

**November 14, 2006**

## **NFL NETWORK**

An Interview With:

### **BRYANT GUMBEL CRIS COLLINSWORTH MARK LOOMIS & STEVE BORNSTEIN**

DAN MASONSON: Good afternoon and welcome our NFL Network conference call, about a week before the debut of games on NFL Network Thanksgiving night. Joining us today, are Bryant Gumbel and Cris Collinsworth and Mark Loomis, and a little bit later, Steve Bornstein.

We'd like to begin with opening remarks from Bryant Gumbel, Cris Collinsworth and Mark Loomis. Bryant, we'll go with you first.

BRYANT GUMBEL: I don't have any structured remarks except to say we have done a couple of run-throughs. I had the pleasure of doing one with Cris in Cincinnati and one with Dick Vermeil here in New York, trying to get our bearings and get some sense of rhythm.

I guess by this point, it's been a long time since Steve and I first talked about this possibility, and I'm just excited about getting up there and getting it done and seeing how good we can do that.

CRIS COLLINSWORTH: I'm excited and ready to get started. I've forgotten how much work is involved in calling a game as I'm sitting here doing my homework as we speak.

But we are going to have some special features on this broadcast. Every time that Bryant and I mis-identify a guy, there will be a little pitch count in the corner of the screen and we'll do the best we can.

But I'm really excited about it. I think adding Bryant to the whole world of the **National Football League**, or re-entering him, of course he used to do it a while back, it's good for the game. You get the brightest people that you can and you get them involved in the NFL, new ideas, new thoughts, sometimes one that is don't always make us comfortable come out of his mouth, but we'll get a chance to discuss and have some fun and I'm really looking forward to the opportunity.

MARK LOOMIS: We're doing eight games starting on Thanksgiving, seven of them are rematches between division rivals starting obviously with the Broncos and the Chiefs which is a great game and then the following week the Ravens and Bengals, we'll get off to a great start.

Bryant and Cris are doing six of the games and Bryant and **Dick Vermeil** are doing two of them. Dick is going to do our first two Saturday games. I was pleasantly surprised to find that not only do Bryant and Cris have a great relationship right off the bat from their time at HBO but, that Bryant and Dick go back all the way to the '70s, and maybe Bryant can speak to that later, when Dick was at UCLA.

So that gets us off to a great start. The rehearsal games went well with both of them. Cris and Bryant's was a long time ago in August. Bryant did another one with Dick just a couple of weeks ago, and really looking forward to working with those guys.

Our general plan, is that all of our focus is on that field. Why are we there? To cover the football game. It's not a show; it's a football game. So we put a lot of effort into getting enough cameras, the right cameras. We're in HD. We'll have players wired. We'll have a cable cam, we have super slow-mos. We brought in a couple of guys from NFL Films, two of their best cameramen to give us a little better look than maybe regular cameras, and we have every angle covered.

I'm a little bit remiss in not mentioning the fact that we have a three-hour pregame before we even get to that. The first week, it's a one-hour pregame because there are other games on that day, obviously, leading into ours. And then we go into a three-hour pregame, which we'll have Rich Eisen, Steve Mariucci, Deion Sanders and Marshall Faulk, and anyone who has seen them on NFL Network already knows how good those guys are together.

Basically I'm excited, because everywhere I look, I'm surrounded by talented people. I think it's going to be a lot of fun.

**Q. When is the last time you were involved in calling a game, either play-by-play or analysis?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: I would say, back, 1981 --

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**Q. What was the game?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: December of '81. It would have been Cris 'Ice Bowl, I believe, San Diego at Cincinnati. Was that '81, Cris?

CRIS COLLINSWORTH: I don't think I'm going to forget that date for a long time. [1981 AFC Championship Game on Jan. 10, 1982, won by host Bengals 27-7 in -59 degree wind chill.]

**Q. You were working with Cris that game, so this will be kind of a reunion Thursday night; right?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: Yeah, but I'm hoping that it will be about 60 degrees warmer than it was that day.

**Q. The ice game was in Cincinnati; who won that?**

CRIS COLLINSWORTH: Last time they ever beat San Diego, and the Chargers turned the tables this week.

But Bryant, I think that was the game that your pants got on fire wasn't?

BRYANT GUMBEL: My pants did indeed catch on fire. I was beating them out on my leg. And this was back then we were doing it live and I was trying to get warm as much as I could, and got my feet a little too close to a radiator and they did catch on fire.

But I had it comfortable compared to Mr. Collinsworth and their colleagues. They kind of won the ballgame when they came out of the tunnel that day.

