

owned or controlled by Cablevision or its affiliates in order to accommodate immediate carriage of CSN; and

(d) Grant CSN such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

Dated March 17, 1997.

Respectfully submitted,


Robert A. Garrett
Philip W. Horton
Richard L. Rosen
Robert M. Cooper

ARNOLD & PORTER
555 12th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004-1202
(202) 942-5999

Attorneys for Classic Sports
Network, Inc.

COMPLAINANT'S SIGNATURE

Stephen D. Greenberg, President of Complainant Classic Sports Network, Inc. ("CSN"), hereby signs this Carriage Agreement Complaint on behalf of CSN as prescribed by 47 C.F.R. § 76.1302(k)(3).

March 17, 1997.



Stephen D. Greenberg
President
Classic Sports Network, Inc.
300 Park Avenue South
6th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10010
(212) 529-8000

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Complainant Classic Sports Network, Inc., by counsel, hereby certifies that the foregoing CARRIAGE AGREEMENT COMPLAINT has been served upon the following individuals on this 17th day of March 1997 by the method indicated:

James Dolan
President
Cablevision Systems Corporation
One Media Crossways
Woodbury, New York 11797

(By United States Mail, First Class, Postage
Prepaid and By Federal Express)

Robert S. Lemle, Esq.
Executive Vice President and
General Counsel
Cablevision Systems Corporation
One Media Crossways
Woodbury, New York 11797

(By United States Mail, First Class, Postage
Prepaid and By Federal Express)



Robert M. Cooper

CLASSIC SPORTS NETWORK

300 PARK AVENUE SOUTH 6TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10010 TEL 212.529.8000 FAX 212.529.8025



February 28, 1997

VIA FACSIMILE AND FEDERAL EXPRESS (516) 393-0206

Mr. James L. Dolan
President
Cablevision Systems Corp.
One Media Crossways
Woodbury, NY 11797

Dear Mr. Dolan:

In light of our recent phone conversation in which you notified me that Cablevision has no intention to launch Classic Sports Network ("CSN") to any additional Cablevision subscribers, this is to notify you, as required by law, that CSN intends to file a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission against Cablevision under Section 12 of the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992 (the "1992 Cable Act"), which added a new Section 616 to the Federal Communications Act. Section 616 was implemented in order to increase the availability of multichannel programming to the public and specifically prohibits cable systems from using coercive tactics to require programming vendors to grant ownership interests or exclusive distribution rights in exchange for carriage. We believe Cablevision is in blatant violation of Section 616.

It is apparent that, despite Cablevision's acknowledgment of the quality and value of CSN, it has no intention to reach agreement with CSN with respect to any significant launches absent either (i) exclusivity in certain regions, or, more likely, (ii) equity ownership in CSN. As you surely must know, insistence on either of these terms as a condition of carriage is specifically prohibited by Federal law.

The following chronology of communications between CSN and Cablevision underscores the basis for our complaint with respect to Cablevision's conduct:

1. Cablevision entered into an affiliation agreement with CSN on July 26, 1995, and agreed to launch CSN on its Norwalk, CT system (the "Norwalk System"). Cablevision filled out the required decoder authorization form (copy enclosed) and indicated that CSN would be launched on the System on September 1, 1995, even specifying the channel number (78). Shortly before the scheduled launch date, I received a phone call from Mack Budill giving me a "heads up" that our launch was in jeopardy. When I pressed Mack for details, he told me that it related to a dispute between Cablevision and "one of [our] owners." He further advised me that "Jimmy has told us to hold up launching Classic Sports" pending a resolution of that dispute.

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It turned out that Cablevision was under the misimpression that Liberty Media owned an equity stake in CSN and, according to Ed Frazier (former President of Liberty Sports), Cablevision was attempting to "horn its way" into an ownership stake of its own. You and I eventually spoke, and I explained to you that CSN was not owned in any fashion by Liberty. However, it is now clear that your desire to own CSN had been whetted and you would continue to use your leverage as the sixth largest cable operator in the country to attempt to coerce us into selling you some or all of CSN. Throughout this entire process, I spoke on numerous occasions with Bob Shrader, general manager of the Norwalk System. Bob repeatedly assured me that he wanted to launch and had reserved a channel for CSN. He said that the "corporate office" had ordered him to hold up the launch for reasons that had not been explained to him, and he urged me to try to resolve whatever issues existed in time for CSN to be included in his launch window. Of course, it was beyond my ability to resolve the "issues" because the only "issue" was Cablevision's attempt to extract an equity position in CSN out of Liberty Sports.

