

Dear Charlie, Dish Network / EchoStar Employees:

I am writing you today because I'm greatly concerned about the programming selection that Dish Network offers. I have been a customer of Dish Network for well over 6 years, and have had the service since the days of the 2700's, and 721 receivers. I have seen Dish Network grow from a few million customers to over 14 million today. I love Dish Network just as much as Charles Ergen does or any of the employees of Dish. From the award winning dvr's to one of the best customer service ratings in the industry, Dish Network has been the programming provider choice of millions.

As technology has changed, Dish Network has adapted to new broadcasting standards such as Mpeg4, Turbo 8PSK on Eastern Arch and Dish continues today to adapt its new broadcasting standards over on its Western Arch allowing for existing bandwidth to be utilized more efficiently. I applaud Dish network in these efforts and the improvements in the advertising department as Dish Network is now getting its message out more effectively than in the past.

With all of these improvements, there unfortunately has been an area that has been left behind and is a weak link for Dish Network. RSN programming has been a part of Dish Network's strategic line up from the early days of Dish Network, and continues to be an inaugural part of its lineup today. As homes began to adapt high definition programming, Dish Network responded by offering Game time RSN programming only.

Today, High Definition programming has become an industry standard over standard definition and millions of homes have adapted multiple HD sets in their home. With this adaption, networks have offered more fulltime HD programming, to include High Definition Regional Sport Networks. In 2007, RSN's provided game time only feeds of home and away games to providers as a supplement to their standard definition programming. Today, HD RSN's offer much more than game time only programs, such as Sports Night, Chicago Tribune Live, and Sports Night on Comcast Sports Net Chicago. Many times there are same day replays of games on earlier in the day that is often in High Definition, as well as hours of Fox Sports Network programming in High Definition that isn't seen on Dish Network today.

More recently, in online forums, Customers have grown angrier at Dish Network as many times, games have been missed in High Definition. In a period of April, 2010, I tracked well over 75 games that were offered by Regional Sports Networks in HD, but were not on in HD on Dish Network. More recently as the NBA and NHL seasons have come to an end, Dish Network continues to miss out on games in High Definition, and full time High Definition programming. One example of this would be the Mets at Orioles game on Sports Net New York that is scheduled to air on Friday June, 11th at 7:05pm Est. This game is not in High Definition on Dish Network, but other programming providers such as Directv air the game in its native format of High Definition. I would like to also note, that every programming provider in every major metro area's provides a feed of their local RSN in HD all the time! Here in Chicago, Dish Network is the only programming provider to not carry Comcast Sports Net Chicago in HD 24/7, whereas ATT Uverse, RCN, WOW Cable, Comcast, and Directv all provide the main feed and every Alternate feeds to their customer's

Another example of how important HDRSN programming is to Dish Network customers, within the past week, the Chicago Blackhawks won the Stanley cup. NBC Aired the game in HD, and continuing post game coverage was provided by local networks and Comcast Sports Net Chicago. Comcast Sports Net Chicago lead the coverage with over 3 hours of additional post game locker room interviews, celebration and local celebration coverage all in High Definition. Dish Network customer's missed out on that HD coverage. Over 3 Million viewers tuned into Comcast Sports Net Chicago for this coverage. Today, June, 11th Comcast Sports Net Chicago is providing additional HD coverage of the Ticker Tape parade and Rally from downtown Chicago all in HD. Dish Network customers are once again missing out on this coverage in High Definition.

Comments from Dish Network customers in regards to this situation from online forums such as satelliteguys.us are of disappointment and here are a few of those comments.

On 4-15-10 BF3000 Commented:

"I understand that DirecTV is the place to go for sports. I have no unrealistic expectations that Dish will ever have the NFL Season Ticket or MLB Extra Innings, but this is a different situation than those 2 high-priced packages. Dish already has contracts with all of the RSNs that most of us are talking about (Philly and NY excluded). Dish also apparently has plenty of space left to put up the channels. So, unless the RSNs themselves are demanding a high price for full time HD, it seems like this would be an easy way for Dish to keep its sports fans happy. I live in MASN territory, and Dish doesn't even have a part-time channel set up for MASN HD or MASN 2 HD. I don't want or expect to be able to see every market's games in HD via a high-priced package, I just want to be able to see my local teams in HD - like everyone in my area with DirecTV, Comcast, or FIOS can do."

