

ESPN Adds More Meat To The Menu

Written by Michael Woods

Wednesday, 22 September 2010 19:00

Good news, addicts.

In case you hadnt noticed, ESPN has new platform---thats a fancier word for channel--which is offering more boxing content.

ESPN3.com,* which is described by the Worldwide Leader as ESPNs live sports broadband network, giving fans a 24/7 online destination that delivers more than 3,500 live, global sports events annually. It is available at no additional cost to fans who receive their high-speed Internet connection from an affiliated service provider, and is currently available in more than 53 million homes – a majority of U.S. broadband homes. It is available via dozens of Internet Service Providers of all sizes nationwide, including Comcast, AT&T, Verizon, Cox, Charter, Windstream, RCN, Insight, Frontier, Cavalier, Mediacom, Conway, Grande Communications and many more. It is also available at no cost to approximately 21 million U.S. college students and U.S.-based military personnel via computers connected to on-campus educational networks and on-base military networks has picked up the slack left by the early ending to the Friday Night Fights season, which is made necessary by the commencement of the college football season.

They ran the Felix Sturm Giovanni Lorenzo scrap on Sept. 4, and followed with the Wladimir Klitschko-Sam Peter on Sept. 11 and a Edin Dapudong vs. Wilberth Uicab and Alisher Rahimov vs. Jose Emilio Perea double bill on Sept. 17.

A man named Doug Loughrey heads up boxing at ESPN, and you dont have to believe me, because I am tainted by the fact that I also do some work under the Disney umbrella, but Loughrey is a solid dude. He likes the sport, gets the most he can for the money he is given to work with, and he has to be applauded for hustling, and tracking down more content for us addicts.

The price is right, which is appealing to Loughrey, though he is loathe to get into specifics about moolah. It is no secret that ESPN doesnt throw a lot of dough at the sport, which is seen as a throwback sport appealing to men who use or should use Just For Men hair dye, and Loughrey needs to find promoters who arent looking to hit the jackpot when they put together a card that runs on ESPN. Heck, sometimes they lose money, unless they do a bangup job at shoring up the hole, with endorsements and sponsorships. But it looks like well be seeing a good number of overseas fights, finished products, which will then be snapped up by Loughrey.

How many well do on ESPN3 is open ended, Loughrey told TSS. But were excited that there are fight fans out there. Loughrey recognizes that the sweet science is seen as a niche sport in the States, but overseas, a Klitschko fight against a no-hoper can pack in 40,000 folks into a stadium. The ESPN3 option will play to the overseas popularity, and to the fact that hardcore fight fans in the US arent fixated solely on American talent; well watch a competitive bout against a Cameroonian and a Latvian, not giving a hoot about what flag a man waves.

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Personally, I tried to log on to watch the Klitschko-Peter rematch, but was stymied, as Time Warner wasn't carrying ESPN3. They and ESPN have come to terms, though, so in the near future, hopefully before ESPN3 runs the Lucian Bute title defense against Jesse Brinkley on Friday, Oct. 15, from Montreal, TWC will hook me up. An undercard bout, Adrian Diaconu-Omar Sheikha, will also air at 10:30 PM Eastern. A day later, ESPN3 will run the Vitali Klitschko-Shannon Briggs scrap, at 5 PM Eastern. Then, on Sunday, a boiled down mashup of the Klitschko and Bute bouts will run in a 90 minute slot on ESPN regular, probably at 2:30 PM.

For the record, the new season of Friday Night Fights kicks off on January 7, which is a bit of a ways away, so we can be thankful to get some solid scraps to fill in the blank. It's looking like ESPN might do a boxing event on Nov. 8, a Salute To America's Heroes program which will spotlight the plight of wounded and disabled veterans.

Please feel free to leave a comment for Loughrey on things you might like to see, or maybe just a pat on the back, because it can be hard to fight for the right to present the sweet science in a time where the number one or two guy in the sport is an infrequent dabbler in the sport, and 90% of people polled think Lennox Lewis is the heavyweight champion of the world.

**=ESPN360.com became ESPN3.com on Sunday, April 4. A release at the time read: ESPN360.com, ESPN's 24/7 broadband sports network, will officially become ESPN3.com on Sunday, April 4. At launch, visitors to the network will notice an enhanced viewing experience with optimal video quality via Adobe's Flash Player 10. Visitors to ESPN3.com will also be able to interact with live event programming on the network through a variety of new features and functionality, including:*

New Viewing Modes – Multiple options to watch live events, including picture-in-picture and split screens;

New Scoreboard Module – Up-to-the-minute scores from hundreds of sports leagues from around the world;

Stats – In-depth event stats that allow fans to track the event they're watching;

Chat – Interact with other fans watching the game;

Enhanced Schedule – Users will be able to find a specific event via improved navigation;

Social Networking Tools – Update your Facebook and Twitter status.

Later this month, ESPN3.com will debut a download for additional enhancements, including:

More HD-quality streaming with the NBA Playoffs followed by the 2010 FIFA World Cup and 2010 US Open tennis;

DVR functionality where fans will be able to pause, rewind and fast forward through live programming;

A Key Plays feature where users will be able to jump to key scoring plays and pivotal moments at any time during the game.

On Sunday, ESPN3.com will feature a line up of events from around the globe, including soccer matches from Dutch Eredivisie and Spain's La Liga leagues, college baseball, the NCAA Women's Final Four games and the return of baseball season featuring the Opening Day match

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up between the 2009 World Series Champions New York Yankees against their biggest rival, the Boston Red Sox, at Fenway Park (subject to local blackout).

As part of the name change, ESPN3.com this week launched its marketing campaign that focuses on the significance of the number three in sports -- whether it be a memorable three-point shot, a triple play or the number of stumps in a cricket wicket. Two versions of the song Three is a Magic Number -- including the original Schoolhouse Rock version -- provide the soundtrack for the television commercials, which will air throughout the month of April across all of the ESPN networks and ESPN's YouTube channel. The 3 campaign also includes print, digital and radio executions. Samsung is the launch partner for the ESPN3.com campaign, which was created by The Martin Agency. To view three versions of the TV creative, [click here](#).

The network is available at no cost to fans who receive their high-speed Internet connection from an affiliated service provider and is currently in 50 million households -- a majority of US broadband homes. It is accessible via dozens of Internet Service Providers nationwide, including AT&T, Verizon, Cox Communications, Comcast, RCN, Insight, Frontier, Cavalier, Charter, Mediacom, Conway, Grande Communications and more.