

NEW YORK POST TV PLUS

REVIEWS • RADIO • LISTINGS • NEWS

Next on Classic Sports: Overtime

No sudden death as hot network gets reprieve

By MICHAEL STARR

THE Classic Sports Network might go into extra innings after all.

Contractually, Classic Sports is scheduled to be dropped by WBIS/Ch. 31 on Oct. 16, when the new station — which used to be WNYC and was bought for \$207 million by Dow Jones and IFT — ostensibly starts airing its own programming.

But it's doubtful WBIS will meet the Oct. 16 startup date, meaning Classic Sports could continue on WBIS. The sports network is being seen on Ch. 3 on cable systems in Manhattan and on Ch. 31 on systems in the other boroughs.

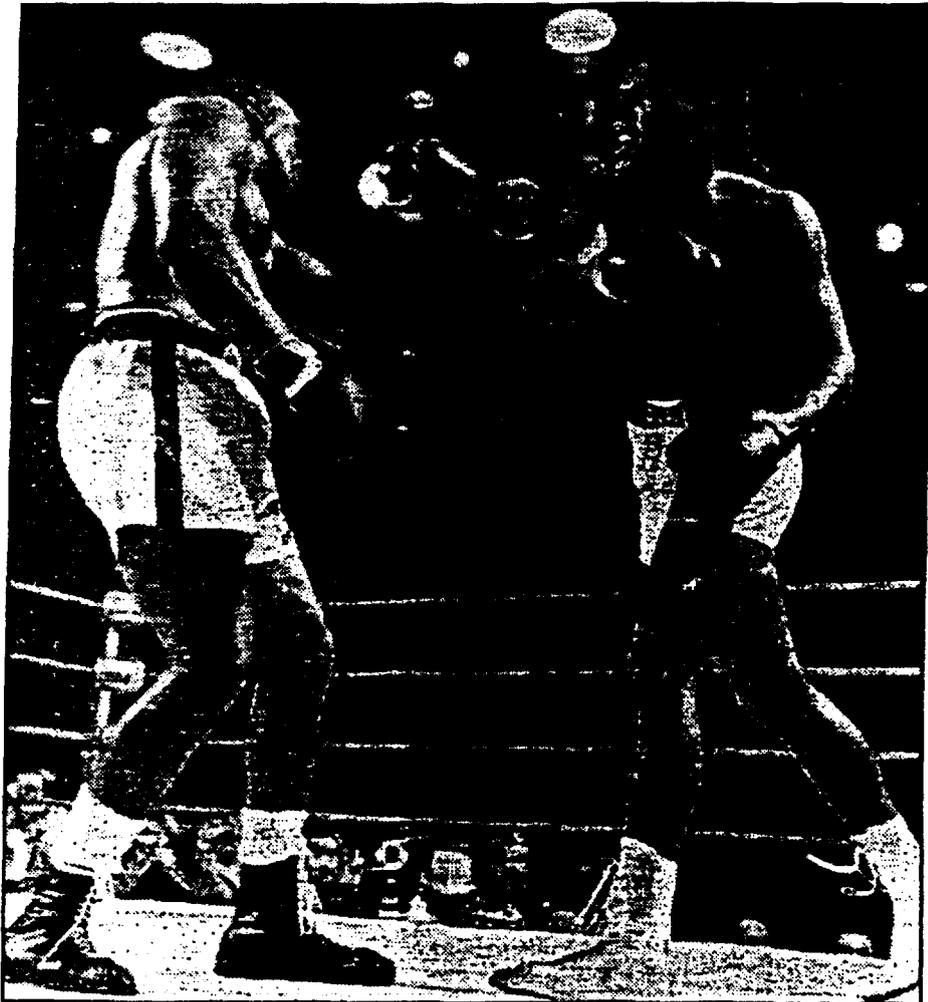
"As of today, we're scheduled to go off WBIS on Oct. 16," said Classic Sports President Steve Greenberg. "Contractually, we have a limited run on WBIS and at some point between now and January we're going to go off. But whether or not that will change we're just not sure."

WBIS station president Carolyn Wall said the station will have several programming announcements "in the next couple of weeks" but wasn't specific about WBIS' startup plans.

"I've been here since June and I think there's still a little bit of time that needs to be devoted to planning and staffing," Wall said.

And Wall said that Classic Sports could find a home on WBIS — though for how long remains to be determined.

"They will continue to be represented after the launch and will have a place on our [programming]



Cable's Classic Sports Network has captivated New York sports fans with its lineup of legendary sports events, including great boxing matches such as the young Muhammad Ali's first bout against heavyweight champion Sonny Liston (left) in Miami in 1964.

schedule," she said. "To what degree and extent will be discussed. I don't know how permanent it will be."

Classic Sports — a 24-hour network devoted to replaying memorable sports events — has generated a lot of passionate talk among sports fans since it began airing July 1 on WBIS.

Classic Sports relies not only on archival footage, but also features old shows like "Home Run Derby," "Sports Challenge" and "The Superstars." In addition, roundtable discussions and interview segments with sports legends are hosted by sportscaster Al Trautwig from the network's "Victory Yard" studios in midtown Manhattan.

Greenberg said Classic Sports is talking to several local cable systems — including TCI (North Jersey and Westchester), Cablevision and Comcast — about picking up Classic Sports once its run ends on WBIS.

But the chances of Classic Sports landing on Time Warner Cable — which carries WBIS in New York —

seems remote, according to Richard Aurelio, president of Time Warner Cable of New York.

