

ESPN, Discovery push third dimension for TV

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FILE - In this June 17, 2009 file photo, South Korea's Park Ji-sung, right, scores the first goal as Iran's Nekounam Javad looks on during their 2010 FIFA World Cup Asia group 2 qualifying soccer match at Seoul World Cup Stadium in Seoul, South Korea. ESPN, owned by the Walt Disney Co., on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010 said it will introduce a sports channel this year that will broadcast live sports events using 3-D technology, starting with the FIFA World Cup soccer match on June 11. (AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon, File)

(AP) -- Two major cable networks - ESPN and Discovery - said Tuesday they plan to start beaming 3-D entertainment into peoples' homes for the first time.

Riding what could be one of the next big waves in consumer electronics, ESPN said it will have a 3-D channel for broadcasting live sports events

in time for the FIFA World Cup soccer match on June 11.

The channel will not operate 24 hours a day, but plans at least 85 live events in its first year.

Separately, Discovery Communications Inc., which owns Discovery, TLC and other cable channels, announced it will partner with Imax Corp. and Sony Corp. to bring out its own full-time 3-D network. The companies did not say which shows it will air on the new channel, which is to launch in 2011.

It's yet to be seen whether 3-D can make inroads in the home. For viewers it will likely mean buying new TV sets and wearing 3-D glasses.

But major electronics makers such as Sony Corp. and Panasonic Corp. are planning to market 3-D-capable TVs this year.

And the movie industry has already had some success with the technology, with 3-D films taking in more than \$1 billion at box offices last year.

In an interview, ESPN's vice president for technology, Chuck Pagano, said the network is preparing for a "3-D tsunami" in the TV industry.

"It brings a sense of 'wow' when you watch a football game," he said. "It's just a new universe for watching TV coming down the pipeline."

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