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'Catholic 7' eye big TV deal outside Big East

by Tom Gallagher

NCR Today

ESPN reports:

The seven Catholic schools that plan to leave the Big East to form their own basketball conference expect to double their money off a television deal, according to sources.

Sources say that Fox, whose Fox Sports 1 channel is set to launch in August, has an initial high offer on the table of more than \$500 million for a 12-year deal. Fox Sports 1 will replace the network's motorsports channel Speed, already in 81 million homes. Sources say officials with Fox are scheduled to meet with those representing the interest of the "Catholic 7" in New York City on Wednesday. A Fox spokesman could not immediately be reached for comment. A high-ranking source at NBC Sports Network, which has so far engaged in preliminary discussions with the "Catholic 7," declined comment. ESPN spokesman Josh Krulewitz also declined comment on the network's interest in the "Catholic 7" games.

The presidents of the schools -- DePaul, Georgetown, Marquette, Providence, Seton Hall, St. John's, and Villanova -- met in New York on Friday to discuss the intricacies of the new conference and announced that they retained the legal services of Proskauer Rose and Pilson Communications for television negotiations.

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