simon & Simon	CBS	23.4/35	25.	Cagney & Lacey	CBS	15.8/24	47.	E/R	CBS	12.6/20
4.	Dallas	CBS	23.0/37	26.	Night Court	NBC	15.6/24	48.	Call to Glory	ABC	12.5/19
5.	A-Team	NBC	21.8/34	27.	Highway to Heaven	NBC	15.3/25	49.	Battle of Network Stars	ABC	12.4/19
6.	Bill Cosby Show	NBC	21.7/35	28.	Alice	CBS	15.2/24	50.	Gimme A Break	NBC	12.3/21
7.	Knots Landing	CBS	20.9/34	29.	Jeffersons	CBS	14.6/24	51.	More Than Murder	CBS	12.1/22
8.	Hotel	ABC	20.8/35	30.	Trapper John, M.D.	CBS	14.5/24	52.	Dukes of Hazzard	CBS	12.1/20
9.	Riptide	NBC	20.8/33	31.	Facts of Life	NBC	14.3/22	53.	Yogi Bear Christmas	CBS	11.9/19
10.	A Christmas Carol	CBS	20.7/30	32.	He's Fired/She's Hired	CBS	14.2/23	54.	Double Trouble	NBC	11.7/20
11.	60 Minutes	CBS	20.1/34	33.	The Sound of Music	NBC	14.1/23	55.	Ripley's Believe It or Not	ABC	11.6/20
12.	Family Ties	NBC	19.8/31	34.	Matt Houston	ABC	13.9/24	56.	Airwolf	CBS	11.3/20
13.	Superman	ABC	18.9/31	35.	It's Your Move	NBC	13.9/21	57.	Spencer	NBC	11.1/19
14.	Magnum, P.I.	CBS	18.9/30	36.	Three's A Crowd	ABC	13.7/22	58.	Hawaiian Heat	ABC	11.0/18
15.	Remington Steele	NBC	18.8/32	37.	Hill Street Blues	NBC	13.6/22	59.	Punky Brewster	NBC	10.3/18
16.	Falcon Crest	CBS	18.4/32	38.	Love Boat	ABC	13.5/24	60.	Partners in Crime	NBC	10.0/18
17.	Fall Guy	ABC	18.4/30	39.	Who's the Boss?	ABC	13.5/21	61.	Glitter	ABC	10.0/16
18.	Little House Movie	NBC	18.2/27	40.	Charles in Charge	CBS	13.4/22	62.	Paper Dolls	ABC	9.9/17
19.	TV Bloopers & Prac. Jokes	NBC	18.0/27	41.	V	NBC	13.4/22	63.	Muppet Babies	CBS	9.9/15
20.	Cheers	NBC	17.4/26	42.	Private Benjamin	CBS	13.3/21	64.	Hunter	NBC	8.8/14
21.	Murder, She Wrote	CBS	17.0/28	43.	Smurfs Springtime Special	NBC	13.2/23	65.	Hot Pursuit	NBC	8.8/12
22.	Webster	ABC	16.8/27	44.	Finder of Lost Loves	ABC	13.0/24				

*Indicates premiere episode