**Q. Explain that. Who were you working with, Bryant?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: I was hosting the game [on NBC]. Dick Enberg might have been working with Merlin Olsen at that time. It's hard for me to go back that far, what is it, 25 years ago?

**Q. When was the last time you were actually involved in play-by-play?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: We'd have to go back probably 30-plus years.

**Q. Do you remember the game?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: I really don't. I barely remember what I had for breakfast.

**Q. And a quick follow-up, if I may, the verbal conflict regarding your comments that created quite a stir, everything copasetic; water under the bridge so to speak?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: Really wasn't much to begin with. Different role, different network, different show; I mean, I don't really think it has much relevance to what we're going to try to do now.

**Q. There's no guarantee it's going to be 40 degrees --**

BRYANT GUMBEL: I'm hoping.

**Q. -- here in Kansas City -- with the first game being here and we know the kind of atmosphere they had for games in Kansas City, just kind of talk about what Kansas City means, or what it means to have this first game in this venue. And also, this might be for Steve, too, but maybe Mark can answer, there's a real tradition in Kansas City, the Country Club Plaza, the first shopping center in America where they light these --**

BRYANT GUMBEL: We're kind of in conflict with it.

**Q. Just wondering if there's been talk that you do that as part of the telecast. What are some of the things you guys are going to do for the first game in Kansas City?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: It's funny, I'm going to invite Mark in on this, because we talked about it, it is kind of interesting that Lamar Hunt wanted this game for so long, and now we get it, and it comes to be in conflict with a Kansas City tradition. So I don't want us playing the heavy in this thing.

MARK LOOMIS: I will tell that you at 6:45 Central time, they are going to light the Plaza. We are going to have a feed of that in the stadium. That will be part of our pregame. You will see that lighting as part of our pregame and the reaction in the stadium itself, so even the people in the stadium will be able to see it.

So I think hopefully conflict averted.

**Q. I did a story with Greg [Gumbel] maybe ten years ago, you had an uncle who was a dentist here --**

BRYANT GUMBEL: That's exactly right. My father's brother and, in fact, he's gravely ill right now and I'm hoping he'll still be with us Thanksgiving. He's gravely ill. He's an optometrist in the Kansas City area and has been for a decade. As a matter of fact, when I was a kid we used to go visit him in KC.

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**Q. What's his name?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: Elton. Dr. Elton Gumbel.

**Q. Maybe have a drumstick with him that weekend?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: I won't be eating with him Thanksgiving Day, but I'll certainly be thinking of him.

**Q. Anything else to make this first-ever game in Kansas City unique?**

MARK LOOMIS: Yeah, I think the answer to that is I think the best thing I've heard about Kansas City when I've been there is that it reminds people of a college stadium, that kind of atmosphere and that kind of excitement in the stadium. I think on that night, people will be -- I think people have been waiting a long time for a game like this and the Broncos...that's such a great rivalry. I think just showing what's going on in that stadium is going to be a lot of fun.

**Q. Wondering, given the debut of games on NFL Network, will you have access to anything the other networks might not have?**

MARK LOOMIS: No. I'm going to try to take advantage of every access we do that, but that's not different than any other network would have, but by no means do we get any special treatment.

However, do we have relationships with people at these teams? Absolutely. Will we try to take advantage of those relationships for us and for them? Sure. We hope to have as much access as we can, with, like I said, having a player wired, to having press conference sound from that week or that day.

**Q. The player wired won't be live, though, will he?**

MARK LOOMIS: No. It will be much like you see in other places.

**Q. Based on the league's reaction to your comments, I know you said there's no relevance, but will you be concerned in the future, in the games or HBO, similar-type criticism of the league?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: You know what, I don't think much about it, I really don't. Cris and I were hired to do games by NFL Network and that's what we are there to do. We are both guys who have strong opinions, but we are not there to bring our opinions and throw them into the broadcast arbitrarily.

I think when we see something that requires a comment, we'll comment. I don't think we either go in there with handcuffs on us or look to make somebody jump out of their seat. When I said I didn't think it was that much, I was specifically referring to the league's reaction.

**Q. Were you comfortable -- how would you characterize the meeting you had with Roger Goodell, you must be comfortable with the relationship now?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: You know, I thought Roger was a friend before he became Commissioner and he's still a friend. And our meeting was not anything unusual or anything formal or anything at all. Really, it wasn't in a clandestine area or off-limits to the public or anything else. We just happened to meet somewhere and have a drink and talk about things.