2. Shortly thereafter, Cablevision's Boston system requested permission to launch CSN. After weeks of delay, Peter Low finally approved that launch (on a low penetration tier) and told me it would be a way for Cablevision to observe the network and determine whether or not it was a product that Cablevision would want to launch in other markets. By all accounts, CSN has been very well received by your customers in Boston since its launch in February 1996. In fact, Continental Cablevision has now launched CSN on its Boston systems, and Time Warner is expected to do likewise later this year.

3. After a very successful debut in New York on WBIS in July 1996, I contacted Peter Low in an attempt to negotiate a launch agreement for Cablevision's systems in the New York market when CSN's carriage on WBIS ended in January of this year. Instead, at the Kaitz dinner this past September and at a meeting the following day in our offices, Hank Ratner, Josh Sapan, Mark Shuken and Mike Bain at various times all stated that Cablevision wanted to buy CSN. In fact, they all related in varying manners that "Jimmy Dolan is obsessed" (their word) with buying CSN. While this was flattering, we had just completed a \$20 million private financing and were not interested in selling the company at that point. We made this clear to all Cablevision personnel involved.

Simultaneously, there were discussions initiated by Mark and Mike about using CSN as a backdrop service to Sportschannel or Sportschannel 2 in the New York market. This piqued our interest, and we were eager to pursue this avenue. In fact, we were told by Mark at one point that our \$.10 rate "shouldn't be a problem" in this scenario.

Despite my repeated follow-up with Mark, Cablevision's apparent interest in this scenario seemingly died. I was told that Cablevision was "reassessing" its entire sports strategy, but that there would be a role for CSN. The proposal was never formally withdrawn.

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4. On October 9, 1996, at a meeting in Woodbury with Mark, Mike and Hank, both Mike and Hank reiterated to me that Cablevision wanted to buy CSN. In fact, Hank asked our price. They made it clear to me that "Jimmy asks about buying Classic Sports in every meeting.....He is really hot to buy [CSN]." Once again, I related that CSN was not for sale.

Later that same day, I met with Peter Low regarding possible carriage of CSN on Cablevision's New York area systems. Peter acknowledged that "some people" within the company wanted to buy CSN. However, he told me that his principal interest was in gaining cable exclusivity for CSN within his competitive markets. He specifically mentioned SNET's planned overbuild of Cablevision in Fairfield County, CT. "Exclusivity is Chuck's hot button," he told me, adding that he would entertain launching CSN "only if you can offer us exclusivity" vis-a-vis SNET and NYNEX. Peter offered to launch CSN on Cablevision's "Optimum Tier" throughout all of its systems in exchange for such exclusivity. Through all of our discussions of these Optimum launches Peter repeatedly told me that he would "have to run all this past Jimmy," making it clear that he lacked the authority to launch CSN without your approval. At the conclusion of this meeting, I raised with Peter my concern over comments to the effect that Cablevision intended to "punish" CSN for some reason. Peter did not deny that some people within Cablevision had made such statements.

I followed up with a draft agreement, the terms of which provided for the grant to Cablevision of exclusivity; numerous phone calls; and several letters. Inexplicably, despite Peter's earlier expressions of keen interest in obtaining certain exclusive rights to CSN in exchange for the Optimum launches and my very clearly enunciated deadlines, I received no response from Peter for many weeks. One could only conclude that Cablevision was no more interested in exclusivity than it was in using CSN as a backdrop service.

5. Recently, I have learned that Mark Lustgarten has commented [in public] that "Classic Sports is a great service, but if we don't own it, we have no incentive to launch it."