On 4-19-10 Tennis Girl Commented:

"Wow...this thread is gonna go on forever! I've been trying to get people who have a Twitter account to post something about full time RSNs a lot on their timelines. The folks that Dish has running their Twitter profile are generally good about responding...I don't think they like my negative tweets about this. If a lot of customers would do it, it couldn't hurt."

On 4-21-10 Voulmaul commented:

"This has nothing to do with HD, but it does concern the RSNs and baseball coverage. I was using my 722k for the picture in picture ability to watch The Nashville Predators and the Atlanta Braves at the same time and easily flip back and forth. So, around the middle of the 9th inning Dish just mercilessly cuts the Braves game off to start a basketball game. The Predators game was in acceptable bit-starved Dish RSN "HD."

The most ridiculous thing is that the baseball game was in SD only. Bandwidth should not have been a factor at all. The Braves went on to tie the game with two home runs in the bottom of the ninth and win with another in the 10th. I would have missed even the opportunity to view that if I only had Dish. It is like they try to make sports fans angry by the way they half ass these games. Will you see the end? You'd better hope the game sticks to the Dish Network schedule... or switch providers. Luckily, I already did that.

Dish + Sports = Bad Joke

By the way, the Fox Sports Tennessee broadcast of the Blackhawks and Predators was carried in HD on 445, so the list above needs to be corrected. I'll at least give them credit for that."

On 4-23-10 BillMarc Commented:

"Cincinnati Reds game tonight on channel 427 in SD only. I could not find it anywhere in HD. DIRECTV did have it on in HD though. What is the problem with DISH? They treat the sports viewers as second class citizens..."

On 4-23-10 Fadalpe Commented:

"It seem that the Astros vs. Pirates Ch. 446 in SD only. But the RSN for PIT is in HD but it is not in my RSN. Very frustrating. What gives?"

On 4-26-10 Davegtestr commented:

"I would have to disagree. I am calling DISH ASAP about CSN Chicago in HD. Also FSN Midwest. Four and counting Sox and Cubs games missing in HD, plus Cubs tonight & Sox tomorrow may be missed. or Royals and Milwaukee coverage. I kept DISH for the Dvr's, also going up in 4 months after the discount. No White Sox games in SD. Pathetic so far this year. Full-time CSN Chicago please..."

On 4-26-10 Dangué commented:

"I just did a live chat to voice my displeasure with the lack of the game in HD. (Just s Dish would get feedback) The CSR's explanation was that CSNBA was not allowing Dish to transmit the game in HD.

Needless to say, that got me a little fired up. I wasn't expecting it to be fixed. Just wanted to provide feedback. But lying to me about it... bad move. When I called the CSR on the lie, he adamantly assured me that it was contractual and CSNBA's choice. So I just finished contacting Comcast. When i hear back from them I'm going to fire off an email to CEO about being misled by a CSR.

That bothers me a hell of a lot more than the game not being on in HD. It's fine if they don't want to show their games in HD. If it gets to the point where it bothers me enough, I can always switch. BUT, to lie to me about why it's not being shown in HD is unacceptable. Dish, you have to own up to your choices, you can't go blaming someone else.

UPDATE: Just got a prompt reply from CSNBA, They confirmed that Dish has the right to carry all games in HD, they are simply choosing not to. Time to email ceo about how unacceptable it is that they have CSRs flat out lying to paying customers on this issue."

These are just a sample of comments from Dish Network customers who are all dissatisfied from the lack of HDRSN programming, and local sports choice available to Dish Network customers. Customers are not the only one taking notice of the lack of HDRSN's on Dish Network. The Washington Post recently published an article in regards to this situation.

Source: http://voices.washingtonpost.com/fasterforward/2010/06/fios_dish_viewers_to_get_a_dim.html

"No HD for Strasburg: Pay TV as usual!

