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ESPN President Jimmy Pitaro expects competition from Silicon Valley when the NFL's television contracts come up for renewal. The cable network's \$15.2 billion, eight-year agreement with the league for Monday night games runs through 2021. CBS, NBC and Fox and NBC have deals with the NFL that extend to 2022.

New media companies such as Amazon, Google, Facebook, DAZN, Hulu and YouTube could be among the bidders. "I have no idea if they're going to be interested specifically in 'Monday Night Football,' but I do believe that several new media companies are going to be interested in acquiring more NFL rights," Pitaro said Thursday during a discussion at the Paley Center for Media. "I still very much like ESPN's hand, if you look at what we offer in terms of production expertise, in terms of the scale and scope, in terms of what we can do with the game, around the game, 'SportsCenter,' all of our original programming, how we can drive value for our league partners I think is really the differentiator."

The NFL announced an expanded highlights deal with Facebook on Thursday, started an agreement this season for its Thursday night games to be streamed on Amazon Prime and also has deals with Twitter, Snapchat and YouTube. "We're navigating through a very complicated world right now where new competitors ... are popping up every single day," Pitaro said. "When we sit down with the NFL, yes, we bring a cable channel, but we also bring a broadcast channel (ABC). We bring the power of the theme parks, for example. We just opened up an NBA experience in Orlando. How many of our competitors can bring the theme parks to the table?"

Disney, in partnership with Hearst Communications, launched its ESPN+ digital service in April 2018. ESPN has declined to provide viewership figures for games on ESPN+, making it hard to gauge the audience size for each sport on that service. To expand its audience, ESPN has expanded to esports and gambling-oriented programming and launched parallel broadcasts — such as televising the NFL draft on ABC with an emphasis on player families and on ESPN with focus on football details.

The company tried to attract younger audiences by partnering with Second Spectrum for coach mode, player mode and mascot mode streams during this year's NBA playoffs; instituted a kidscast for the Little League World Series with teenage announcers from Bruce Beck's sports broadcasting camp; offers "SportsCenter" on Snapchat; and uses Twitter, Instagram and TikTok. "We can't say audience expansion and mean that we're only going to be investing in our owned and operated platforms," he said. "We have to be open. We have to go to where our customers are."

Interviewed by ESPN broadcaster Hannah Storm, Pitaro was not asked about the decision for ESPN commentators to avoid politics on the air, a change from the policy under his predecessor, John Skipper. Pitaro was head of media at Yahoo! when he moved in 2010 to The Walt Disney Co. as co-president of Disney Interactive. He was installed as president of ESPN, a Disney subsidiary, in March 2018 following Skipper's resignation. He reports to Robert Iger, the Disney CEO.

Allentown Morning Call
Lehigh reimbursed \$380,000 by state for voting machines and hopes to get more in future

Philadelphia Inquirer
Ed Rendell says he wrote op-ed attacking Elizabeth Warren without telling Joe Biden's campaign

Pitaro revealed some behind-the-scenes detail of ESPN's decision-making, showing the detail of executive involvement in production decisions. When viewers complained on social media during Monday's Houston-New Orleans game that the yellow background for down and distance on a graphic made them think a flag had been thrown on the field, ESPN's production staff changed the graphic for the second half before he sent a note he was typing up on his couch at home. "I think your description of 'holy cow, there's something wrong' was kind," he told Storm. "By the way, I'm color blind, so I didn't quite understand what was wrong."

Pitaro said during the 2018 U.S. Open tennis women's final, when Serena Williams started confrontations with chair umpire Carlos Ramos, he had just moved from California to a house in Westport, Connecticut, and was trying to retrieve the family dogs, who inadvertently were let out of the house by movers. "I found the dogs, got back to my couch, I literally had 350 emails during that period," he said, then describing texts from Iger. "Bob wanted to understand whether this was a one-off for this umpire and should we have more cameras on the coach right now. There were a lot of details." – **Associated Press**

The Federal Trade Commission plans to lay out exactly how U.S. antitrust laws apply to big technology companies—an effort intended to guide its own enforcement and highlight potential regulatory gaps. The guidance would help clarify whether limitations exist in current laws that prevent the regulator from policing anti-competitive behavior by the technology sector, a senior FTC official said this week.