"They've made presentations to us in the past but we have so many channels that my reaction [Classic Sports] is that it really ought to be a wrap-around channel on a sports network like M-ESPN2 or SportsChannel," Aurelio said. "As a channel by itself, it doesn't seem to be a viable programming service. We're tracking pretty closely, and we don't see anything significant about its impact. It's a novelty and it's new — people want to watch sports events, usually prime time."

There aren't any official Nielsen numbers on Classic Sports is performing. According to one published report, Classic Sports scored cable ratings ranging from 0.4 to 1.2 in New York on July 24 and 26 — outperforming other cable networks like ESPN, Comedy Central, CNN and Discovery Channel.

"We've gotten thousands of letters and phone calls from people thanking us for creating the network and asking us to run special programming," Greenberg said. "There's even a 'Home Run Derby' cult and we're hearing from a lot of box fanatics rediscovering the boxers of the '40s and '50s. We've developed a very strong following in a very short period of time."

To ensure people won't forget about the network if it leaves WBIS, Greenberg said Classic Sports is advertising on radio, TV, newspapers and on the boards.

"We have a substantial budget allocated for promotion and marketing in New York over the next few weeks," he said. "We want to be somewhat ubiquitous."

NEW YORK POST

LATE CITY FINAL

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1996

CABLE MUSTN'T BENCH CLASSIC SPORTS CHANNEL

BY EVERY measure, the new Classic Sports Network has been a home run ever since it started airing on WBIS July 1.

Its ratings are higher than ESPN's and Comedy Central's. The network has been receiving about 300 letters a week from fans. Yesterday, it got a \$20 million infusion of new capital.

But unless something unexpected happens, Classic Sports will lose its New York outlet at the end of the year because of the monopoly politics of cable television.

CSN shows complete, memorable sports events, plus old shows like "Home Run Derby." It preserves legacies and standards.

It shows the younger generation originals like Roberto Clemente, Larry Bird, Willie Mays, Billie Jean King, Oscar Robertson, Bobby Orr and Sugar Ray Robinson — in their primes, in the context of dramatic confrontations.

There is no doubt that such archival film and tape — like an old song — has the mystical power to make memory seem magical.

I watched the 1970 Knicks with my daughter, and she gained new insight into selfless teamwork, my private memory bank and where Bill Bradley came from.

One reason I shed a tear when I watched Muhammad Ali light the Olympic flame with a trembling hand was that I had just seen Ali — forever young at 22 — jab and dance Sonny Liston silly an hour earlier on CSN.

Joe Spinelli, former state inspector general and FBI agent, told me:

"I watched the Rocky Marciano-Archie Moore fight with my daughter. My grandfather had taken me to see that fight in 1955, when I was 6 years old. It gave me a chill to relive that experience with my daughter. It linked four generations."

But the No. 1 fan of Classic Sports may be Rudy Giuliani.

The other day, the mayor had a City Hall meeting with Magic Johnson. The first thing the mayor told Magic was, "My son and I watched you play against Larry Bird last night."

"Classic Sports is the best thing that happened this summer," Giuliani says. "I watch it with Andrew all the time. My son never knew the Knicks won two NBA titles. We saw the catch by Willie Mays in the 1954 [World] Series together. He became a boxing fan watching the Carmen Basilio-Tony DeMarco and Jimmy Young-George Foreman fights."

Yet, despite all this consumer enthusiasm — and genuine family values — Classic Sports may be forced off cable at the end of the year. Its trial run on WBIS, which took over Channel 31 from WNYC, is limited. And Time Warner, which has a cable monopoly, incredibly seems to have no interest in giving CSN one of its 76 channels — many of which air junk or porn.

"The chances of CSN getting a dedicated channel from us are

very remote," says Barry Rosenblum, president of Time Warner Cable of New York.

"We would have to give up one of our six pay-per-view channels, and this would irritate our customers."

Richard Aurelio, Rosenblum's boss, was quoted earlier saying, "CSN doesn't seem to be a viable programming service. We don't see anything significant about its impact. It's a novelty."

My cable-industry sources say Time Warner is just acting like a normal arrogant monopoly.

A new sports channel, owned by Sports Illustrated and CNN, is scheduled to start in December. Cable insiders think Time Warner will give this venture a dedicated channel because Time

Warner owns Sports Illustrated and is merging with Turner Broadcasting, which owns CNN

It's taken Greenberg and his partner, Brian Bedol, three years to negotiate licensing deals with all the major sports film libraries.

Part of the appeal of CSN is its taste in programming. It does not go for cheap thrills.

"We elected not to show the third [Emile] Griffith-[Benny] Paret fight, despite many requests, because Paret died after the bout," Greenberg says. "We won't show any of O.J. [Simpson's] games because that would be exploitive and we don't want to promote O.J."

"The biggest problem we face is that there isn't a rival cable distributor we can sell our product to in New York. It's like having one supermarket in a city, and no neighborhood groceries to stock a superior product."

Over the next 10 days, Classic Sports will air: the 1947 Yankees-Dodgers World Series; the 1982 NCAA finals between North Carolina and Georgetown; the 1980 Bjorn Borg-John McEnroe tennis match; the 1955 Stanley Cup finals; the third fight in the Tony Zale-Rocky Graziano trilogy; and every fight in Muhammad Ali's career in a marathon this Saturday.

The VCR industry would probably be pressuring Time Warner Cable to give CSN a slot just for all the VCRs it will help sell.