6. Finally, Brian Bedol has related to me his recent conversations with Peter Low. Again, Peter reiterated that you, Peter and other Cablevision people liked Classic Sports. But, he said, Cablevision would not "be doing business" with CSN in any territory unless we could grant Cablevision exclusivity in Connecticut. In view of our operating history and my repeated attempts to obtain a response from him in the fall prior to our authorization of an SNET launch in Connecticut, this was a very frustrating position. In fact, Peter suggested to Brian that if Classic Sports were willing to go to court in order to

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attempt to rescind its SNET launch authorization, Peter would recommend that Cablevision negotiate a carriage deal with Classic Sports. Even then, he stated, any deal with Classic Sports would be subject to your approval, which might very well not be forthcoming. Of course, it is not our style of business to try unilaterally to rescind agreements which we have entered into in good faith. However, in this case it appeared that even going to court to try to break any agreement with one of your competitors would not necessarily have resulted in carriage with you. In fact, as described above, if Cablevision had truly been interested in acquiring exclusivity in Connecticut, it had had ample opportunity to do so.

The only plausible explanation for Cablevision's behavior is your specific directive to Peter to "make [our] lives miserable." In fact, Peter acknowledged to Brian that if Cablevision were making our lives miserable, it was not accidental. I have concluded that your stated desire to "punish" CSN and to "make [our] lives miserable" is part of Cablevision's ongoing campaign to coerce us into giving Cablevision an equity interest in our network.

7. Your stated objection to launching Classic Sports, as expressed in our most recent phone conversation, is that "customers would be mad at Cablevision since they had [CSN] for free on WBIS and now would have to pay for it." This explanation is disingenuous at best.

The only conclusion one can draw from Cablevision's pattern of behavior is that it is using coercive conduct in order to gain a financial interest in CSN. Alternatively, Cablevision is using coercion to obtain exclusive distribution rights to CSN's programming service specifically in regions where exclusivity is no longer available. In any case, Cablevision is clearly discriminating against CSN based on its "non-affiliated status" vis-a-vis Cablevision.

All of this conduct is explicitly prohibited by Section 616 of the Federal Communications Act.

There is substantial regulatory history to support this proposition. According to the 1993 FCC release in which the applicable regulations were implemented (the "1993 Order"), the intent underlying Section 616 is to "prevent cable systems and other multichannel video programming distributors from taking undue advantage of programming vendors through various practices, including coercing vendors to grant ownership interests or exclusive distribution rights to multichannel distributors in exchange for carriage on their systems." 9 FCC Rcd 2642. We believe that Cablevision's refusal to deal with CSN in

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good faith is exactly the type of anticompetitive behavior the FCC sought to address. There is substantial evidence that Cablevision's conduct has crossed the line from strenuous, arm's length negotiations, in which we have been more than willing to engage, to discrimination, coercion and bad faith.

It is clear that consumer demand for the service is strong, particularly in the New York ADI. In fact, everyone at Cablevision has been consistently complimentary about the service. The following Cablevision system managers are among those who have told CSN representatives that they have notified Cablevision's corporate office that they want to launch CSN because of strong customer acceptance and demand: Tom DeMarinis (Long Island); Frank DeJoy and Clara Rodriguez (Hoboken); Mike Smith and Sherri Schiffman (Yorktown); Steve Randall (Asbury Park and Jackson Township); Stephanie Reina (Lynbrook). You cannot possibly expect me to believe that you do not want to offer the service because of its lack of merit or support from your system managers.

Further, you cannot argue that we have been unwilling to negotiate a fair and reasonable affiliation agreement. After all, CSN has an executed affiliation agreement with Cablevision. In addition, since our agreement was executed in July 1995, we have executed affiliation agreements with every other major MSO and substantially increased CSN's subscriber count. Cablevision's refusal to deal with us stands in stark contrast to the rest of the cable industry, including those MSO's who have substantial ownership interests in other programming services (e.g., Cox, TCI, Time Warner, Continental and Comcast).

In the 1993 Order, the FCC stated, "We believe that ultimatums, intimidation, conduct that amounts to the exertion of pressure beyond good faith negotiations, or behavior that is tantamount to an unreasonable refusal to deal with a vendor who refuses to grant financial interests or exclusivity rights in exchange for carriage should be considered examples of behavior that violates the prohibitions set forth in Section 616." 9 FCC Rcd 2642, 2649.

