



Atlantic Network Highlights for March 2012

March on ESPN has more NBA regular season plus NCAA Basketball's March Madness, Winter X Games Europe, motor sports with NASCAR, NHRA and the return of IndyCar racing, PGA Tour golf, the Spanish Primera División, the NHL and more

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION (NBA)

The world's best basketball – the NBA on ESPN

The ***National Basketball Association (NBA)*** is at full speed this month, as teams push hard to make the most of these two final months, March and April, of a shortened regular season before the NBA Playoffs tip off. The lineup is deep from top to bottom in a tough Eastern Conference led by talents like the *Miami Heat's* LeBron James and Dwyane Wade, the *Orlando Magic's* Dwight Howard, the *Boston Celtics'* Kevin Garnett and the *Chicago Bulls'* Derrick Rose. Rose is the reigning league MVP and the youngest player, at 22, to ever claim the award.

Out West, it promises to be another battle to the wire among a deep group of serious title contenders, among them Kobe Bryant and the *Los Angeles Lakers*, the always-dangerous *San Antonio Spurs*, the *Oklahoma City Thunder* – led by two-time league scoring champion Kevin Durant – and the defending champion *Dallas Mavericks*, home to veteran star and last year's Finals MVP Dirk Nowitzki.

ESPN's coverage of the NBA airs LIVE or taped all season featuring NBA Wednesday and NBA Friday games (airing Thursdays and Saturdays S.A.). Games feature a same day re-air in the afternoon or evening.

| Schedule: | S.A. | Host team shown first |
|------------------|-------------|--|
| Mar 1 | 20:00 | San Antonio Spurs vs. Chicago Bulls |
| Mar 3 | 04:00 | Utah Jazz vs. Miami Heat |
| Mar 3 | 13:00 | Utah Jazz vs. Miami Heat (R) |
| Mar 8 | 02:30 | Miami Heat vs. Atlanta Hawks |
| Mar 8 | 20:00 | Miami Heat vs. Atlanta Hawks (R) |
| Mar 10 | 03:30 | San Antonio Spurs vs. Los Angeles Clippers |
| Mar 10 | 13:00 | San Antonio Spurs vs. Los Angeles Clippers (R) |
| Mar 15 | 03:00 | Chicago Bulls vs. Miami Heat |

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|--------|-------|---|
| Mar 15 | 20:00 | Chicago Bulls vs. Miami Heat (R) |
| Mar 17 | 02:00 | Philadelphia 76ers vs. Miami Heat |
| Mar 17 | 13:00 | Philadelphia 76ers vs. Miami Heat (R) |
| Mar 22 | 04:30 | Dallas Mavericks vs. Los Angeles Lakers |
| Mar 22 | 20:00 | Dallas Mavericks vs. Los Angeles Lakers (R) |
| Mar 24 | 05:30 | Los Angeles Lakers vs. Portland Trail Blazers |
| Mar 24 | 13:00 | Los Angeles Lakers vs. Portland Trail Blazers (R) |
| Mar 29 | 02:00 | New York Knicks vs. Orlando Magic |
| Mar 29 | 20:00 | New York Knicks vs. Orlando Magic (R) |
| Mar 31 | 05:30 | Los Angeles Clippers vs. Portland Trail Blazers |
| Mar 31 | 13:00 | Los Angeles Clippers vs. Portland Trail Blazers (R) |

Games air Live or on tape; (R) Re-air

NCAA COLLEGE BASKETBALL

March Madness shakes the rafters: don't miss a dunk with ESPN's coverage of the 2012 NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament

Another season of great **NCAA Men's College Basketball** starts winding towards its end with ESPN's coverage of final regular season games, many conference tournament championship games and that singular event lovingly known as March Madness, the **NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament**. Following a season of buzzer-beaters and high-flying dunks, the 68-team field will be set for the NCAA men's basketball tournament tipping off March 14 and wrapping with the Final Four on March 31 and April 2 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Last year's Final Four featured two of this year's top-ranked teams – the SEC's Kentucky and eventual national champion UConn of the Big East – as well as two scrappy challengers in Butler and VCU. This year's lineup remains a mystery, but teams to watch besides Kentucky and UConn include Big Ten power Ohio State, Big East challengers Syracuse and Louisville, and traditional ACC contenders Duke and North Carolina, the latter the preseason No. 1.

