



American Athletic Conference Looks Ahead to its TV/Media Future

Fresh off its fifth anniversary celebration, the American Athletic Conference is poised to take a massive step towards its future. When the calendar turns to 2019, The American will begin negotiations for its second TV/media rights deal. The conference's current deal with ESPN expires after the 2019-20 season.

"We have a wonderful relationship with ESPN/ABC," said Mike Aresco, commissioner of the American Athletic Conference. "I respect what they do for us and we are excited to talk to new president Jimmy Pitaro and see where they are with their initiatives. We are a growth stock and we want to continue our upward trajectory."

The American has seen significant progress in its five-year existence. Consider the following:

- The American's 13 schools reside in 11 states and have produced more than 2.6 million alumni
- Five schools are in top 20 U.S. media markets – Dallas, Houston, Orlando, Philadelphia and Tampa
- The American's footprint covers almost 15 percent of the country, close to 17 million households
- Conference teams have appeared in more than 90 football games, including bowl games, that have each drawn more than one million viewers
- Strong Navy/Notre Dame football series
- War on I-4 rivalry between UCF and USF
- Championship football game featured on ABC for the last three years
- Compelling Thursday and Friday prime-time football games

Early Success and the Power 6

When The American launched in 2013, there were many unknowns. But the conference has achieved early success, including three major New

Year's Day bowl victories, four NCAA basketball team championships and 11 individual NCAA titles.

"Since 2013, we have quickly become a respected conference and brand," said Aresco. "We have had big bowl wins and basketball championships. We have become an extremely powerful football conference and have great Power 6 inventory. We are strong in men and women's basketball. We've also done very well in Olympic sports."

Since its launch, The American's goal has been to be included in the Power 5 group of conferences (ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12, SEC), creating a Power 6 group.

"When you look across the quality of the conference's teams, the average audience that games generate, the number of NFL and NBA draft picks produced, and other metrics, it is clear that The American is much more like the other P5 conferences than anything else in college sports," said Aresco.

In the next eight years, the conference will play more than 100 football games against other P6 members. This includes premium opponents such as Arkansas, Florida, Michigan, Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia Tech and Wisconsin.

"When you're competitive in games like that, there's huge national interest because those games affect the CFP race, not only for our teams, but also for the teams we're playing," said Aresco.

TV/Media Deal Version 2.0

One of the challenges facing The American in its new TV/media deal is whether it should bundle all its rights or create multiple packages, breaking off mobile rights from linear rights.

"Our first priority will be our discussions with ESPN, which has been a great partner. We also value our



UCF quarterback McKenzie Milton was named offensive MVP of the 2018 Peach Bowl as the 12th-ranked Knights upset seventh-ranked Auburn 34-27. The Knights were the only undefeated FBS team for the 2017 season.

men's basketball relationship with CBS Sports and appreciate the football and basketball coverage provided by CBS Sports Network. We will look carefully at the marketplace and see what innovative things people are doing that might affect us down the road.

"We need to keep building our brand and keep the P6 narrative strong because I think we are going to eventually crack that autonomy group," Aresco continued. "We have created a narrative and have been able to fill that narrative with a lot of great moments that have been on national TV.

"We also need to generate revenue to sustain and build on what we're doing in the conference," Aresco added. "Our current revenue was an accident of history, the upheaval and disarray of realignment and people not understanding what we had."

In addition to revenue, the conference's main objective is to get the kind of exposure that will allow The

American to continue building its brand by increasing its viewership. The conference also wants to adapt to the changing viewing habits of its audience, particularly young people.

It's All About Timing

The American may have found a sweet spot in the timing of its negotiations for a new deal. All of the autonomous conferences are locked into TV contracts through 2023 and beyond. The American has the most elite college product that will be available for a while. The conference is also at a great intersection of its success and the development of new distribution platforms.

"We continue to generate higher ratings and more interest," said Aresco. "I think we are going to continue to be a College Football Playoff contender and that's going to spark interest across the country. Our basketball is strong and we have a crown jewel in UConn women's basketball. The value of our conference is at its highest since we reconstituted five years ago.