Cablevision's actions vis-a-vis Classic Sports Network fall squarely within that which the Commission sought to prevent when it implemented Section 616.

It is well known that Cablevision, through its Rainbow Programming arm, owns a number of cable programming services, including many sports services (e.g., Sportschannel and Newsport). Cablevision is also the sixth largest cable operator in the country with more than 2.5 million subscribers. As president of a large, vertically integrated company, you have a special responsibility to ensure that the provisions of Federal law (Section 616 in particular) are complied with. Yet, the bullying of CSN by

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Cablevision has not been undertaken by overzealous low level employees. Rather it has been instituted by Cablevision's senior management, and that is what makes it all the more egregious.

CSN is not owned by any MSO's or any of the several large cable programmers. We are independently funded and rely on the level playing field specifically mandated by Federal law. Attempts by Cablevision, or anyone else, to abuse its position of power to the detriment of CSN will be vigorously resisted. If independent, entrepreneurial ventures like Classic Sports Network are to have any chance of succeeding in this world of media giants, companies like Cablevision must understand their responsibility to abide by the standards of good business -- and law -- that have been established for the cable industry.

We intend this letter to serve as notice to Cablevision, as required by law, that we believe a violation of Section 616 has occurred. 47 CFR 76.1302 (a). However, let me state that it is not our preference to resort to legal action. Instead, we would welcome the chance to work out, once and for all, a fair and equitable roll-out schedule for CSN on Cablevision systems on terms comparable to those offered to and accepted by other MSO's.

However, if we are unable to do so in a timely manner, you leave us no choice but to pursue legal redress for Cablevision's illegal conduct, including mandatory carriage on the terms set forth in our Affiliation Agreement.

In addition, we have recently been notified that Cablevision intends to launch "its own version of Classic Sports Network." We believe that this action, coupled with your refusal to carry Classic Sports Network, would result in Cablevision's also being in violation of Federal antitrust laws. Congress has specifically provided that "[a]ll antitrust and other remedies that can be pursued under current law by video programming vendors are unaffected by this section [616]." 9 FCC Rcd 2650.

Please call me at your earliest convenience so that we may set a meeting to discuss the foregoing. If we do not receive a prompt, satisfactory response to this letter, we plan to pursue appropriate legal remedies.

Very truly yours,

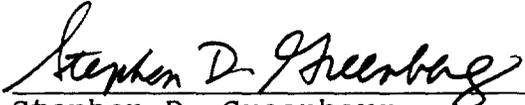
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen D. Greenberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Stephen D. Greenberg
President

SDG:pp
Enclosures

5 OFFICE PRODUCTS

and policies. The complaint is not interposed for any improper purpose.


Stephen D. Greenberg

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 14th day of March, 1997.


Notary Public

My Commission expires:

9/30/97

JUDITH A. VOLLMAR
Notary Public, State of New York
No. 4701978
Qualified in Orange Co.
Commission Expires 9/30/97

July 26, 1995

Mr. Peter Low
Vice President of Programming
Cablevision Systems Corp.
One Media Crossways
Woodbury, NY 11797

Dear Peter:

This Agreement contains the terms by which Classic Sports Partners, L.P. ("Network") grants the right to distribute and exhibit Classic Sports Network ("Service") to Cablevision Systems Corporation, Cablevision of Boston Limited Partnership, Cablevision of Brookline Limited Partnership, Cablevision of New York City--Phase I, A-R Cable Services, Inc., V Cable, Inc., Cablevision of Newark, U.S. Cable Television Group, L.P., Cablevision of Cleveland, L.P., A-R Cable Partners, Cablevision of Monmouth, Inc., Cablevision of Riverview, Inc., and Cablevision of Framingham, Inc. (each of the above individually or collectively an "Affiliate"); it being acknowledged herein that additional entities under common ownership, management, and/or control with any Affiliate can be added to this Agreement as an additional Affiliate from time to time.

MATERIAL REDACTED

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Sincerely,

Stephen D. Greenberg

Classic Sports Partners, L.P.

