

Feds in NY shut down 16 sports streaming websites

2 February 2012, By LARRY NEUMEISTER , Associated Press



Andrew McLees, special agent in charge with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, talks about counterfeit NFL football merchandise seized during a news conference, Thursday, Feb. 2, 2012, in Newark, N.J. Federal officials say authorities seized nearly \$5 million worth of phony Super Bowl sportswear and merchandise in a nationwide sweep. The seizure comes amid an important week in football as the New England Patriots and the New York Giants face off in Super Bowl XLVI Feb. 5. (AP Photo/Julio Cortez)

(AP) -- With the Super Bowl days away, federal authorities announced a crackdown Thursday on websites that stream unauthorized broadcasts of sports events just hours after New England quarterback Tom Brady told reporters gathered in Indianapolis that he watched last year's game on an illegal site.

Investigators seized 16 sites and brought criminal charges against a Michigan man who controlled nine of them.

U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara warned sports fans in a release that piracy costs sports leagues and broadcasters millions of dollars, forcing increases in ticket prices and other costs to consumers.

His message came soon after Brady casually mentioned his own use of illegal websites during a

news conference staged in preparation for the [Super Bowl](#) on Sunday between the New England Patriots and the New York Giants.

"Last year I was rehabbing my foot in Costa Rica, watching the game on an illegal Super Bowl website. And now I'm actually playing in the game. So, it's pretty cool," Brady said.

Web operator Yonjo Quiroa, of Comstock Park, Mich., was charged Wednesday with copyright infringement. Prosecutors said he distributed football, basketball and hockey games and wrestling matches.

Quiroa appeared in federal court in Grand Rapids, Mich., on Wednesday. He was held without bail while his immigration status was under review. Larry Phelan, his lawyer, declined to comment.

Authorities said the prosecution was part of a continuing federal effort to target counterfeiting and piracy on the Internet.

Also in Indianapolis, [federal authorities](#) said they seized nearly \$5 million worth of phony Super Bowl sportswear and merchandise in a nationwide sweep that was the result of a four-month investigation.

Officials from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection said agents targeted stores, flea markets and street vendors that allegedly sold counterfeit game-related sportswear. Fake jerseys, ball caps, T-shirts, jackets and other souvenirs were among the 42,000 items confiscated in Operation Fake Sweep.

Authorities put the total take at more than \$4.8 million, up from \$3.7 million last year.

Also seized were counterfeit Major League Baseball, NBA and NHL items worth about \$1.6

million.

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