When I told Giuliani that Classic Sports will probably be squeezed out of the New York market, he responded:

"You write that Time Warner should not only give Classic Sports a channel, they should expand it to 24 hours. I can't believe there isn't a huge audience for this. I know at least 20 or 30 people who watch it religiously."

Our sports-buff mayor stopped just short of mentioning that the city licenses and regulates the Time Warner cable monopoly.

JACK
NEWFIELD



DAILY NEWS

Sunday, September 22, 1996

... and the readers SHOOT BACK

Hey Lip,

Do sports fans a favor. Tell all your readers to write their cable companies and ask them to make the Classic Sports Network a permanent station.

Joe DeNapoli, Brooklyn

Done. I love Classic Sports, but then who doesn't?

SPORTS

NEWSSTAY

Thursday, September 26, 1996

They're All Classics

Word of mouth giving a boost to new network

By Steve Zipay
STAFF WRITER

A steady rain washed out a crucial Yankee-Orioles game earlier this month. But that night, New York baseball fans still saw one of David Cone's most dramatic performances.

Were they all hallucinating from watching the phone, acting in the Bronx and listening to the radio partner of MSG's Jim Kase and Dave Cohen? Nope. Fans just clicked the remote to one of the newest kids on the TV block — the 16-month-old Classic Sports Network, which was airing the final game of the 1991 Mets season, when Cone struck out 13 Philies. It was, to borrow from Bob Murphy, a happy recap — and a timely discovery.

Since July 1, when WBIS-TV/Ch. 31 began showing Classic Sports in the New York area, more and more fans have been discovering the fledgling network, with its nonstop nostalgia from the world's sports archives. With access to miles of footage from Major League Baseball, the NBA, NFL, NHL, Bill Clinton's fight library, Bud Greenspan's Olympic library, as well as NCAA games, golf, tennis and decade-old shows such as "Sports Challenge" and "Home Run Derby," CSN has found a niche.

Amazingly, CSN's praise have been spread largely by word of mouth, an unusual herald in a 100-channel world, when viewers are used to hearing about new cable channels from exciting ones: about ESPN2 from ESPN, about The History Channel from A+E & Entertainment.

"Basing on WBIS has created an enormous buzz because it overtopped a lot of cable systems in the New York area," Classic Sports CEO Brian Bedel said. "There's a social quality to it; a shared experience. I call it water-cooler programming. People stop and say, 'Did you see Mariano last night?' People pick up the phone at home and call their friends and say, 'Are you watching?'"

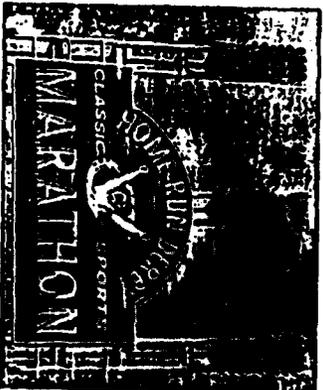
Indeed, judging by letters and e-mail to Classic, the network seems to work on several levels: as an electronic fountain of youth for viewers over 65, as a Nick at Nite for the slightly aging folk, or as a window to the unseen past for youngsters yearning Michael Jordan jerseys.

CSN has sparked discussions about the Dolphins' perfect season in 1972, the '58 Stanley Cup, Laker-Celtics games from the '60s, all either around coffee machines in offices, on recreational courts, in restaurants, retail stores or even on the doorstep with the local Federal Express driver.

"It's got excellent programs," said Anthony Avener, 34, of Valley Stream, a FedEx employee and devotee of the Yankees and Steelers. "I always find myself flicking over there during commercials." He said he particularly enjoys the archival footage of baseball and the NFL.

The network also has become "a cross-generational bonding channel," CSN president Steve Greensberg said. "We're hearing from 75-year-old men who are watching with their 40-year-old sons. And 40-year-olds are watching with their 15-year-old sons or daughters."

According to Leon Rosen, Magic Johnson's agent, the former Laker recently walked into Greek Stadium for an event and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani stands up to him and exclaimed: "My son Andrew and I were just watching you on Classic Sports."



Brought to you by...



Steve Greensberg, left, is a former supply commissioner of baseball and son of Hall of Famer Hank Greenberg. Greenberg is a former pitching coach at Texas A&M.

executive at Texas A&M.

"Three years ago, this was two guys with an idea on the back of an envelope," Greensberg said.

Classic Sports debuted in May, 1996, with 18 staffers but now has 60 and is expanding its offices at 300 Park



Cable in Phoenix and in Omaha also took a chance. But did systems in half a dozen other major markets, such as Boston and Chicago.

Today, CSN is available in about 15 million homes — about 7 million through WBIS — and on DirecTV and

Good Old Sports

CLASSIC from Page A86

dishes. WBIS+, formerly WNYC-TV, is a joint venture of Dow Jones & Co. and ITT Corp., the principal owner of Madison Square Garden, hotels and casinos. On Long Island, WBIS is carried by TCI / Brookhaven, Cablevision systems in Great Neck, Lynbrook and Huntington, and can be seen in all the boroughs and Westchester and Rockland Counties and in much of northern and central New Jersey. Although CSN offers 24 hours of programming, WBIS carries CSN from 9 a.m.-11 p.m. weekdays and noon-11 p.m. weekends.