By: Classic Sports Network, Inc.

its general partner

By: Stephen D. Greenberg, President

AGREED AND ACCEPTED:

[Signature]
Cablevision Systems Corporation

[Signature]
Cablevision of Boston Limited Partnership

[Signature]
Cablevision of Brookline Limited Partnership

[Signature]
Cablevision of Cleveland, L.P.

[Signature]
Cablevision of New York City--Phase I

[Signature]
V.Cable, Inc.

[Signature]
Cablevision of Riverview, Inc.

[Signature]
Cablevision of Newark

[Signature]
A-R Cable Services, Inc.

[Signature]
U.S. Cable Television Group, L.P.

[Signature]
Cablevision of Framingham, Inc.

[Signature]
A-R Cable Partners

[Signature]
Cablevision of Monmouth, Inc.

MATERIAL REDACTED



October 3, 1995

Mr. Peter Low
Vice President, Programming
CABLEVISION SYSTEMS
One Media Crossways
Woodbury, NY 11797-2013

Dear Peter:

Thank you for calling me last week to follow-up on my recent phone conversation with Chuck Dolan.

In order to facilitate your further review of the decision to pull Classic Sports Network from Cablevision's recent Connecticut launch, I thought it would be helpful to provide you with a brief summary of what has transpired to date:

- After several weeks of negotiations, Classic Sports Network entered into an affiliation agreement with Cablevision Systems dated as of July 26, 1995.
- The affiliation agreement provided for certain launch incentives and charter rates if Classic Sports was launched on any system on or before October 1.
- Soon after the agreement was signed, I was notified that Classic Sports would be launching on Cablevision's Norfolk, Connecticut system on September 1 and "probably on the Bridgeport system soon thereafter".
- We were asked to send the necessary authorization forms to your corporate office for completion and execution.
- On August 11, we received the completed Digicipher Authorization Form (copy enclosed) back from Cablevision, signed by Thomas Montemagno. What is noteworthy is that the form, which your office completed, in addition to providing the specific digicipher IRD code number, also lists the launch date (September 1), number of subscribers (105,000) and even the channel number (78).

Mr. Peter Low
October 3, 1995
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- Approximately a week before the anticipated launch date, I received a phone call from the Woodbury office notifying me that "there may be a problem regarding one of our partners" and as a result the launch of Classic Sports, scheduled for September 1, was "on hold."
- In subsequent conversations with Cablevision executives, I have been advised that the "problem" related to a problem between Rainbow and Liberty Sports and the (erroneous) belief that Liberty was an equity owner of Classic Sports Network.

As you know, Classic Sports Network is an independent programming service. Brian Bedol and I conceived of Classic Sports nearly three years ago, went out and licensed the programming necessary to support the service, raised the money to finance the network and have poured a lifetime's worth of sweat into this endeavor. We are entrepreneurs trying to survive in a world dominated by huge enterprises, many of which have both cable programming and cable distribution interests.

In short, we believe that it is unfair to penalize Classic Sports Network or use us as a pawn in some larger chess match. We want to be terrific programming partners with all of our cable affiliates, especially one as prominent as Cablevision Systems. All we ask is that we be given a fair shot and a level playing field.

I look forward to hearing from you following your further review of this matter.

Sincerely,

Stephen D. Greenberg
President

SDG:lht

cc: Charles Dolan

FORTUNE

OCTOBER 28, 1996

VOL. 134, NO. 8

COMPETITION

Classic Sports: Cable Underdog

SPORTS' GREATEST UPSETS ARE BACK ON TV, thanks to a fledgling cable channel called the Classic Sports Network. Fans of sports oldies can now watch a brash young Cassius Clay dethrone Sonny Liston or see the upstart New York Jets stun the Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl III.

Such triumphs must be inspirational for Classic Sports' founders, Brian Bedol and Stephen Greenberg. They have an appealing concept—classic movies and classic TV have sold on cable, so why not classic sports?—but they are decided underdogs in a cable world dominated by well-entrenched, vertically integrated media giants. In the sports arena alone, Classic Sports will be competing with new networks being launched by ESPN (owned by Disney), CNN/SI

(Ted Turner and Time Warner), and Fox Sports (Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. and John Malone's Tele-Communications). Then there are the niche channels devoted to golf, auto racing, and outdoor life owned by cable operators, who control the pipelines to subscriber homes. With channel capacity scarce, conventional wisdom holds that only networks with ties to cable operators, existing programmers, or broadcasters stand a chance of gaining "carriage," as the cableheads say.

