

# TV blackouts aren't shutting out fans completely

RYAN NAKASHIMA - AP Business Writer - Associated Press

A week into the blackout of CBS programming to millions of Time Warner Cable subscribers, viewers are finding workarounds.

Nancy Keiter, a graphic designer in New York, plans to watch early rounds of the PGA Championship golf tournament on TNT on Saturday and Sunday until 2 p.m. Eastern time. Then, she'll switch from the TV set to her computer, where she'll head to PGA.com. The site will follow the featured golfers with live video coverage through the trophy ceremony.

Still, Keiter is peeved that she can't watch the action the normal way: by switching to CBS on her TV.

"I have my fingers crossed that cooler heads will prevail," she said in an email interview. "I think it is so rich that CBS and Time Warner say they have the 'best interests' of the viewers in mind. Please. This is about money and shareholders, not about the viewer!"

Both CBS and Time Warner appear to be hunkered down for the long haul. Their fight is over how much Time Warner Cable pays for CBS programming and how much of the network's content it can use online. Since the two sides couldn't agree, about 3 million cable subscribers in New York, Los Angeles and Dallas have been without CBS programming since Aug. 2.

Although both companies say negotiations are ongoing, top representatives for both companies were away on Friday and weren't expected back for the remainder of the weekend. Time Warner Cable sent out a news release Thursday detailing how consumers could find sports and other CBS programming in other ways.

In New York, the cable operator has recommended signing up for a month-long free trial of Aereo, which transmits CBS signals to laptops, mobile devices and computers for \$8 a month. People with a relatively unobstructed view of a TV tower can buy and hook up a digital antenna to catch free over-the-air broadcasts on their own.

Fans of CBS show "Under the Dome" can watch new episodes online four days after their original air date by signing up for Amazon.com's \$79-a-year Prime shipping and video service. Amazon Prime video is watchable on computers, mobile devices and through the TV using connected gadgets such as Roku devices or Xbox game consoles.

Other CBS shows such as "Big Brother" are available for free on the CBS mobile app and CBS.com the day after airing, as long as customers are not using an Internet connection provided by Time Warner Cable, because CBS has blocked video to

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those using an IP address from the cable operator. Live golf coverage will be available on CBSSports.com with the same restriction.

Full replays of the final two rounds will be aired on the CBS Sports Network channel, which was not blocked out.

Cable subscribers looking to get around the Internet blockade can go to a cafe for free Wi-Fi, or run the app using a personal wireless data plan on their cellphone or tablet.

Fans of Showtime shows like "Dexter" and "Ray Donovan" don't have a legal alternative to get the latest episodes, unless they know someone who gets Showtime from another satellite or cable provider and has room on their couch.

Paul Scoptur, a lawyer in Wauwatosa, Wis., who is suing Time Warner Cable for a similar blackout in southeastern Wisconsin, planned to catch the Green Bay Packers' first preseason game Friday night against Arizona with an awkward workaround.

He planned to watch the game on Spanish-language Telemundo with the volume turned down while listening to the play-by-play — in English — on AM radio.

In a separate fee fight, Time Warner Cable has blacked out Journal Communications Inc.'s NBC affiliate, WTMJ-TV, to cable subscribers in southeastern Wisconsin since July 25.

"I blame Time Warner because that's who my contract is with," said Scoptur. "There's a lot of people situated like myself who are just ticked off."

Daryl Balod, a design consultant in the Dallas suburb of Colleyville, said her family is unlikely to be rigging up cords from laptops to their TV or running coaxial cable from an antenna on their own.

She's surprised the dispute has gone on this long. Her family members are huge sports fans, and avidly watch everything from major golf tournaments to college sports and Cowboys football.

Her family has been subscribing to Time Warner Cable for some nine years, and because they get phone, Internet and TV service, they are among the cable operator's most valuable customers. But rather than cobble together a temporary solution, they're more likely to switch providers, possibly to Verizon, she said.

"We don't want TV-watching to be a complicated activity," Balod said. "We don't want to see if we can find it streaming from somebody else or hooking up a computer or anything like that. We just want to use our remote control."

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