Although Classic still hasn't turned a profit, it got a major boost with a \$20-million investment from Warburg Pincus Ventures, a private equity fund managed by venture banking giant E.M. Warburg, Pincus & Co, which manages about \$6 billion in investment capital. Earlier investors were Allen & Co., AT & T Ventures and Wayne Hui-zenga, who owns the Dolphins, Marlins and Panthers.

In New York, the WBIS experiment was an opportunity for people to sample CSN in the country's No. 1 TV market. "When WNYC was sold, they knew there would be a transition period to when they would be up and running with business and sports and entertainment programming," Greenberg said.

Bedol said, "When they approached us, I think it took us close to a second to say, 'Absolutely.'"

As of last month, 35 percent of sports fans in the New York market were aware of CSN, "which is great, because we basically had a Stealth rollout," Bedol said. He said that advertising agencies and WBIS tell them CSN is performing beyond expectations, beating well-established cable networks.

CSN's trial run on WBIS+, which was to end Oct. 10, is expected to be extended through January. But Greenberg said: "WBIS is the tactic, not the end game. We're talking with the five or six area cable operators to convince them that we can attract new subscribers. Ideally, there'll be a smooth transition from WBIS to them."

That will take some persuading. On its web site, CSN asked on-line browsers not only to write to WBIS, but also to download a petition to fill out and send cable operators around the metropolitan area to give CSN some channel space.

Sitting on the same furniture they bought from IKEA when they moved into their first offices on East 21st Street in 1993, Greenberg and Bedol maintain an entrepreneurial enthusiasm.

Bedol, who grew up in Ohio, confesses to "once knowing every player on the Indians and Browns, every stat. When I hit 30, I didn't know who was on the Indians and Browns; my memories are of the '60s and '70s. Suddenly, as an adult, here it is again. Maybe this business is a way of regressing."

Or progressing.

"The independent film analogy is probably as close as you get," Bedol said. "We opened in a couple of art houses and we knew that if we could get the audiences or the critics to see us, the acclaim would come. You can open in 2,000 theaters and have a \$30-million ad campaign, or you can go to a film festival and get the buzz started. This has been an experience more like that."

"We never set out to compete with ESPN or live sports," Greenberg said. "What it taps into is the feeling that people have, you know, 'I'm so disgusted with sports, I would love to watch channels that have a game where, at least in my mind it was pure, it was better. I'm not gonna see any lopsided scores. I'm going to see my childhood idols or people I never saw.'"

Greenberg further explained CSN's appeal by recalling that when his children were younger, he would bring home classic movies from the video store along with the PG-13s they wanted. "To Kill a Mockingbird,' 'North by Northwest,' 'Some Like It Hot,' 'Casablanca.' They were riveted," he said. "It comes back to telling stories. You know Bogart's not going to get the girl, he's going to be left on the tarmac and walk off with Claude Rains. But you watch it 10 times, anyway."

In keeping with its aim to be "the storytellers of sports," CSN tapped Al Trautwig as a studio host to offer context and anecdotes about the event being replayed.

CSN also plans to mix a few twists into its storytelling. On Sunday, for example, CSN has scheduled a "Home Run Derby" marathon to commemorate the major-league season-homer record being broken. All 28 half-hour episodes will air back to back. The host: media-averse Albert Belle. Greenberg said: "I knew that Albert studied films of hitters like Frank Robinson and Henry Aaron, and his agent said Albert was delighted to do it — as long as we weren't talking about him."

GREENWICH TIME

Monday, September 16, 1996

Cable classics channel a place for quality sports

My sons were talking about some great tennis match they had just watched on television where a fifth set tie-breaker went on forever. It occurred to me that the match sounded an awful lot like the Jimmy Connors-Bjorn Borg match, which included the longest tie-breaker in history, but that match took place in the 1970s.

And that's precisely the match they were talking about. The kids were watching a relatively new cable channel that offered only classic sports events from the past.

I'll watch any sport for the last five minutes if it's exciting, but I'm not enough of a fan to sit and watch the whole thing unless my husband or kids are playing. The exception to the rule used to be pro tennis matches, because tennis was a game I understood and played reasonably well. I was only a kid when I watched a young Billie Jean Moffet (King) beat Margaret Court at Forest Hills. That was probably my inspiration to take tennis more seriously. I look forward to seeing that again one day on the classic sports channel.

The sports channel gives kids the opportunity to see some sports played in a more pure form. Today's basketball stars have become bigger than the game itself. Fans turn out to see what color Dennis Rodman's hair will be, or how many times Shaquille will dunk the ball, not necessarily



Joanne Zatzkin

because they enjoy the way a team moves the ball around the court. There are some of us who prefer watching the greats like Julius Irving, Wilt Chamberlain, Bill Russell, Jerry West and Bob Cousy play without all of today's razzle-dazzle.

Maybe it's the agents, or the advertisers, but there is so much money involved in all sports today that kids know as much about the big contracts as they do about the sports themselves.

The classic channel runs an old show called "Home Run Derby" which my husband loved in the '50s and still does. The show was set up much like "Bowling For Dollars." Two ball players would compete against each other to see who could hit the most homers and the winner got the cash. This program gives my sons the chance to see Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris and Willie Mays, all in their prime, all smacking the ball out of the park.

A few friends of my 16-year-old son dropped by, and we got to talking about the new sports channel. Josh and Charles talked about watching the first ever Super Bowl with the Packers against the Kansas City Chiefs, a game that occurred long before these kids hit the planet. They told me that they enjoyed getting the chance to see the great coaches at work. I wasn't familiar with the name Tom Landry, but I do know about Vince Lombardi — they named a restroom after him on the New Jersey Turnpike. (We used to live in Philly and traveled on the Jersey turnpike frequently. Vince and I are old friends.)

