

NFL Sunday Ticket is big draw for DirecTV in 3Q

November 3 2011, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer



This photo made with a fisheye lens on Nov. 2, 2011, shows a DirecTV satellite dish on a post in the front yard of a home in Harmony, Pa. Satellite TV provider DirecTV said Thursday, Nov. 3, 2011, it raked in more subscribers than ever in the third quarter, helped by the NFL Sunday Ticket. (AP Photo/Keth Srakocic)

(AP) -- DirecTV Group Inc., the country's largest satellite TV broadcaster, raked in more subscribers than ever in the third quarter, helped by the NFL Sunday Ticket.

DirecTV, the added a net 327,000 U.S. [subscribers](#) in the July to September period, the best third-quarter result in at least five years. Including Latin American operations, net gains were 901,000, the best for any quarter.

The new subscribers drove revenue up 14 percent from a year ago to \$6.84 billion.

But NFL programming is expensive, and net income was \$516 million, or 70 cents per share, up only 7.7 percent from last year's \$479 million, or 55 cents per share.

Analysts polled by FactSet had expected earnings of 73 cents per share on revenue of \$6.74 billion.

DirecTV shares rose 69 cents, or 1.5 percent, to \$45.55 in premarket trading.

The NFL Sunday Ticket gives access to every out-of-market Sunday NFL game, with bells and whistles like the ability to show eight live games simultaneously, side-by-side. DirecTV charges \$53 per month for it.

Average revenue per U.S. user was \$92.21 per month, a modest increase of 3.6 percent from a year ago. Latin American subscribers paid an average of \$64.63, a figure that was up 7.7 percent from a year ago, after adjusting for currency fluctuations.

The flood of new subscribers comes after a dismal second quarter, which saw DirecTV gain just 26,000 U.S. subscribers, a record low. Rival [Dish Network Corp.](#) lost more subscribers than that, which meant the U.S. satellite industry posted a net subscriber loss for the first time ever.

DirecTV ended the quarter with 19.8 million U.S. subscribers, making it the second-largest provider of pay-TV service after cable company [Comcast Corp.](#) In Latin America, it had 7.3 million subscribers.

Dish reports third-quarter results on Monday.

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