"When you look at the Navy/Notre Dame (football) games and the UConn women (basketball), we have an iconic product, as well as teams competing at the highest level. This is a deep conference. We have had multiple teams win 10, 11, 12 and 13 football games. It hasn't been just one team."

From traditional media to cutting-edge platforms, The American will be looking to secure its future as a P6 conference.

"We have a terrific product to offer television and media partners," Aresco continued. "We are a great media value proposition."



Adam Amin and John Thompson III call a regular season game at courtside between the University of Houston and Wichita State in 2018. Intense rivalries and level of play put American Athletic Conference men's basketball on par with some of the top collegiate basketball conferences in the country.



AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

MEDIA POW6R

The American Athletic Conference enjoys strong and valuable partnerships with **ESPN/ABC** and **CBS Sports**, strengthening The American's brand and identity nationally.

OUR TELEVISION PARTNERS



NATIONAL TELECASTS SINCE 2013

333

FOOTBALL

734

MEN'S BASKETBALL

131

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

TOTAL HOURS: **3,000**

POW6R RATINGS FOR NATIONAL FOOTBALL TELECASTS

MAJOR MARKET DOUBLE-DIGIT RATINGS

FOOTBALL RATINGS RANGING FROM **10.1** TO **22.6** IN PHILADELPHIA, HOUSTON, ORLANDO, TAMPA AND MEMPHIS MARKETS

94 FOOTBALL TELECASTS EACH WITH **MORE THAN A MILLION** VIEWERS SINCE 2013

- ★ IN 2017, USF VS UCF - **4.7 MILLION** VIEWERS, **ABC'S** SECOND MOST WATCHED LATE AFTERNOON BLACK FRIDAY GAME SINCE 2005
- ★ IN 2017, AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP GAME (MEMPHIS VS UCF) - **3.5 MILLION** VIEWERS ON **ABC**
- ★ IN 2016, **ESPN'S** HIGHEST RATED THURSDAY NIGHT PRIME TIME TELECASTS WERE LOUISVILLE AT HOUSTON (**1.5**) AND HOUSTON AT CINCINNATI (**1.4**)

MAJOR FOOTBALL OPPONENTS 2019-26

120 GAMES VERSUS 47 OPPONENTS REPRESENTING THE BIG TEN, BIG 12, ACC, SEC, PAC-12 AND NOTRE DAME

A SAMPLING OF FUTURE OPPONENTS

Florida	South Carolina
Miami	Stanford
Michigan	Texas
Nebraska	TCU
Notre Dame	UCLA
Ohio State	Virginia Tech
Oklahoma	West Virginia



POW6R BASKETBALL RATINGS

- ★ **CELEBRATING ESPN'S MEN'S BASKETBALL COVERAGE**
"THE MEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP IN ITS FIRST FOUR YEARS ON **ESPN** AVERAGED OVER **1.4 MILLION** VIEWERS."
- ★ **2017-18 MEN'S BASKETBALL REGULAR SEASON**
CINCINNATI @ WICHITA STATE 1.2 ON CBS
(HIGHEST-RATED **CBS** GAME IN NOON WINDOW ON FINAL REGULAR SEASON SUNDAY SINCE 2012)
- ★ **2017-18 MEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP**
HOUSTON VS. CINCINNATI: 1.4 ON CBS
(HIGHEST-RATED TELECAST IN LEAGUE HISTORY)
- ★ **WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP**
SINCE 2014, AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES OUTRATE ALL OTHER CONFERENCES' CHAMPIONSHIPS (AVERAGES **0.37** ON **ESPN** AND **ESPN2**)

TOP 50 MEDIA MARKETS

- #4 - PHILADELPHIA {TEMPLE}
- #5 - DALLAS/FORT WORTH {SMU}
- #7 - HOUSTON {HOUSTON}
- #13 - TAMPA/ST. PETERSBURG {USF}
- #18 - ORLANDO {UCF}
- #26 - BALTIMORE {NAVY}
- #32 - HARTFORD/NEW HAVEN {UCONN}
- #35 - CINCINNATI {CINCINNATI}
- #50 - MEMPHIS {MEMPHIS}

