



Notre Dame renewing TV contract with NBC

Fighting Irish agree to 5-year deal extending through the 2015 season

NBCSports.com news services
updated 2:26 p.m. CT, Thurs., June. 19, 2008

SOUTH BEND, Ind. - Notre Dame is renewing its television contract with NBC.

The university and NBC announced Thursday they have agreed to a five-year deal that runs through the 2015 season. The current contract was scheduled to expire in 2010.

This contract includes seven home games per season. It allows for the first time an eighth off-site home game played at a neutral stadium.

NBC has broadcast Irish football since 1991.

"We are absolutely thrilled to be continuing our landmark agreement with Notre Dame, the most storied brand in college sports," said Dick Ebersol, Chairman of NBC Sports and Olympics. "This new deal, which will bring us to 25 years as partners, is great tribute to the wonderful relationship that (President, NBC Sports) Ken Schanzer has built with the entire Notre Dame community.

"The announcement of our association with Notre Dame back in 1990 was one of the great moments in the history of NBCSports, so we're obviously thrilled to be continuing this landmark partnership with Notre Dame. Notre Dame is unquestionably one of the premier brands that defines who we at NBC are — things like the Olympics, the NFL, the U.S. Open and Notre Dame. This guarantees we'll have a partnership of at least a quarter of a century, and we'll now have eight games a year instead of what has been six games a year."

Last year the Fighting Irish struggled, but a rough season hasn't discouraged Ebersol.

"The Notre Dame brand is a brand that has been sustained for decade after decade after decade," said Ebersol. "When you look at the great brands you don't necessarily look at year to year. Notre Dame has had a new coaching team settling in. We're big believers in how Notre Dame time and time again, over all these generations, has maintained its strength. I don't see that going away."

Notre Dame President Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C. said that the partnership with NBC has been as valuable academically as athletically.

"For almost 20 years, the innovative partnership between Notre Dame and NBC has been a valuable relationship for both the University and the network, and we are delighted that will be extended by another five years," he said. "Our fans and student-athletes have benefited, of course, but, most importantly, it is the general student body that has realized the greatest gains. In a collaboration unlike any other in higher education, revenue derived from the NBC contract has provided millions of dollars in financial aid to hundreds of deserving students at Notre Dame, and we are pleased that this support to the academic mission of the University will continue."

Notre Dame head football coach Charlie Weis added, "I'm thrilled on two levels to hear that Notre Dame will maintain its great relationship with NBC. As the head football coach, it is very beneficial for the program to have all of our home games broadcast into every living room in the country for the foreseeable future. As an alumnus, it is great to know that future students at Notre Dame will benefit from this partnership in the form of need-based scholarships."

Revenues from the NBC partnership have played a key role in Notre Dame's financial aid endowment since the start of the relationship in 1991. University officers decided then to use a portion of the football television contract revenue for undergraduate scholarship endowment (not athletic scholarships). To date, some 2,400 Notre Dame undergraduate students have received nearly \$26 million in aid.

The University also has committed NBC revenues to endow doctoral fellowships in its Graduate School and MBA scholarships in its Mendoza College of Business.

The revenue generated through the NBC relationship is a primary reason why Forbes magazine has recognized the substantial financial contributions made by Irish athletics to the University's academic enterprise. In a 2007 survey, Forbes reported that the Notre Dame football program returns \$21.1 million to academic initiatives, a total that is more than the survey's next five programs combined.

NBC has been televising Irish home games since 1991, and this marks the fifth of a series of five-year agreements with Notre Dame. The original agreement covered the seasons from 1991 through 1995. The first five-year extension (announced in 1994) covered 1996 to 2000, the second extension (announced in May '97) covered 2001 to 2005, and the third extension (announced in December '03) covered 2006 to 2010.

NBC has been televising Irish home games since 1991, and this marks the fifth of a series of five-year agreements with Notre Dame. The original agreement covered the 1991-95 seasons. The first five-year extension (announced in 1994) covered 1996-2000, the second extension (announced in May '97) covered 2001-05, and the third extension (announced in Dec. 2003) covers 2005-10. By the conclusion of this latest extension, NBC will have televised Notre Dame home football games for 25 consecutive seasons.

NBC's schedule of Notre Dame home games in 2008 features dates against San Diego State (Sept. 6), Michigan (Sept. 13), Purdue (Sept. 27), Stanford (Oct. 4), Pittsburgh (Nov. 1) and Syracuse (Nov. 22).

© 2008 NBC Sports.com

URL: <http://nbcsports.msnbc.com/id/25264347/>

MSN Privacy . Legal
© 2008 NBCSports.com