**Q. Quickly for Mark, can you describe the NFL Films camera guys and exactly where they are going to be and how many of them there are going to be?**

MARK LOOMIS: Donnie Marx and Hank McElwee who have worked for NFL Films for 30 years. They will be on the sideline in their normal handheld positions like you would see in the Game of the Week or later in the week.

However, those cameras will be hooked up to our trucks, and the hope is that they bring a little bit of the style that you've seen on the NFL Films stuff over the years.

**Q. Are you at all surprised by how quickly the NFL Network has grown? It just turned three years old and already we have games on the network, for anybody.**

CRIS COLLINSWORTH: I'm not. I've got to tell you, the NFL right now, it's just an overwhelming presence in our culture. It doesn't matter where you go or who you meet, whether it's actors -- Bryant gets the same thing I do. Whether it's actors or politicians or business leaders, if a football-type person shows up in the room, the common bond that everybody has much more so than politics or business or anything else seems to be the **National Football League**. I mean, I've sat at tables with powerful people before, and it always cracks me up that they all want to talk about football.

The idea that until this point there had not been a network devoted to the **National Football League**, it is probably a little surprising it didn't happen even sooner. And as much as I really

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appreciate some other networks that are out there to devote themselves to sports, the idea that I had to sit through an hour and a half of highlights of various sports before I get to my five or ten minutes of NFL news; or I can go to the NFL Network and watch an hour-and-a-half program devoted to the **National Football League**, it's really become a pretty easy choice for me and one that I greatly appreciate, the fact that they are doing it. And I think a lot more people do, as well, as they discover this channel.

With a thousand channels out there, I think it's taken people a little while to just figure out all the different programs that are on and all the different things. But once they discover it, it's hard to go back to the other. Because if that's really what you're about, and I think that's what most people are about, at least at this time of the year, they are trying to get all they can, and the place to get it is on the NFL Network.

**Q. Cris, obviously you're preparing for this game and looking at the Broncos, who before facing Kansas City faced the Chargers this Sunday, how do you break down that game and how do you look at AFC race in general?**

CRIS COLLINSWORTH: Right now I think there's some transition going on for the Kansas City Chiefs, of course they have got a tough decision coming up concerning their quarterback situation. Damon [Huard] has certainly played really well here lately, and had a bit of an off-day against Miami; and does that mean that Trent Green comes back in the picture and how soon can he comeback in the picture?

But one of the big stories has been the upgraded play of Kansas City defense, and for the Denver Broncos -- I'm talking about Kansas City because it's our game, but I'll talk San Diego if you want to. The Broncos, they used to be able to do anything they wanted to do offensively. You go back a few years ago, they made the trade for Champ Bailey and Portis and they tried to upgrade their defense, and now their defense finally gets great and now they can't find the running game they always used to take for granted.

Now you have some questions at the quarterback position as well. Jake Plummer has struggled on and off, made some really bad throws the other day. **Jay Cutler** flashed so much during the exhibition season. The Broncos have already made a change, they are bringing up running backs from the practice squad. They changed one of their offensive linemen this last week, they changed their tight end.

So clearly offensively, they are sort of fishing around looking for answers as well. But one of these two teams, or the San Diego Chargers, are going to end up emerging.

**Q. Question for Bryant and Cris. You both have a reputation of being opinionated. Bryant, you gained a reputation of being a very tough interviewer. My question for you is: Do you see any danger if a huge issue about the NFL should come up, be it steroids or a suspension or anything along those lines, that people are going to look at you and be afraid that you might be a mouthpiece for the NFL, as opposed to be telling it like it really is?**

CRIS COLLINSWORTH: I think the danger is if we didn't tell it like it really is. People know Bryant and they know me by now. I mean, we've been around for a long time. And if all of a sudden the tenor of our conversation changes, then we're in real trouble. And not only our reputation, but the reputation of the network and we will realize that.

But having said that, I hope that you also understand that for us to go out and to make some comment just to prove that we can, would be just as silly and it would just be wrong for the audience. I mean, I'm not going to be anything any different than what I am.

This is my third job, you know, and I've got a couple other ones that are pretty important to me, too. And the No. 1 question that those other people ask me was exactly what you're asking, I don't want you to do it if you're going to pull your punches or do anything differently than what you're doing on our network. And I said: I don't know how to do that. It's not in my makeup to do anything but tell you what I see without a whole lot of thought between what I see and what I think and what I say.