Jake's friend Geoff also enjoys watching hockey highlights on the channel. He told me that Bobby Orr was the best defensive player in the league, and that Gordie Howe played for the Detroit Red Wings and had 801 goals. I think that was his lifetime total, not what he scored in one game. Everyone knows how I feel about football and hockey (*grrrrr*), but my son's football teammates were so excited to experience these great players that I didn't have the heart to tell them. Anyhow, none of these kids seem to have been adversely affected by the violence of my two least favorite sports; quite the contrary.

Cousin Marty told me that he recently watched Ali and Frazier battle it out in the "Thrilla from

Manila". I don't watch boxing but it's fun to see the handsome Cassius Clay do his thing before a match.

Marty watches the classic sports channel when there is nothing worthwhile on the tube. He says he is always entertained by whatever sporting event or related program is playing. My cousin Marjorie watches the station for the goofy hairstyles from the old days. She's like me. The only sport we like to watch is tennis, and I don't even watch much of that anymore because I know so few of the players. They're all so good they're interchangeable.

(Did you hear that the National Tennis Association is going to ban the use of the tennis racquets whose technology allows a serve to travel at 135 mph? Weren't you wondering why no one can return a serve anymore? That's why!)

We watched our sports heroes when we were young and fantasized that one day we could make it to the big leagues. Now we are old and fat and slower on the tennis and basketball courts than we ever dreamed was possible for a living, breathing person. But when we see those replays of competition from the old days, it reminds us of a time when we still had a shot at it. You couldn't have a better trip on LSD!

Joanne Zatzkin, who lives in Greenwich, is a free-lance writer.

THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

August 26, 1996

AN INSTANT CLASSIC

I've never known so many people to become addicted to a TV channel as quickly as my friends have to the

Classic Sports Network. This is a whole different ball game: We don't listen to old-timers tell us how great the first Rocky Marciano-Jersey Joe Wolcott fight was, we can *see* it; we don't have to read about what an innovator Bill Tilden was, we can *see* him.

I did a quick poll among my friends as to the sports events they'd most like to see CSN replay. We came up with:

- the 1974 challenge match between Jimmy Connors and John Newcombe.
- the 1966 Notre Dame-Michigan State "Game of the Century" tie.
- the first Super Bowl, in 1967, between the Green Bay Packers and the Kansas City Chiefs.
- the 1973 Bobby Riggs-Billie Jean King tennis match.
- Wilt Chamberlain's 100-point game. (Does the footage even exist?)

I'll toss in one more: I recall from my youth an amazing football documentary called *The Violent World of Sam Huff*.

More on the Classic Sports Network later

DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Tuesday, February 4, 1997

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Bring back the best

Bronx: My worst fear has come true — no more Classic Sports Network in New York. I don't blame WBIS. I think its effort to bring the local sports teams back to free TV is great. It is actually long overdue. I do blame the cable systems in general, Cablevision in particular. New Yorkers, let's not just accept this, as we do so many other things. Voice your concerns to your newspaper, your local television station and, more importantly, to your cable provider. Let them know that you want Classic Sports Network back.

Christopher Bell

The New York Times

Arts & Leisure

Sunday, February 9, 1997

TELEVISION VIEW/Richard Sandomir

The Games (And Ghosts) Of Yesterday

IN A JOB THAT REQUIRES WATCHING MORE TELEVISION sports than a nervous bookie, I've discovered the ideal reason to watch even more: the Classic Sports Network, a 21-month-old cable wonderland of sports oddities, where everybody exists in the past tense, the sideburns are long, the outcomes are foregone conclusions and my youth — and the youth of others — regularly passes before me.

Flip on Nick at Nite, and you can see the actor Bruno Kirby play a teen-age con man in a 1972 episode of "Room 222" or Mr. Ed stealing bases against the Dodgers. But where, oh, where, were the old fight films, the long-concluded baseball games, the ancient college basketball games? Who cared if the players were dead, retired or sent down to the minors? Once upon a time, they were stars, but you could not call them back up as you could Ralph Kramden.

For 10 million cable and satellite homes, Classic Sports has solved the problem. Willis Reed, Billie Jean King, Arnold Palmer are back. And performing quite well. No lame knees or prostate surgeries. Sure, you probably know who won, but it doesn't matter; performances matter.

Either you discover something you may not have seen before, or something you thought you forgot. Sonny Liston still won't get off his stool in his loss to Cassius Clay in 1964. But it remains compelling. Over and over.

Classic is grandma's jam-packed attic; watching it is like rediscovering the shoe box full of baseball cards you thought your mother had tossed in the trash. Like singing oldies lyrics, I recite old play calls; "Havlicek stole the ball!" blends into "Chantilly lace/ And a pretty face."

Networks and local stations have been terrible archivists. Footage from many games from the 1950's and 60's was destroyed or decomposed. No one has unearthed a complete version of Yankee pitcher Don Larsen's perfect game in the 1956 World Series or Wilt Chamberlain's 100-point game in 1962. Television's focus on live events kept the old games dormant in warehouses. Whenever an old gem emerged, like Sportschannel's telecasts of the 1952 Yankees-Dodgers World Series, called by Red Barber and Mel Allen, I wondered, How much more is there?