Bedol, 38, a former Time Warner executive, and Greenberg, 48—a lawyer, former deputy baseball commissioner, and son of Baseball Hall of Famer Hank Greenberg—aren't naive. Says Greenberg: "We run up against that every day." But they believe, almost touchingly, in an idea that's revolutionary for cable: that they can sell their channel on its merits.

Some smart money says they're right. Allen & Co. was first to provide seed money for the startup (AT&T Ventures, Florida sports magnate H. Wayne Huizenga, and Warburg Pincus Ventures have since bought pieces). Launched in May 1995, the network can count on a potential audience of about six million cable homes and two million more from satellite TV services. They say they need about 20 million subscribers to break even.

For the moment—though not for long—Classic Sports can be seen by about seven million more viewers in the New York City area on WBIS-TV. Dow Jones and ITT bought the station in July but didn't have their own business and

sports shows ready. In the meantime, they've been running Classic Sports to fill the dead air. As luck would have it, WBIS showed up as channel three on many Manhattan cable boxes—smack between CBS and NBC. Cable subscribers have all stumbled across it, and many liked what they saw. Nielsen ratings show that Classic Sports occasionally outdraws such cable franchises as CNN, ESPN, and Discovery. The channel has produced lots of media attention and "buzz": Mention it in a roomful of Manhattan males, and you'll find that many are addicted. "It gave us an enormous boost," says Bedol.

But these sports fans may be disappointed when WBIS drops Classic Sports for its own programming, probably early next year. And Richard Aurelio, president of Time Warner's New York City Cable Group—noting that doz-

ens of channels are seeking carriage—doesn't seem inclined to find room for it elsewhere. "I question whether a 24-hour vintage sports channel is justified," he says. Classic Sports, he suggests, might do better as filler on a live sports channel.

MENTION IT IN A ROOMFUL OF MANHATTAN MALES, AND YOU'LL FIND THAT MANY ARE ADDICTED.

Elsewhere, Bedol and Greenberg are moving the ball. They've signed up satellite TV services and Baby Bells that offer cable TV over their phone lines. That, in turn, has helped them sell Classic Sports to traditional cable operators in places like Cleveland and Omaha.

TV big shots may look down their noses at Classic Sports, but hey!—the old guard in '69 when Joe Namath promised the Jets would win the Super Bowl. Oh, and if you'd like to watch that game one more time, there's this cable channel ...

— Marc Gunther

Greenberg (left) and Bedol are playing in the big leagues.



TRADEWINDS BLOWING: While Hurricane Bertha is almost done storming the East, the baseball forecast is calling for a flurry of heavy dealing before the July 31 waiver deadline. The Yankees should remain unseasonably quiet, but look for some playoff hopefuls to rain in some major acquisitions. **Page 78**

By **DAVID MINCKLEY**
Daily News Critic at Large

BRIAN Bedol's 9-year-old daughter loves gymnastics. So one night Bedol, the co-founder and CEO of the fledgling Classic Sports Network, brought her home a tape of Mary Lou Retton's performance in the 1984 Olympics.

"Mary Lou Retton," said his daughter. "Isn't she the one on Nick at Nite?"

Well, no, Bedol said. That's Mary Tyler Moore. But watch this tape anyway. So she did and of course it blew her away the same as it blew away the rest of America in 1984.

New cable TV networks aren't exactly a novelty in this age of MTV spinoffs and ESPN3. But if there's anything left that can still rouse a video-jaded America, that can neutralize millions of channel-changing clickers, it's Game 6 of the 1975 World Series. The Borg-McEnroe final at Wimbledon in 1980. Paul Henderson's goal against the Russians in 1972. Billy Mills' last lap in the 10,000 meters at the 1964 Olympics. Lakers-Celtics, 1980s.

This stuff isn't just potentially interesting. It's potentially addictive.

