

# Facebook to stream 25 MLB games in exclusive deal

9 March 2018, by Ronald Blum



In this May 16, 2012, file photo, the Facebook logo is displayed on an iPad in Philadelphia. Facebook is getting deeper into the professional sports streaming game, signing a deal with Major League Baseball to show 25 afternoon games in an exclusive deal. The games will be available Facebook users in the U.S. on Facebook Watch, the company's video feature, via the MLB Live show page Facebook said Friday, March 9, 2018. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke, File)

Facebook is getting deeper into the professional sports streaming game, partnering with Major League Baseball to air 25 weekday afternoon games in an exclusive deal.

The games will be available to Facebook users in the U.S. on Facebook Watch, the company's video feature announced last August, via the MLB Live show page. Facebook said Friday that recorded broadcasts also will be available globally, excluding select international markets.

The package, MLB's first digital-only national broadcast agreement, precludes teams from televising those games on their regional sports networks.

Facebook's selection will come from among the nine games per season teams can lose from their local telecasts to national video partners, which include Fox and ESPN.

MLB owners approved the deal in a telephone meeting this week. MLB will receive \$30 million to \$35 million, a person familiar with the agreement told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the amount was not released.

Facebook, Twitter and Amazon and other tech companies are in a race to acquire sports streaming rights, which can be lucrative and potentially boost user loyalty. The deal comes at a time when leagues are worrying about cord-cutters causing a decrease in viewers among cable television networks.



In this Feb. 22, 2015, file photo, a basket of baseballs sits on a practice field as Pittsburgh Pirates catchers take batting practice during a baseball spring training workout in Bradenton, Fla. Facebook is getting deeper into the professional sports streaming game, signing a deal with Major League Baseball to show 25 afternoon games in an exclusive deal. The games will be available Facebook users in the U.S. on Facebook Watch, the company's video feature, via the MLB Live show page Facebook

said Friday, March 9, 2018. (AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar, File) © 2018 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Verizon signed a deal with the NBA to stream eight basketball games on Yahoo, and Amazon paid \$50 million to stream NFL games to Prime members last season.

The games will be produced by the MLB Network for Facebook Watch, with interactive and social elements that differentiate them from live streaming.

Facebook's first-month schedule includes Philadelphia-New York Mets on April 4, Milwaukee-St. Louis on April 11, Kansas City-Toronto on April 18 and Arizona-Philadelphia on April 26.

Facebook had a package of 20 non-exclusive Friday night games last year that began in mid-May and used broadcast feeds from the participating teams.



In this Feb. 20, 2018, file photo, Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred gestures while speaking at an owners meeting in Glendale, Ariz. Facebook is getting deeper into the professional sports streaming game, signing a deal with Major League Baseball to show 25 afternoon games in an exclusive deal. The games will be available Facebook users in the U.S. on Facebook Watch, the company's video feature, via the MLB Live show page Facebook said Friday, March 9. (AP Photo/Ben Margot, File)

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