The same thought occurred to Classic's top executives, Brian Bedol, a former senior vice president of Time Warner Enterprises, and Steve Greenberg, the former deputy commissioner of major league baseball whose father was Hank Greenberg, the Hall of Fame ballplayer. They began talks

with leagues and other archives about licensing their tape and film and providing a continuous stream of programming; yesterday's great game may be today's classic. But as an independent, lacking any ties to major cable, broadcasting or studio giants, Classic has had to be satisfied with slow growth in a crowded new cable-channel universe.

Classic Sports is a guilty comfort, a bottomless box of M&M's. It hasn't been on long enough for many subscribers to instinctively know the time slot of its shows so you surf over to it, not knowing what may be on. An Evert-Navratilova match from Wimbledon in the early 1980's? Mickey Mantle swatting dingers against Willie Mays in "Home Run Derby"? A 1987 Canada-U.S.S.R. hockey game in the Canada Cup, starring Mark Messier, Mario Lemieux and Wayne Gretzky? More often than not, the choice ropes you in.

Somehow, everybody seemed to play better back then. The passing was crisper, the combination of punches faster, the pitching tougher. One night I flipped to "The Main Event," a talk show starring Rocky Marciano, the former undefeated heavyweight champion, and written by Jimmy Breslin. Marciano, retired five years, was talking pugilism and show business with Jerry Lewis.

"You're still an ox," said Mr. Lewis, chain-smoking, still thin enough to star in "The Bellboy."

"I'm 220," said Mr. Marciano, reciting his lines as if reading from a children's reading primer.

"You could take care of Russia alone," Mr. Lewis said.

They arm-wrestled, then watched Mr. Marciano's finale, against Archie Moore. "Boy," Mr. Marciano said woodenly. "Am I glad this fight is over!"

Classic Sports has smartly repackaged some of its trove and created original programming. Joe Namath, the former Jet quarterback, is host of the vintage football shows, with Tom Brookshier, the former Philadelphia Eagle. Mr. Namath got to employ his creaky acting skills as a professor of pigskin knowledge during a series of Super Bowl specials. Al Trautwig, a jack-of-all-trades announcer for the MSG Network, is the host of "Distant Replay," where sports figures reminisce. Al Michaels, the ABC Sports commentator, recalled how his gambling mother would take him out of school to watch horse racing at Hollywood Park.

"Legend to Legend" is a series of one-on-one talks between old and young stars, like Jerry West, pro basketball's greatest pure shooter as a Los Angeles Laker, and Reggie Miller, the Indiana Pacer guard who grew up admiring Mr. West. They compare shooting styles, as Mr. Miller's awe slowly peels away. In another segment, Ted Williams discusses hitting with Tony Gwynn of the San Diego Padres.

Last month, about five million New York City-area viewers lost Classic when its six-month trial run on Channel 31 ended, replaced by a full slate of sports and business programming. On some nights, though, Classic beat sports programming on ESPN and TNT. One evening, it peaked with a 4.3 rating for a marathon of Muhammad Ali fights.

Classic is still available in various cable systems around the metropolitan area and the country, and a Time Warner official calls it a strong contender for one of 12 new slots opening up on its New York City system this year. But right now, it's gone from my house. It's back to live, real-time events.

I want my dead and retired athletes back. That old black-and-white magic. And I want to see Rocky Marciano swap tales with Zsa Zsa Gabor. □



My Greatest Sports Memory

It doesn't happen often. Hardly ever, I should say. He's just not an emotional man. But on that day - January 11, 1987 - something happened that would forever change the landscape of our relationship. It was on that day that we celebrated together, not just as father and son, but more so as two men (since I was only 8 years old that reference might be a little stretch) sharing something so rare and precious that it hadn't occurred for over three decades.

To use anymore words to describe the events of that day would only serve to cheapen the meaning of the memory. However, I will conclude with this; as the scoreboard read 17-0, Giants over Redskins, I saw my father attempt to fight off the tears of a lifetime of frustration.

Jason Schaechter, Age 18
5 Manchester Way
Pine Brook, NJ 07058

Jason D. Schaechter

MEIR JOLOVITZ

2083 EAST 5TH STREET, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11223

Classic Sports
Murray Hill Station
P.O.Box 1830
New York, NY 10156

Friends:

First of all, congratulations. You have put together a great concept, combining entertainment, sport, and nostalgia.

You have also changed some of the rules in our household which were taken as norm - i.e., limited television time for the children. The quality of the programming has forced us to reconsider, and we now allow them more.

Now for my suggestion for the Classic Boxing shows that you do: Billy Conn vs Joe Louis, one of the best matches ever, with a light heavy against a heavy. This fight was testimony to a fighter stepping up in class, and more than holding his own against the world's best.

Second choice: Muhammed Ali vs Bob Foster, a light heavy who though the best in his class, was unable to step up.

There - my choices. Now I'll be proud to wear the Sports Classic T-shirt for that great suggestion. Size XL please (unless of course, you have an XXL).

Cordially,



JIM CORNIE
82 BROOKSIDE HEIGHTS
WANAQUE, NJ 07465

10/24

10/17/95

DEAR "CSN"

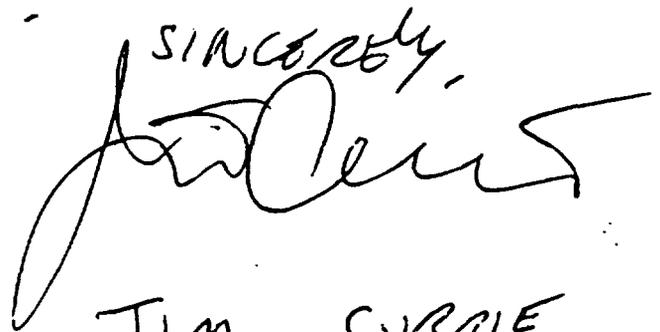
THANK YOU SO MUCH
FOR YOUR GREAT PROGRAMS!!!