Like rock 'n' roll oldies, sports oldies won't replace new live sports, simply because sports fans (and yes, sports bettors) always need contests where they don't know the outcome. CSN has no surprises. The Yankees always win the World Series. UCLA always wins the NCAAs.

But as a safe harbor from modern life, or modern sports, the sirens would have a hard time offering anything more enticing than the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team.

Even people who hate sports love sports moments — a figure skater, maybe, or a skier. People who love sports have a thousand moments. What Bedol and his partner Steve Greenberg must do now is wrap them into a package so irresistible that cable system operators around America will find room in the cable universe, which is denser than Calcutta, to give CSN a home.

They're getting a big boost in New York now from the new Channel 31, WBIS, which is running CSN programming while it gears up for its long-term menu of local sports, business and the like.

Greenberg, who does a lot of the pitching, dealing and negotiating with cable companies, says response has been very positive, and he expects a flowering of CSN once cable systems expand from, say, 60 to 150 channels. Which everyone wants to happen soon.

When it does, and CSN is widely available, the focus shifts to whether it can deliver.

The raw material is there:

JUST CLASSICS



CSN hopes you'll feel bubbly watching Howie, glory Knicks & Nollie's no-no's.

New network specializes in best of the old. Will yesteryear play today?

CSN has access rights to virtually the complete libraries of major league baseball, football, basketball and hockey, plus the major fight film collections (including Jimmy Jacobs'), a lot of tennis, Olympics and so on. It has the rights to wacky old sports

shows like the Rocky Marciano-hosted "Main Event" and talk programs like Howard Cosell's.

A few legendary sports events are either lost forever or simply undiscovered on film: the first Super Bowl, Wilt Chamberlain's 100-point

game. But if it exists, CSN probably has a line on it. Don't be surprised to see more soccer pop up soon, alongside the old "Home Run Derby" and a sometimes-forgotten old quiz show called "Sports Challenge," hosted by Dick Enberg in a variety of

1970s outfits (a la "Soul Train"). The shows themselves are lightweight (sample question: What was Red Grange's real name?), but it's amazing to see which athletes would participate.

In one episode, the Yankees vs. the Boston Celtics, the teams are Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle and Billy Martin vs. Red Auerbach, Bill Russell and Tommy Heinsohn.

Those shows won't be as riveting to the average sports fan as the Lew Alcindor vs. Elvin Hayes showdown in the Astrodome, Bedol notes, but they do serve a purpose. A classic sports channel, like a buffet dinner, can't be all desserts. It can't be 24 hours of home runs, dunks and touchdown passes, because that doesn't convey the rhythm or the truth of sports.

That is, CSN can't be programmed for the Mets fan who wants to watch Mookie Wilson's ground ball skip through Bill Buckner for 24 straight hours.

"I think there are three levels of fan," says Bedol. "The casual fan, the serious fan and the fanatic. We've got to program for all three, with most of it probably falling in the middle."

That's easier said than programmed, however. What do you do with, for instance, a Nolan Ryan no-hitter? The casual fan wants to see the ninth inning. The serious fan wants the whole game, to feel the tension build, to recapture the ambience of the game itself.

In cases like that, Bedol says CSN might create a two-hour version, paring a bit here and there. "We definitely don't just show highlights," he says. "You have ESPN for that. We want to provide more."

Bedol also suggests, in a figurative cautious whisper, that CSN may be more than just entertainment. There just might be some history tucked into those old Dr. J and Bobby Orr films — subliminal lessons in how basketball got to Michael Jordan and hockey got to Wayne Gretzky.

"You have a lot of kids today who can talk about Shaq, but don't know anything about Russell and Chamberlain," says Bedol. "We can be the vehicle to show them. We've got the ability to connect the past and the present. Everyone sees Albert Belle. We have Roger Maris, Mickey Mantle and Hank Greenberg (Steve's father)."

One interesting response CSN has already heard from viewers, says Bedol, is that it's become a bonding vehicle. Fathers and kids watch it together and the kid can see that the old man was right. That was a great moment, that was a great player.

"This is not a bad thing," says Bedol, whose own daughter can now tell Mary Lou Retton from Mary Tyler Moore.