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NFL Bell fighting ruling allowing U.S. Super Bowl ads in Canada

BY BILL HARRIS, QMI AGENCY

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Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski hoists the Vince Lombardi Trophy after defeating the Seahawks in Super Bowl XLIX in Phoenix on Sunday, Feb. 1, 2015. (Mark J. Rebilas/USA TODAY Sports)

If Bell Media gets its way, Canadian Super Bowl viewers won't have the choice to watch U.S. commercials on TV after all.

Bell Media has filed a "motion for leave to appeal" in federal court as it fights a CRTC decision to ban "simultaneous substitution" during the Super Bowl, starting in 2017.

In singling out the Super Bowl as the one event annually for which "simulcasting" is prohibited, Bell Media spokesman Scott Henderson said in a statement that the CRTC "erred in law, exceeded its jurisdiction, and demonstrated a lack of awareness of Canadian attitudes, opinions, and values."

The first two points are legal issues on which Bell Media may, in fact, be proven right. The latter point about what

Canadians think with regard to U.S. Super Bowl ads depends upon who you

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talk to, of course.

Bell Media issued the results of a Nanos Research poll that claims only about 20% of Canadians care about seeing the U.S. ads on TV during the Super Bowl. But when the CRTC made its decision, it claimed that not being able to watch the U.S. ads is the top complaint it receives from Canadians each year (Bell Media points out that the actual number of complaints annually is extremely tiny compared to the millions of people overall who watch the game in Canada).

Both things can be true. Some Canadians who are regular watchers of the Super Bowl may see things differently than Canadians who never watch the Super Bowl anyway.

Big picture, Bell Media is arguing that banning its ability to block U.S. ads on TV in favour of its own during the Super Bowl is a big financial hit, which in turn will impact Bell's ability to create Canadian content. And the U.S. Super Bowl ads are available online anyway.

"The decision discriminates by singling out this one particular broadcast and, more specifically, one particular licensee, given that the decision takes effect during the term of Bell Media's current contract for the Super Bowl rights," Henderson said.

The CRTC, on the other hand, intimated in its decision that the Super Bowl is the one day a year in which U.S. ads now are regarded as part of the overall entertainment package, and honestly, the CRTC simply got sick of hearing viewers complain about it.

Someone is going to be left complaining, no matter who wins this game.

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Ed Ward

Screw Bell!!

Punkindrublic1

Does Bell actually think that people are paying attention to the Canadian ad's when it goes to commercial??... lol people usually just turn their attention to each other and not even care what Canadian ad they are going to show because they are always ones we have seen before and they suck.

rugolin

Another example of Bell thinking about customer satisfaction and not trying to make more money by offering subpar products

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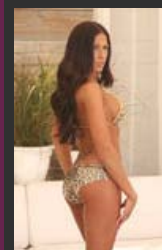
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