

Local Television Stations Will Have Plenty of NFL Access

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You may have heard that the NFL this year changed its rules for local television stations on the videotaping of NFL games. That decision has stirred some misinformed controversy in the media.

We want to be sure that fans know this change will not take anything away from them. They will see highlights of NFL games on local and national television just as they have for many years.

Local stations will continue to have access for free to all network game footage and to post-game interview sessions. There is really no change in the ability of local stations to serve their viewers with in-depth and unique coverage of the NFL and its teams.

The change simply means that local stations will rely primarily on the network game telecast for highlights and, instead of having their own cameras on the sidelines to supplement those highlights, will use a pool feed of sideline shots. The network footage offers the best highlights and has been used extensively by stations and networks for decades. The networks show our games with seven to 12 cameras and the use of replay and multiple angles on all important or controversial plays. But since sideline footage also can be of interest to our fans, we have taken steps to ensure that it will continue to be available.

This type of policy is commonplace for major sports events televised by national networks. It reduces congestion on the sidelines, allowing our network partners to do a better job of televising our games to the millions of fans who watch NFL games every week. It also protects valuable, league-generated content from misuse, while providing plenty of raw material for extensive news coverage by local stations.

Local station crews will continue to be credentialed to shoot on the field at NFL games during the pre-game, halftime, and post-game periods. They will continue to have access to all post-game interview sessions. And the pool feed of sideline footage – staffed by local station cameras – will be available to supplement local station coverage of NFL games. There are no restrictions on the content of the pool feed, including game action.

We appreciate and value the role local television stations play in communicating with our fans. That's why NFL teams make their players and coaches available to the media for interviews throughout the year, including after all games and every week during the season at their practice facilities under league-mandated media access rules.

Serving our fans continues to be our highest priority. This policy change will not detract from that service.

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