Nationals pitcher Stephen Strasburg's dazzling debut last night looked a little less dazzling to many Washington-area viewers.

Where the 21-year-old rookie's 14-strikeout performance represented the future, Verizon Fios and Dish Network's standard-definition broadcasts represented the past--the same old channel-bundle system that forces viewers to pay for channels they don't like while sometimes failing to provide the content they want. In this case, the desired content was a high-definition feed of the Nats' 5-2 win over the Pittsburgh Pirates, not the lower-resolution version served up by those two companies.

The immediate blame for that falls on the Mid-Atlantic Sports Network -- the regional firm owned in part by the Nationals but mostly by the Baltimore Orioles--that chose to reserve its primary channel for a Yankees-Orioles game that nobody will remember two months from now. (O's fans probably want to forget that 12-7 beatdown already.)

But Verizon paid to carry both MASN channels and then failed to clear space on its Fios TV system for the high-definition version of MASN2--yet still manages to carry HD versions of the QVC and HSN home-shopping channels. Dish, meanwhile, also signed up for MASN but has yet to transmit a single game in

HD--perhaps because the necessary bandwidth had already been assigned to such fare as the Weather Channel HD and HLN (the former Headline News) HD.

(Comcast, Cox, DirecTV and RSN all provide both MASN channels in high-def. And all of these TV services, plus Verizon and Dish, offer the high-def version of the other big regional sports network, Comcast SportsNet.)

My far more productive colleague Dan Steinberg noted this problem last week, and readers were less than amused. Nor was the Dish-subscribing friend at whose house I watched the game.

Tuesday afternoon, Verizon spokesman Harry Mitchell e-mailed that MASN2 HD "is one of the channels we're looking to add to the FiOS TV lineup soon." How soon--July 4, the All-Star break, the September call-ups? Mitchell wouldn't say. Dish Network spokeswoman Francie Bauer did not reply to an e-mail.

But viewers shouldn't have to wait for these corporate games to settle out. MASN could follow the example of far too few other sports networks and allow local viewers with sufficient bandwidth to pay to watch games online. (Note that since I canceled my TV subscription last fall, this would be my preferred solution.) TV providers, meanwhile, could try to pay more attention to what viewers want--or they could let viewers vote with their credit cards by subscribing to certain channels and declining to pay for others, a feasible option on all-digital TV systems.

Until either of those things happens, the availability of your favorite channels in HD will remain a fine-print gotcha, as if shopping for TV service wasn't confusing enough. After you've compared channel bundles, their prices, their prices with and without Internet access and/or phone service, digital-video-recorder service fees, any DVR purchase costs, duration of new-customer discounts, odds of your ability to extend new-customer discounts, all of the above costs after those initial discounts expire--yes, you need to add yet another cell to your TV-service-choices spreadsheet."

As I'm sure you can see, frustration is growing among the Dish Network customer base and this is a situation that needs to be immediately corrected. Normally, on the internet boards I will see channel requests such as Sprout, ESPN UHD, AMCHD, IFCHD, MLBHD, Ect, HDRSN's are the most requested channels along with the channels mentioned. Locally, I have seen requests also for WYCCHD, WCIUHD, WTTWHD, WPWRHD, WSNHD, WGBOHD, WYINHD and CLTVHD to be added to Chicago's local lineup as other providers are now offering these channels in HD, whereas Dish Network isn't.

I would like Dish Network to address this issue, and use available bandwidth now to immediately correct this situation with the HDRSN's. Dish Network can easily become the provider of all things HD, in combination with dish's award winning dvr's. This combination can create an unstoppable force to launch Dish as the Number One pay TV provider in the World. There is no one provider out there that brings all HD, Movies, Sports, and family value programming all in HD. With the launch of full time HD RSN's Dish Network becomes that provider. I hope that you take the time to address these concerns of mine and millions of other Dish Network subscribers as we truly want dish to be the best provider out there. Finally, I would like to wish you guys well with your upcoming launch on July 10th. Good Luck and Go EchoStar 15!

Best Regards,

Robert Nemitz,

A longtime friend of Dish Network!