I'm not going to do anything, and if somehow that makes people uncomfortable to the point that the network decides that they didn't want me to do it, then so be it. I'm not going to change who I am because of this network, and I think that's the reason I was hired. If they want to establish the reputation that they are going to honestly and fairly call these games, that's exactly what we plan on doing.

BRYANT GUMBEL: Along with everything Cris has said, let me just add. He touched on this, I don't think anyone will be tuning in going, I hope what they throw at us -- we are not going into this looking to do any exposés; we are not going into this trying to be rabble rousers; we are not trying to

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stir the pot unnecessarily.

I mean, we are going in trying to do a football game. We are going to try to do it as completely and honestly as we possibly can. And you know, if nothing comes up that winds up being controversial, if somebody comes away going, you know what these guys just like any other announcer, for a certain game, that's fine.

We don't really have a problem with that. I would hope that our lone reputation is not that we are both flame throwers.

CRIS COLLINSWORTH: If it comes up, we are throwing some flames and that's just the way it's going to be. But that's what I hope that the two of us are at this point in our careers; that people understand and that people trust us, that if there's an issue, that we go after it.

And we are not talk radio. We are not going to make an issue -- I did talk radio for ten years. I know you have to make issues out of where there are no issues sometimes on talk radio. And we have a great football game in front of us. If there are no issues, we're going to enjoy a great game. And if there are issues, we're going to drill them right between the eyes.

MARK LOOMIS: I just wanted to throw in, we hired Cris and Bryant for who they are and for that trust, and we are not asking them to be any different than that.

**Q. What's behind the decision about using sideline reporters, because you have the some are and some are not using sideline reporters?**

MARK LOOMIS: Absolutely. We don't have a sideline person because we didn't feel like there was enough value from that position to add to what Cris and Bryant were already saying.

And quite honestly, the other thing that we have is we have that pregame show. We have the backup. If something happens that we really need to feel like we need to go cover and go search out, we have a lot of people on site already. I mean, we have Adam Schefter, as well with the group I mentioned before. So I feel like we are kind of covered in every way.

And I just feel, and I think everybody here felt, like the sideline reporter at times, gets in the way and we didn't want to go that direction.

CRIS COLLINSWORTH: I can say this, though, from my standpoint. If, you know, Steve or Deion or Adam or any of those guys were down there, I sort of feel like Johnny Miller sitting in the booth. I want their input and if something were to happen and we could get one of those guys on, that would be great by me. I want to do the best

game possible for the people that are watching it, and who the contributors are, I'm all for it; the more, the better.

**Q. This is a follow-up to what Cris was talking about the popularity of the game. Back in the '70s, there was concern about overexposure. Does anybody see a limit to how much NFL is going to be on TV?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: That's a new one. I guess the quick answer would be no. I mean, the appetite seems to be insatiable at this point. You know, I think to the extent there are diminishing returns, that's really more could be certain for the advertisers in terms of what the NFL is offering, the more there is out there, the better it is for it.

And to echo what Cris was talking about earlier, I can only tell you what's always been hilarious to me, I've been away from football since, as I noted earlier, in 1981. I did the Today program for 15 years and then CBS for five years and yet as I walk by a construction site, people will go, "Bryant, who is going to win Sunday?" People want to talk football. It is ever-present and I don't see a diminishment.

Cris, do you?

CRIS COLLINSWORTH: It depends on the quality of the programming. I see some of it that I watch, I'll flip around the dial and I'll see it and one minute later I'm turning it off because I know they are just making it up.

Whereas, if you're talking about the NFL Network with the kind of access that they have, that was the reason that I was interested in doing this. One, I'll be perfectly honest with you, it gave me all of the tapes every week that they have now sent to my house where I can watch every game tape and really begin to break down what's happening around the league.

But, two, this isn't made up stuff. These are guys that have access to players and coaches have cameras in every locker room, have players dying to get on and learn the craft a little bit, to learn television and they are willing to say a few things.

And so that kind of access and the access that NFL Films has, which I'm really excited about and I hope we incorporate in our broadcast occasionally, because after dealing with those people from HBO all these years, there's nothing better than NFL Films in my mind, what you can hear what the guys are saying and what they are doing out there on the field.

So I think that we have created an opportunity here to cover the NFL in a way that

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nobody else has or can just because of the access that we have. And that's what I'm really excited about.

And do I think that we are going to capture all that we're going to be on this opening broadcast on Thanksgiving? I don't. I've been a part of a start-up now and a part of a couple different places and most recently at NBC. I know that you do a broadcast and you come up with ten ideas and you incorporate two, and then you have another broadcast and you have ten more ideas and you incorporate two more.