I THINK YOUR STATION IS
THE VERY BEST NETWORK. I
WAITED A LONG TIME FOR A
NETWORK LIKE YOURS. I JUST
WISH IT WAS ON 24 HOURS.
SEE, ON OUR CABLE SYSTEM,
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CLASSIC FIGHTS I'D LOVE
TO SEE ARE:

THE 2 Welterweight Title
Matches BETWEEN "MANTOQUILLA"
NAPLES AND CURTIS COCKS, NAPLES
VS. MONZON, MONZON VS. BENVENUTI
(BOTH), MONZON VS. GRIFFITH (BOTH)
DICK TIGER VS. BOB FOSTER, ROBERT
ROUSE, AND CENE FULLMER, LIONEL
ROSE VS. RUBEN OLIVARES, LIONEL
ROSE VS. FIGHTING HAZADA,
CURTIS COCKS VS. WILLIE LUBICK,

(2)

COKE VS. RAMON LACROZ,
COKE VS. LUIS RODRIGUEZ,
MIMUN BEN ALI VS. JESUS
PIMENTEL AND VICENTE SALDANA
VS. HARVEY WINSTONE, ALSO SALDANA
VS. EDER JOFRE, ORLIN NORRAS
VS. BERT COOPER, AND PIMENTEL
VS. OLIVARES. I REALIZE THIS
IS QUITE A LIST, BUT YOURS
IS SUCH A GREAT STATION THAT
IF ANY ONE HAS THESE RARE
MATCH-UPS ITS YOU GUYS! I COULD
EVEN LIST MORE, BUT I'D BE
HERE ALL DAY! ANYWAY, THANKS
FOR READING MY LETTER, AND
KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK!
I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH!
KEEP PUNCHING!

SINCERELY,


JIM CURRIE
86 BROOKSIDE HEIGHTS
WANAQUE, NJ

07465

Hi,

I'm writing to you just to say your classic sport programming and classic sport channel is fantastic. I love it. The boxing, baseball, basketball football everything is great.

My Cable Company TCI of Northern NJ carries it (you guys) on channel 611. Unfortunately, at around 8pm daily it gets scrambled (it turns into the Playboy channel). Some of the older classic shows which start late in the day (after Womens Sports) and so quickly. Is there any other way to get you guys (I will also talk to my cable company) for longer than 8pm or does your programming stop at that time?

Do you have a listing of programs or a schedule of shows I can possibly get? It seems as though I may be missing a lot and may start recording you guys on tape.

②

I also wanted to ask if it was imaging this or did it real happen. During the NBA all star weekend (Feb 9-11) specifically Sat. Feb 10th did you guys have a replay of an old ABA all star game programmed. I set the VCR to record and got 3 hrs of womens basketball. Did I miss it somehow? Will it ever be played again? I was so mad I'm a huge ABA fan.

Being from the NY/NJ area all my life I've been a fan of all NY teams but my favorite during their days in the 1970, late 70's was the NY nets featuring Dr. J. I would love to see some highlights of the Doctors early days with the Nets. I am dunking from the foul line, slicing up the whole league with unbelievable moves. He took up the power forward in the ABA finals. He avg 40 pts a game the whole series. He mostly the reason that the ABA got the recognition-

③

and respect enough to be able to
merge with the NBA. He was
skying way before Michael Jordan
and paved the way for me.

Show Some ABA highlights!

Thank you for all the Great Memories
and whatever you can send in the
way of program guides, listings any
info at all about what you guys
do would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for reading
my long letter. Sorry for its length

Sincerely
Mike Lomuti

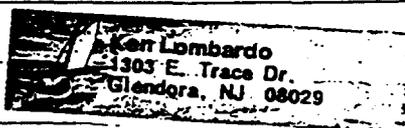
My address: Mike Lomuti
148 FRANKLIN AVE
HARBROUCK HEIGHTS
NEW JERSEY 07604

4/4/94

DEAR SIR,

I love TONIGHT AT THE FILMS' on CSN. I would love to see the Thomas Hearns - Wilfred Benitez fight from December of 1982. If you could show it I would greatly appreciate it. Thanks

Sincerely,



March 23rd

Dear Classic Sports Network,

Hello, my name is Daniel Hoodwin and I would like to commend you and your unsurpassed sports channel. Your channel brings us the Best sports to our homes which we can get nowhere else. Keep up the Good Work! I have one minor inconvenience, there are no t.v listings for your station I have missed the N.C. Tarheels, NCAA 1982 Championships Run, the Bulls 91, 92, 93 Championships and the Great Jim Brown football games, Please send me some information on when they will be televised again. Once again your station offers sports like no others in all their great moments. Also when will the Jordan slam, Chuck Connors' Red and again?

Sincerely #1 fan

Daniel Hoodwin

40 W. S. KAY DR

Shirley NY 11957

10/18

10-14-95.

Dear Classic Sports,

First of all, I love watching your classic basketball and great boxing matches. I never thought I'd get a channel this satisfying when I first moved to where I live.