NCAA Basketball coverage on ESPN this month features final regular season matchups – including Kentucky taking on Georgia – plus vast Championship Week coverage including many Conference Tournament Championships, the Postseason NIT from Madison Square Garden in New York City, and the **NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament** beginning March 14 and wrapping with the Final Four in New Orleans.

| Schedule: | S.A. | LIVE coverage – Host team shown first |
|-----------|-------|---|
| Mar 2 | 02:00 | Big Ten Basketball: Illinois vs. Michigan |
| Mar 2 | 04:00 | SEC Basketball: Kentucky vs. Georgia |
| Mar 14 | 02:30 | 2012 Postseason NIT |
| Mar 14 | 04:30 | 2012 Postseason NIT |
| Mar 20 | 02:00 | 2012 Postseason NIT |
| Mar 20 | 04:00 | 2012 Postseason NIT |
| Mar 21 | 02:00 | 2012 Postseason NIT |
| Mar 21 | 04:00 | 2012 Postseason NIT |
| Mar 30 | 02:00 | 2012 Postseason NIT: Championship |
| Mar 14 | 01:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |

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|--------|-------|----------------------------------|
| Mar 14 | 03:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 15 | 01:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 15 | 03:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 15 | 19:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 15 | 21:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 15 | 23:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 16 | 02:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 16 | 04:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 16 | 19:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 16 | 21:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 16 | 23:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 17 | 02:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 17 | 04:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 17 | 19:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 17 | 21:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 17 | 19:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 17 | 21:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 18 | 19:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 18 | 21:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 19 | 04:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 23 | 02:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 23 | 04:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 24 | 02:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 24 | 04:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 24 | 23:25 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 25 | 01:55 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 25 | 21:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Mar 25 | 23:55 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Apr 1 | 01:00 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |
| Apr 1 | 03:30 | NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament |

Games air Live, on Short-turnaround and Taped

ACTION SPORTS – Winter X Games Europe

Tignes, France again hosts the world's best action sports athletes for another edition of winter's hottest event – ESPN's Winter X Games Europe

Back for a third year in March is **Winter X Games Europe (WXE)**, another popular stop on ESPN's franchise of trailblazing X Games events. Returning to spectacular Tignes in France, the 2012 event will again spotlight more than 125 international athletes competing over three days for medals and prize money in winter's most demanding and entertaining sports: Snowboard and Skiing, featuring men's and women's competitions in SuperPipe and Slopestyle in both disciplines.

Last year's event was once again marked by deep powder, steep slopes and high attendance, both at the site and in homes around the globe. Fans saw some of the best action ever, as U.S. snowboarder Chas Guldemond beat 2010 gold medalist Sebastien Toutant for the Slopestyle top prize, along the way notching the highest score, 99.33, of any slope rider in any X event. Another 2010 gold medalist was also relegated to silver status as Iouri Podladtchikov, the famed I-Pod, was bested in Snowboard SuperPipe by U.S. rider Louis Vito. Should U.S. talent Shaun White make it to Tignes this year, the SuperPipe battle in 2012 may well prove to be three-way.

It is sure to be another top-notch action sports spectacular. Don't miss a trick with ESPN's LIVE coverage airing March 14 – 16.

| Schedule: | S.A. | LIVE coverage |
|-----------|-------|--|
| Mar 14 | 15:30 | Winter X Games Europe – Tignes, France |
| Mar 14 | 20:30 | Winter X Games Europe – Tignes, France |
| Mar 14 | 22:30 | Winter X Games Europe – Tignes, France |
| Mar 15 | 15:30 | Winter X Games Europe – Tignes, France |
| Mar 15 | 19:00 | Winter X Games Europe – Tignes, France |
| Mar 15 | 20:30 | Winter X Games Europe – Tignes, France |
| Mar 15 | 22:30 | Winter X Games Europe – Tignes, France |
| Mar 16 | 15:00 | Winter X Games Europe – Tignes, France |
| Mar 16 | 19:00 | Winter X Games Europe – Tignes, France |
| Mar 16 | 20:30 | Winter X Games Europe – Tignes, France |
| Mar 16 | 22:30 | Winter X Games Europe – Tignes, France |

(R) Re-air

MOTORSPORTS – NASCAR, IndyCar Series, NHRA and Supercross Motorcycles

Bumper-to-bumper race action continues all month on ESPN – the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series

Coverage of the best stock car racing on the planet continues all month on ESPN with race action from the **NASCAR Sprint Cup Series**. This month's races gave fans last season an early glimpse of the drivers who were going to challenge for the title, led by No. 2 series finisher Carl Edwards, who won in Las Vegas, and No. 3 Kevin Harvick, who took the checkered flag in Fontana. In Bristol it was once again Kyle Busch, who has made an industry out of winning on this track in both Sprint Cup and Nationwide, claiming five straight victories here as of last March.