So by the end of this season, and three, four, five years from now, I think that the opportunities are limitless when you're talking about a broadcast on the NFL Network.

**Q. Mark and Cris, in the practice games you did, what were the things that stood out in terms of the practice games that Bryant brought to the broadcast that was different or you thought was exceptional?**

CRIS COLLINSWORTH: I can tell from you my standpoint, and you know that I had an opportunity -- I was almost a play-by-play announcer. I fought it kicking and screaming all the way before they hired **Al Michaels** at NBC. But I also did five or six games as the play-by-play guy. I can tell that you it was not until the sixth game that I was anything less than absolutely horrible doing it. It is an incredibly difficult job.

So I know that there's going to be a ramp-up part of this for Bryant and for me as a new partner with him and all those kinds of things.

But I'll tell you what, I was really excited working with him. There's not anybody that I can name out there right now that's not currently working on the **National Football League** that has the perspective that this guy has. I mean, he has interviewed world leaders for decades, he's interviewed probably every president of the last 20 years, and his perspective on the universe, not the universe that the NFL, which is what you get with so many play-by-play guys, but on big-picture stuff. Or a guy like an **Al Michaels** that could turn the earthquake during the World Series game into a news event and that kind of coverage, and we have a guy like that now.

And the conversations that we have that go beyond what the right tackle did on this play, to me, it's really exciting and it's really different. And will we have our craft honed by the third quarter of this game? Probably not. But again, I think that this relationship and as this network continues to grow, the perspective that he has on the bigger

pictures of life are going to make it a really terrific broadcast.

MARK LOOMIS: I'm echoing what Cris said, but there isn't any time that I spend with Bryant where he doesn't ask me something or bring up a point where I say to myself, "I haven't thought of that." And on top of that, Cris is the right guy to be on the other end of that question.

So I think the tandem and the two of them together have the chance to be absolutely terrific and it was already the first time we got together in Cincinnati.

**Q. And for Bryant, whose advice, if any, you sought, and what was the best piece of advice that you've gotten from someone?**

BRYANT GUMBEL: I don't know if there is one single piece of advice. I have been fortunate enough to have tapped the brains of people who have been engaged a lot longer than I have from my brother through Cris and Bob Costas and everybody else. You could probably name the names as easily as I can.

I think Cris only touched on part of the difficulty. It is, in fact, finding a rhythm. And you know, our first effort is not going to be perfect and we are not going to be as good in November as we hope to be in December. That's the reality of it. And I'm not a very patient person, so I'm going to try to avoid not beating myself up a great deal. But there's an awful lot to learn, there's an awful lot to do, and it was interesting, I was just reading an article today on the Monday Night guys about still trying to find a rhythm and they are, what, ten weeks in.

So I think it is -- look, it is only football; that's true. But I think Cris is absolutely right. It is in today's age a very difficult thing to do properly and we want to do it right, we want to do it well, and we want to do it as well as out there and as better than anybody else out there. We have a long way to go to get to that point. This is going to be our first effort and it's not going to be without its bumps and bruises.

DAN MASONSON: Thank you. We're going to take questions now for Steve Bornstein.

STEVE BORNSTEIN: Good afternoon, everybody, I appreciate you being here. All of us at the NFL Network are excited about two things that are coming up in the next couple of weeks, the games that you just talked about with Cris, Bryant and Mark Loomis, and I will tell you that we are putting the best product that we possibly can out there. It's going to be beautiful-looking cameras and High Definition, and we are sparing really no

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creativity and no expense in putting the best presentation we can put on the air.

The other event that we have announced recently is the America's Game, which is probably the most ambitious NFL Films project that NFL Films has ever engaged in in the last 40 years. It is Steve Sabol's personal tribute really to the 40 winning Super Bowl teams. And I really encourage you, if you have not looked at any of the screeners to get some from our public relations department, give Steve Sabol a call, because it really is some of his finest work.

And with that, I will take any of your questions.

**Q. Can you talk about what's going on as far as how many people have access to NFL Network? I'm in Chicago, I think it's on digital here with Comcast. Are you making headway as far as getting it on basic?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: Well, it's available really everywhere because we have -- we are fortunate to have both satellite providers in this country, Echo Star, Dish Network and DIRECTV are putting on basic service.

We have to date just over 40 million homes that will be receiving the games as of next week, which is in my opinion a very good place to be. We think that we'll grow from there. We think that this will, in your case, Comcast, who has us on a very highly-penetrated digital tier, this will be a product that will be very beneficial for them to get more upgrades to digital television and digital programming which is ultimately in everyone's best interests.