Anyway, there are five fights that I'd really, really appreciate that you put on. I'm a big Evander Holyfield fan, so I'd like it if you can show his boxing matches against Michael Dokes, Big George Foreman and Buster Douglas. The other two matches I request are Leonard/Dalonde and Donald Curry vs. McCrory. I've never seen Curry fight, so I'd like to see a match that I'd heard he was at his best. Please show these fights. Thank You.

Maddox
2 N'Assern Drive
Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. 10522
Apt # 2-6

Yours Truly,
Mark Maddox

Classie Sports July 16, '76



Your new channel
is a pleasant surprise
to non cable subscribers.
It its sports memories
enjoyment, beyond
belief.

My favorite all
time fight is the
one between Archie
moore and Yvonne
Durrell. It had
non stop action and
I'd love to see it
(and so would your
fans, I'm sure) in
its entirety again.
Thank You, Paul Stimpf

71 Ridge Drive
Livingston, NJ 07039
July 13, 1996

To Who It May Concern:

Thank you for showing Classic Sports Network on Channel 31. These past weeks I have watched Channel 31 for over 15 hours each week because of CSN.

As you can probably tell, I am an avid sports fan and have been anxiously hoping that someday, some station (not on satellite) would air CSN. You delivered it to me, and I hope that you continue to do so.

My only recommendation is to please have the programming listed in TV Guide or more detailed programming noted in local newspapers. Currently, the Newark Star Ledger does not disclose any information concerning the events to be featured on, for example, TONIGHT AT THE FIGHTS.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,



Eric Barr

cc: Classic Sports Network

August 6, 1996

Mario Matamoros
13 Coles St. 3rd Fl.
Jersey City NJ 07302
201-433-2133

Classic Sports Network
Fight Memories
PO BOX 1830
Murray Hill Station
New York NY 10156

Dear Gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate the genius behind the best network on cable TV. I am a Boxing fan who thrives on your programming. I'd like to tell you that I'm a newlywed and I may be divorced before the year is up because I get home and watch Tonight at the Fights and Main Event religiously. I'm so ecstatic to see that someone finally features boxing, especially old fights that myself and other generations may not have seen if not for your channel. I have many fond boxing memories but one of the most vivid is of the Championship bout from Caesars Palace in Las Vegas between Salvador Sanchez and Wilfredo Gomez. At the time Sanchez, who would later die in a car crash, was regarded as one of the best pound for pound fighters in the world. Wilfredo Gomez was known as a devastating puncher with an undefeated record and high KO percentage. In boxing, the rivalry between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans is legendary and has offered some of the best fights boxing has ever seen. As you are probably aware, Hispanics make up a large portion of the boxing fans, so I and many were highly anticipating this match. Would Sanchez be able to withstand the devastating puncher? Would Gomez be able to out box the finesse boxer that was Sanchez? Well, I remember listening to the news all night in bed with my small portable AM radio I had gotten for my birthday and awaiting the decision on the news. I was too young to go to the Felt Forum in New York to see the Closed Circuit transmission so I pictured the action that night, while I made my parents believe I was sleeping, in total darkness wondering who would be victorious. Luckily, my favorite fighter of that time Sanchez was the victor 8th Rd TKO. There was so much potential for him as he was working on moving up in weight to take on the great Alexis Arguello. Unfortunately for the boxing fan he perished before his time. I would love to see this fight on your network in the near future as it would bring back many memories. The ironic part is that it was never transmitted on TV and to this day 16 yrs later I have never seen it only one round the 8th. I hope you continue your excellent programming and continue featuring Latin fighters as they have contributed so much to the sport of boxing.

Sincerely,



To whom it may concern:

Dear Sir,

My cable company, Comcast Meadowlands Cable, in North Jersey recently began offering Classic Sports Network to its subscribers. Of course, being a sports fan, I am very grateful and often find myself viewing this channel as much as I can. I consider myself a historian of sports and I have been long awaiting a channel that offers the type of programming that you do.

Unfortunately, I recently read an article in the New York Daily News that stated that this programming will run through September 1996 and then new programming will be offered. I hope that this is not the case and you can consider this letter a formal protest on my behalf.

In that same publication (Daily News), I saw an advertisement for your network which asked its fans if they were hooked yet. I can speak for roughly 20 friends and family: absolutely yes! We are drafting a petition of protest to be sent to you and to Meadowlands Cable (Comcast) in order to persuade against any programming changes. I'm confident that this is not the first nor will it be the last

letter that you will receive concerning this matter. Please consider our protests when and if a decision is made.

Thank You.

The following are just a few games that I feel will be very popular amongst your viewing audience.

NCAA Championship Games

- 1989 Michigan 80 Seton Hall 79 O.T.
- 1993 U. No. Carolina 77 Michigan 71
(Webber's Time-out)
- 1988 Kansas 83 Oklahoma 79
(Hanning carries Jayhawks on his back)
- 1987 Indiana 74 Syracuse 73
(Keith Smart's Jumper)

College Football

Boston College vs. Miami Shootout
(1984 Flutie to Phelan)

Pro Football

- 1981 Divisional Playoff
San Diego 41 Miami 38
(Winstow, Miami's Hook & Ladder, Stock)
- 1988 Miami 45 New York Jets 51 OT
(Wesley Walker's 4 TD's)

I'm confident that these games
will be enjoyed by many of your
viewers.

If they qualify for a free
T-Shirt(s) my size is XL.

Thank you for your
time and consideration.

JOHN SILVERMAN



43 Wood St.
RUTHERFORD, N.J.
07070