

clude the use of a fully digital mobile production unit (NBC is calling it the "swat truck") to produce "highly stylized" prime time coverage of cycling, whitewater kayaking and cross-country equestrian events.

A new "dive cam" digital camera will be used to cover the 10-meter diving competition. The camera literally will be dropped from the platform just as the diver jumps, to follow the plunge into the water.

Advertising sales have far exceeded initial expectations, said Ebersol. When the network made its bid three years ago, executives were using a projection of \$560 million in gross advertising sales. So far the games have sold \$675 million. And there



probably will be fewer commercials in the Atlanta games, he said. Ebersol estimated that the Atlanta games will average nine commercial minutes per hour, compared with the 10 minutes for Barcelona.

Some 2,800 Olympics-related personnel will produce a total 171 hours of coverage of the games, which for the last time will

be broadcast-exclusive. According to Ebersol, CBS is talking to cable networks about partnering for the 1998 games in Japan, and NBC will have cable coverage in its subsequent Olympics coverage through 2008.

There will be 78 hours of prime time coverage, about 65% of which will be live. The network will not report

results of contests before they are shown, Ebersol said. Although some suggest that's a journalistic lapse, Ebersol said that thousands of focus group interviews with viewers suggest "they don't want to hear it."

One of the things that makes the Olympics special to advertisers is that they draw large quantities of men and women in roughly equal numbers. Some scheduling changes have been implemented for the Atlanta games to stretch the most popular events over more nights. Gymnastics coverage, for example, will be spread over nine nights. Women's gymnastics, the most popular events in the summer Olympics, will be spread over six nights instead of four.

The first seven nights of the games will kick off with a live gold-medal swimming event. ■

Fox gets news edge in L.A., Chicago

Owned stations' prime time newscasts unseat, tie Tribune

By Cynthia Littleton

Fox-owned stations in Los Angeles and Chicago hit new heights during May in their nightly news contest with Tribune stations.

Fox's KTTV(TV) Los Angeles unseated Tribune's KTLA(TV) as the 10 p.m. news leader for the first time in decades, while Fox's WFLD(TV) Chicago tied WGN-TV's 9 p.m. news for the first time ever, with a 6 Nielsen household rating and 9 share.

In a race too close to call until the final numbers were in, KTTV's 10 p.m. newscast beat KTLA's by three-tenths of a ratings point. KTTV's 10 p.m. average grew 8% over last May, to a 5.0/8, while KTLA's dipped 11%, to a 4.7/8.

The status quo reigned in New York, where Fox's WNYW-TV remains the dominant news station at 10 p.m., although ratings for the 10 p.m. newscast on Tribune's WPIX(TV) climbed 32% over its year-ago average, to a 4.9/7.

Greg Nathanson, vice president/general manager of KTLA, credits the strength of Fox's prime time schedule for the shift, noting that KTTV's 10 p.m. newscast had an average lead-in of 11.7/17 at 9:45 p.m., compared with KTLA's 6.3/9 in the same time period. And WGN-TV officials say that about one-third of its 9 p.m. newscasts during the sweeps were preempted as a result

of baseball games.

Still, Fox officials say the sweeps performance represents nearly a decade of hard work on the local-news front. "This is an incredible success story," says Stacey Marks-Bronner, vice president/general manager of WFLD-TV, who is leaving the station this

month for a new post as head of scheduling and marketing at Fox Broadcasting.

In all, May was a good month for the eight Fox O&Os located in metered markets. Together, the stations averaged a 9% increase in households, beating the network's average 3% rise. ■

Networks roll out lazy, hazy, crazy shows of summer

Plan specials, sports, series to keep viewers tuned in

By Cynthia Littleton

The four major networks aim to keep viewers from defecting to cable over the next few months with a range of specials, theatricals and new episodes of regular series on tap for the summer.

Fox is leading the networks' renewed investment in summer originals, with two new ensemble shows set to debut today (June 3).

"Over 40% of our summer schedule will be original programming," says John Matoian, president, Fox Entertainment.

Bowing at 8:30 p.m. is the first of an



Fox debuts its new series 'L.A. Firefighters' this week with a six-week run.