So we are pretty pleased where we are on our distribution front.

**Q. So does that mean, is there a goal to get on the more basic systems, or are you happy as far as being on the digital?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: I look at it in a slightly -- I think those are somewhat anachronistic terms. We are looking for the maximum amount of homes we can get. We want to be very broadly distributed.

So if that is analog cable, which we do believe is going to be phased out, we would certainly be interested in it. But we also are big believers in the increase in digital households in this country.

**Q. Have you had any negative feedback from people who don't have the NFL Network and are going to miss this game, and what you would say to people outside the home area like**

**Denver who will not be able to watch the Broncos play?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: We obviously are just at the cusp of getting feedback. Most of America is learning about the games the closer we get.

It's our hope that people will realize this before Thanksgiving and either call their cable operator or satellite provider and find out if they are offering the NFL Network. We are very well distributed, particularly for a network that's only three years old.

We believe that this product along with our other programming is very valuable content and ultimately the consumer will want to get it and will either -- the cable operator that isn't distributing it will react to that and distribute it, or the cable operator and satellite provider that already are distributors will tell the customer where to get the games.

**Q. Does it bother you at all that there are a lot of fans in Colorado that do not have the access to Broncos games as usual and will miss the game?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: I'm always concerned when a fan doesn't get what he wants, but my position is that we can give the fans what they want.

It really is the same question that was asked to me 19 years ago when ESPN was awarded the first NFL games. You're not as broadly distributed as terrestrial networks. Well, the answer is, there's very little difference today in ESPN having the games or terrestrial network. There is still a slight difference and we think that we, along with our policy of putting the games over the air of the teams involved in the game are satisfying the fans request.

This isn't about eight games for us. This is about 365 days a year of what we think is the most popular programming, the most popular cultural impactful programming that we can do. And we are spending a lot of time, effort and resources putting on 365 days a year of good programming.

And when people sample the NFL Network, they like the NFL Network and what we are doing here, not dissimilar to what ESPN and CNN did 25 years ago, we are building a platform that will be responsive to the fans' long-term interest. And when you want NFL information, you go here to be entertained and get it. And it's the same thing CNN did and they got the same criticism; you're only in 5 million homes and if anything's important, I'm going to turn over to

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network news.

The same BS we got at ESPN, that all the sports you ever wanted were on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. You don't need any information Monday through Friday and all you care about is your local teams. So if you want local teams, the local TV station is going to do it; and we proved that a fallacy.

What we are saying to you is, this is the perfect -- I think the perfect 24/7 sport because of its importance in this country, and we're excited about presenting everything we do, not just these eight games.

**Q. Where do you see the NFL Network in a few years, broadcasting the majority of the games, or will that still be the networks and you have a small niche there?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: We serve as a complement to the networks. We are committed to having a broad reach and having all of our games in the local area. We have been very successful in not tinkering with that recipe over the last four years.

My anticipation is that we will grow, we will grow along with the NFL, but we are very happy with our three broadcast packages, our cable packages and our relationship with DIRECTV.

**Q. Can you talk about distribution?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: I'm pleased with where we are on our distribution. Our affiliates seem to be doing very well with us. The satellite guys are very happy with what's happening into their businesses and additional satellite subscribers. The cable companies working with us seem very pleased in the response to both local advertising interest in the games.

You have to remember, if you're a cable distributor, the most powerful product you have to sell is NFL Network live regular season games. And we essentially are offering them 50 percent more of what ESPN is already offering them. Monday Night Football is a tremendous success. ESPN has really taken this franchise and revitalized it, re-invigorated it, and they are doing it on the back of 16 primetime games. We are coming long saying, Mr. Cable Operator, here is eight more. So we think it's a win-win situation.

**Q. What are cable operators doing to market your game but also market digital Video on Demand and so forth on top of the games?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: This is an evolutionary process. We are sitting here with the most popular programming content in the country

and offering our distributors a relationship that goes beyond Sunday and Monday when we typically play the games.

So we offer our cable distributors the most popular sport that's available. We are offering mini-games of every game we play on Sunday. We are offering best-of highlights from that Sunday's action, and it's getting great responses by the consumer.

We are also offering High Definition. We think the best mover of High Definition upgrades and boxes is, in fact, live sports, and in particular, live NFL football games. So we have encouraged our partners to produce games in High Definition and we of course have committed to produce it in High Definition.

