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CSN Philly Breaks In-Market Streaming Barrier

By: [Carolyn Braff, Managing Editor](#) | Published: December 11, 2009

The New York Yankees and San Diego Padres made a big splash this summer with in-market Philadelphia 76ers have taken the streaming spotlight. With help from streaming partner (RSN) to offer in-market fans the ability to watch NBA games live online. Sixers fans to a television service that includes Comcast SportsNet Philadelphia, and can catch a

The streaming service has been in the works at CSN Philadelphia for over a year, with Comcast worked directly with the NBA and NBA Digital to secure the digital rights to looking in enabling the process to move forward.



The RayV-powered player debuted with two available signal qualities and a slate of social media tie-ins.

Local Control

[The NBA] has handed over some of the reins to their teams to work out these things Comcast Sports Group. Working with the Sixers locally has been very easy as well.

To mirror the authentication process for the NBA's own broadband product, NBA League own.

The technology automatically sniffs out through your IP address and IP mapping where director of digital media for Comcast Sports Group. If you're outside the approved territory product.

The NBA League Pass blacks out fans within the Sixers telecast territory from watching SportsNet product fills that hole.

streaming of their games, but this winter, the Comcast SportsNet is the first regional sports network can log on to CSNPhilly.com, authenticate that they subscribe to all of the team's games live online.

the RSN blazing a trail as the first to stream NBA games. the streaming product, and the league has been forward-

locally, says Tim Fitzpatrick, VP of communications for

Pass, CSN put in a series of checks and balances of its

you're coming from, explains Troy Ewanchyna, senior vice president of Comcast Sports Group. If you're outside the approved territory, then you'll not be permitted to subscribe to the

g games online, so Ewanchyna explains that the Comcast

Once a user's in-market location is confirmed, the subscription product requires credentialed approved cable providers. If a fan subscribes to cable providers that offer Comcast Stream then permission is granted to enter the site and watch the stream.

Comcast is currently in discussions with a growing number of TV affiliates, and Fitzpatrick's authentication process to grow over the course of the season.

Mirror Images

For now, the stream that fans see online will mirror what is broadcast on TV, including additional DVR and social-media features including Twitter and Facebook applications, but no additional camera angles are available just yet.

It's challenging because there is no established model to follow on that, so Fitzpatrick is limited to two baseball teams that did some streaming this summer and the Blazers, who he follows, so we and RayV are working through a lot of things together.

RayV Vision

Comcast tapped RayV to serve as its streaming partner because of the company's ability to build a signal through building the player.

Essentially, RayV is providing software to Comcast, says Doug Billman, head of sports technology in place in the Wachovia Center, together with a video-capture card. With the RayV software, time on the fly.

Through a Comcast-provided Internet connection, that signal is delivered to the RayV player. The signal is delivered in two qualities, 700 kB and 1.2 MB, which is not technically HD-quality, but, from the standpoint of IP streaming, most fans will see it as such. The DVR features are built into the RayV-designed player based on H.264 encoding to allow fans to pause and record up to 30 minutes of play.

Down the road, Comcast aims to get more innovative with its online offerings.

At this point, the features that we have really strengthen and enable a sense of community, says Fitzpatrick. One of the most compelling aspects of being a local sports fan: you share your experience with others.

Four for Four

Comcast sees its target audience as divided into four parts. The first is the businessperson who is not able to get to a TV at game time.

The second audience group comprises folks who are at home but have lost control of their remote. Rather than going into a different room, they want to be in the room with the family member or significant other, but they want to consult what they want to watch on a different screen, as opposed to the primary monitor, Ewanchyna explains.

RayV's frame synchronicity allows this audience to truly enjoy the experience.

With RayV's platform technology, all users who watch any stream are watching it from the same city or houses on different sides of the globe, you'll be watching the pictures frame-by-frame at the same second, as opposed to seeing there being any buffering. That synchronicity is the prerequisite for more and more meaningful consumer interactivity.

The third audience grouping is the super fans, those who use the streaming service as a second-screen experience to take advantage of interactive features not currently available through broadcast. The fourth audience is those interested in getting the product in a non-broadcast format through rested in the product in a non-broadcast format through

This is an alternative to trying to find a way of consuming Sixers coverage that doesn't necessarily promote the best video, Ewanchyna says. One of the ways we are we're doing it in more of a controlled environment.

Online and in Person

CSN Philadelphia is offering two price points for the streaming offering: a Season Pass for \$76 or a Day Package for \$17.76. In a new twist on broadband packaging, the Season Pass also includes two lower-level tickets to a Sixers game this season.

We did a lot of evaluation in the pricing and packaging of the product, Ewanchyna says. In speaking to the Sixers, we thought that going to market with not only a live streaming product but also a promotional ticket opportunity was something we wanted to do.

The philosophy behind the streaming offering is not only to build the fan base but to build the CSN Philadelphia brand as well.

The fact that we're able to put these games on CSNPhilly.com, not on a league, team, or third-party site, is an extension of our ownership in these markets, Fitzpatrick says. People turn to us for their local sports news and information, and we want people to come to our site first for all things about the Sixers: team news, updates, information, and now live game coverage.

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