The document could serve as a roadmap for lawmakers who have voiced concerns about the dominance of companies such as Alphabet Inc. 's Google unit, Amazon.com Inc., Facebook Inc. and Apple Inc. "The executive and legislative branch may find this document helpful as each considers whether new laws or new regulations" are needed to maintain competitive technology markets, said Bilal Sayyed, director of the FTC's office of policy planning, in prepared remarks for a speech delivered Tuesday at an antitrust enforcement symposium at Georgetown University Law Center.

Mr. Sayyed said the agency, which is tasked with protecting American consumers from unfair or deceptive business practices, wasn't ready to discuss the substance of the document. An FTC spokeswoman was unable to say when the guidance would be released. Mr. Sayyed said the document was his office's "highest priority." The dominance of big tech companies has increasingly become a bipartisan issue in Washington, D.C., and around the country. A group of 48 states' attorneys general, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, on Monday **announced a probe** of Google's practices in online advertising markets.

The scrutiny has been fueled in part by the view that the current approach to enforcing U.S. antitrust laws has led to the accumulation of overly large market shares and political clout by tech companies in a way that harms consumers. Responding to the announcement of an investigation by the states' attorneys general, a Google spokesman on Monday referred to a blog post by executive Kent Walker, a senior vice president for global affairs. "Google's services help people, create more choice, and support thousands of jobs and small businesses across the United States," Mr. Walker wrote.

The FTC in February **created a task force** to examine antitrust violations in the tech industry. The Justice Department in July **said it was also reviewing** whether tech companies were unlawfully stifling competition. The pressure to tackle the competition issues posed by big tech companies has **led to skirmishes** between the two agencies, which share the responsibility of enforcing federal antitrust laws. Mr. Sayyed, in his speech this week, voiced some support for existing antitrust laws. Calls to regulate the operational decisions of digital platforms do not take into account the "strength" and "vitality" of federal antitrust law's ability to integrate new economic concepts, he said. – **Wall Street Journal**

Presidential campaigns are all about priorities. Throw a swanky fund-raiser with high-powered donors doling out the dollars, and former Vice President Joe Biden will show up. Gather 2,000 union members for a presidential forum to talk lunch-pail politics — well, Biden still hasn't sent in his RSVP for that one. Biden's focus on fund-raising was in the news again this week when one of his loudest cheerleaders, former Gov. Ed Rendell, **penned an op-ed** slamming Sen. Elizabeth Warren for going after the former veep about his money game.

In a rogue Washington Post piece, Rendell defended Biden's fund-raising and called Warren of Massachusetts "a hypocrite" for slamming the former vice president, given Rendell had personally hosted similar events for Warren in 2018. Rendell said he wrote the op-ed because the Post asked, but now Biden's camp is "a little ticked off" because it didn't know the attack was coming. One group seemed to enjoy it: supporters of Sen. Bernie Sanders, who with Biden and Warren are the party's top-tier candidates in recent polling. "The Bernie bots are happy," Rendell said.

Warren sent supporters an email in April that called Biden out for hosting a "swanky private fund-raiser for wealthy donors" in Philadelphia. Biden is scheduled to appear at another high-dollar event Sept. 23 in Center City, with hosts that include Rendell and Comcast senior vice president David L. Cohen. The Wall Street Journal has also reported that Biden's campaign will "hold a retreat for top donors" three weeks from now in Philadelphia.

Biden has still not confirmed whether he will attend the Philadelphia AFL-CIO's Workers Presidential Summit next Tuesday at the Convention Center, four blocks from his campaign headquarters. Pat Eiding, local AFL-CIO president, made it clear two weeks ago he was peeved that Biden would not commit to the union event but has time for fund-raisers. This week, Eiding said he was still holding out hope that Biden and other candidates show. "We want them all to come," Eiding said. "You don't win Pennsylvania without Philadelphia. And you don't win Philadelphia without the workers."

Biden's camp this week again cited his long support for organized labor. How will that resonate if 2,000 union members feel snubbed on Tuesday? "They're definitely going to take notice of who was there," Eiding said. Just six Democratic candidates, including Sanders, are locked in for the Workers' Presidential Summit. Warren is not attending. Sounds as if she and Eiding would have a lot to talk about. – Chris Brennan's "Clout" column in *Philadelphia Daily News*