I think it all goes to our distributor's benefit. We are making the video bundle as attractive as possible for them. We intend to do some interactive application and enhanced television applications on our Web site, and we will do it with these eight games and distributors of our product will be able to offer it to their customers.

We have a lot of plans on the drawing board, many of which we will be executing this year, most of which we are just -- I'm excited that we have games coming up in nine days. I think you'll be very pleased with the programming we're putting out there, and ultimately we want to satisfy the fans' almost insatiable demand, for this platinum-standard NFL programming football.

**Q. Just like TNT and just like ESPN, this is a cable package that's starting off with a part-time season situation, and in your situation, it's a quarter of the season and you're getting eight games; is the ultimate game plan to do what ESPN did and to get a full season's worth of games?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: I challenge your premise on the first three things. This, to me, again, is not about eight football games. This is about nearly 200 football games.

You may be aware that we now for the first time in our history have the ability to take the best games on Sunday, cut them down into 60-, 90-minute versions, add post-game sound and put them on the air and call that NFL Replay. That has been very well received. We have the ability to offer this VOD product I mentioned.

We look at this business -- the only question I had three years ago when I was tapped by Paul Tagliabue to launch this network, the only question I had was, was it a six-month networks, or was it a 12-month network. We proved very

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quickly to my satisfaction and ultimately to the ownership of the NFL's satisfaction and most importantly to the consumers' satisfaction, that we've got a 12-month sport here. I don't know whether it's the Combine, I don't know whether it's the Draft that out-rates post-season games of other sports, I don't know if it's the free agency or the trades, but we have a sport that people follow 12 months a year, and that's what we are offering our distributors.

**Q. Speaking as someone in an area with Time-Warner Cable, when what is it going to take to build a stalemate with one of the larger operators in the country?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: My hope is that you and the rest of the subscribers in Time-Warner's footprint call up Time-Warner and say: We want you to have a relationship with the NFL Network.

**Q. And that seems simple, but is there any more, right now is it fair to characterize that there's nothing going on between you two, and neither side is giving in at this point?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: Well, I'm not optimistic that anything will be concluded prior to Thanksgiving, prior to the games going on the air. I'm always looking at the glass as half-full, because if you know me, you would know that I'm just an optimistic guy. And I believe I am offering a real good value to cable distributors, and a good value to Time-Warner.

We have 160 other cable distributors currently that have entered into this relationship and we are just hopeful that we can get 100%. That's what we're trying to do.

I think the best -- the best alternative I have is, you know, ultimately, people vote with their feet. If you're not happy with the product that they provide, there are other alternatives to it. We would hope to be ubiquitously distributed, and we would think that most cable operators would want this kind of punch-through programming and they have to hear from the consumer.

If they don't hear from the consumer and nothing happens, then I'm incorrect, but I don't think that's what's going to happen.

**Q. When cable operators say we want to put it on a service with NBA TV, Golf Channel, what is your response?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: That has not worked for the NBA or the other guys. Look, we are interested in being as widely distributed as possible, and that's always been our objective. We want to keep our costs as efficient as possible for

the cable operator, and we want it be as widely distributed so more fans can see our games. That's all we are asking for. We are asking to be treated like many other sports services.

And unfortunately, the sports tier's unique bundle of product are not particularly well marketed and not particularly successful. What is successful is broad distribution, which is why cable operators broadly distribute these services.

**Q. The people that are paying now, how many are paying extra for it?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: Well, when you say pay extra, we just recently completed deals in the last eight, six months, with both DIRECTV and Echo Star, and neither one of them raised their price and they put this network on their most broadly-penetrated tier. I'm sure there are cable operators that do the games -- I'm not familiar with them. We have other cable operators who are on a broadly-distributed tier. And typically the digital box costs more than the analog service.

**Q. Time-Warner is transferring to Comcast in the first quarter next year, for those who are not familiar with your relationship with Comcast, I assume with that transfer that the network will be available on the Houston system?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: I think we are hopeful that that's the case. That's a better question answered by Comcast. We have a very good relationship with them. They have been a good distributor for us for many years. They were one of the earlier adopters.

The issue that has arisen is currently in litigation with Comcast. And it's a very narrow litigation. It's a question of Comcast believes they have the right to distribute the NFL Network on one of these narrow sports tiers, and we dispute that. So we have asked an arbitrator, an impartial third party to determine who is correct in that, and I think that will ultimately answer your question in the Houston market.

**Q. Is there a time set for the hearing on the arbitration matter?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: The process is started. I am not familiar with the time frame. It would be after the first of the year I would suspect.

**Q. Going into another aspect of your duties, you were involved, were you not, in the decision to switch the over the air network to Sunday and the cable package to Monday; if**

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that's the case, how would you say that that's worked thus far for both networks and for the NFL?

STEVE BORNSTEIN: I am sometimes credited with that. But clearly this has exceeded my expectations. When you are, in today's day and age, with multiple television options from multi-channel providers and from the Internet and from DVDs and from video games and from very competitive programming landscape to have not one, not two, not three, but all four of your primary distributors up over last year is an incredible accomplishment.

So not only do we have more people watching CBS, FOX, NBC and ESPN than we had watching last year, we have more of the -- even attracted demographics that advertisers are seeking.

So we are pleased with the performance to date and think that, in fact, ESPN's ability to promote **Monday Night Football** for three, four, five hours prior to the game has revitalized that franchise and has made it important to the communities where it's being played. NBC coming back in after an eight-year absence with the kind of quality production they have put together and the firepower in their lineup and promotional value has made that a very attractive schedule with the addition of some flexible scheduling so that towards the end of the season we can modify the game selections to put in a more compelling game if we have mis-thought back in March and April when we put the schedules together, who is going to be a contender and who isn't. And, has the added benefit of allowing teams that you did not think were going to be particularly competitive to play their way in, as witnessed this Sunday when San Diego will be playing the Denver Broncos for the leadership in the west.

I think we are very cautious at the NFL in changing our programming patterns. This was a very calculated and particularly aggressive move for us, and it has paid back exceptionally well.

**Q. I assume we are correct in crediting you with it, are we not?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: I work for a Commissioner who I always call the quarterback and he's calling the plays, and I also have a bunch of -- a lot of great help on broadcasting committee. The answer is that many of these ideas were ideas that I pitched to them, if that's what you want to know.

**Q. In New York, the people with Time-Warner, Cablevision, they don't have the**

**option with DIRECTV and other outlets to see your network, what are the chances that you think that we will see NFL Network on Cablevision or Time-Warner this season, do you think or before next Thursday?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: My hope is that both -- that both happen before next Thursday. I would tell you that I don't see that happening before the games, but I try to remain optimistic. Our dialogues are open with both distributors, but right now, we're not getting a lot of traction.

**Q. If you were to say that there is one thing you would disagree on with cable operators, what's the No. 1 thing in your mind, the headline?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: It is how important NFL programming is. The fact of the matter is that this has become so part of the pop culture that sometimes the history of distributors is they underestimated what the public wants. Whether it was, I want my MTV, I don't need CNN, I don't need FOX News, some of them didn't need the ABC Television Network. They constantly underestimated that what you really are serving here is the consumer, and what we are putting out there is first-class, top-shelf product.

I mean, we are putting it on the screen here at NFL Network, and I believe that, you know, ultimately the customer will be best served by distributors that recognize -- that recognize the quality of this product.

And we are programmers by career and we are not really cable providers in that regard.

**Q. Can you talk about the Lamar Hunt factor in your selecting Kansas City for the first game on Thanksgiving night?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: I think that Lamar has been so instrumental in not only the success of the NFL but supportive of the NFL Network and new initiatives; that I really think that it goes back to primarily Paul Tagliabue, but Roger Goodell, as well, thinking that this would be a wonderful, inaugural Thanksgiving night event. But putting it in Kansas City, we could not be more pleased.

**Q. Did you see this as an annual event in Kansas City, or do you want to rotate the Thanksgiving game?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: The thinking right now is we would rotate the Thursday night game.

**Q. Talk a little bit, you mentioned that the NFL Network is an evolving process, do**

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**you envision that you have more than, say, eight games in the season, do you think you're going to increase the amount of coverage every year annually?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: You have to remember, we entered into long-term arrangements with all our partners. So there's nothing short of some sort of expansion which I'm not, A, privy to, and B, would tell you it's unlikely to happen. I do not see more inventory being created. And by the way, expansion would only be if we expanded playoffs I guess.

So the answer is that -- the simple answer is all our programming has really been spoken for for the next six years.

**Q. Regarding distribution, are there any other major cable companies besides Time-Warner and Cablevision not in the package deal who are not subscribing?**

STEVE BORNSTEIN: There are -- I look at it this way, out of the top ten cable distributors, we probably are missing three of them, and it would be Time-Warner, Cablevision, and Charter. But we have everybody else.

DAN MASONSON: Thank you very much, Steve, and thanks everyone for joining us today.