Although Edwards and Harvick made an impressive push towards the title, with Harvick claiming four wins before the start of the Chase, it was an unstoppable Tony Stewart – whose all five wins on the season came in the final ten Chase races – hanging on to narrowly win the title over Edwards. All three are back in sharp form, joined by top finishers Brad Keselowski and Matt Kenseth and past champions Jeff Gordon – the defending champion at this month's Phoenix race – and Jimmie Johnson.

Coverage of the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series airs LIVE or on short-turnaround throughout the season on ESPN.

| Schedule: | S.A. | |
|-----------|-------|--|
| Mar 4 | 22:00 | NASCAR Sprint Cup Series – Phoenix, AZ (L) |
| Mar 11 | 20:00 | NASCAR Sprint Cup Series – Las Vegas, NV (L) |
| Mar 19 | 21:00 | NASCAR Sprint Cup Series – Bristol, TN (S) |
| Mar 26 | 21:00 | NASCAR Sprint Cup Series – Fontana, CA (S) |

(L) Live; (S) Short-turnaround

LIVE coverage of the Nationwide Series continues in March on ESPN

NASCAR's second-tier level of racing, the **NASCAR Nationwide Series**, continues LIVE all month on ESPN with race action from Phoenix, Las Vegas, Bristol and Fontana. Although racers can now only earn points in one NASCAR series, young drivers honing their skills on this circuit have the opportunity to learn from the best, as established Sprint Cup stars are always in the lineup. One of them, Kyle Busch, showed his might at this series of races last year, claiming all except Las Vegas, where Mark Martin came out on top.

Last season saw the emergence of a group of young, skilled drivers who promise to be the future of stock car racing: Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Justin Allgaier and Reed Sorenson, all winners of at least one race last year. Stenhouse Jr. went on to claim the Nationwide Series title, followed in the standings by veteran Sprint Cup driver Elliott Sadler, Allgaier, Aric Almirola and Sorenson.

Coverage of the Nationwide Series airs LIVE and on short-turnaround throughout the season on ESPN.

Schedule: S.A.

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|--------|-------|--|
| Mar 4 | 01:30 | NASCAR Nationwide Series – Phoenix, AZ (L) |
| Mar 11 | 00:00 | NASCAR Nationwide Series – Las Vegas, NV (L) |
| Mar 18 | 13:00 | NASCAR Nationwide Series – Bristol, TN (S) |
| Mar 26 | 13:00 | NASCAR Nationwide Series – Fontana, CA (S) |

(L) Live; (S) Short-turnaround

Back on ESPN: sleek open wheel racing from the famed IZOD IndyCar Series

A new season of open wheel racing returns to ESPN in March with coverage of the opening race in the **IZOD IndyCar Series**, the eighth *Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg*. Running from March to September, the IZOD IndyCar Series has the most diverse schedule in motorsports, racing in four countries on temporary street circuits, permanent road courses, superspeedways and short ovals. 2012 features a first-ever event in China, the return of two venues that have been absent from the schedule in recent years – scenic Belle Isle and the oval in Fontana – and of course, the legendary *Indianapolis 500* in May.

Last season saw Scotland's Dario Franchitti claim a third consecutive IndyCar Series title, his fourth overall. It was once again a thriller of a season, with Franchitti besting Australia's Will Power and New Zealand's Scott Dixon for the top prize – delivering the same Top 3 finishers from the previous year. All three are back in fine form, joined by Spain's Oriol Servia, Brazil's Tony Kanaan and Australia's Ryan Briscoe.

The IZOD IndyCar Series on ESPN opens LIVE on March 25, 19:30, with the challenging 1.8-mile street course in Florida, the *Streets of St. Petersburg*, won last year by Franchitti.

***NHRA Drag Racing continues on ESPN with the popular
Tire Kingdom NHRA Gatornationals from Gainesville, Florida***

NHRA Drag Racing continues on ESPN in March with one of the most storied races on the schedule, the 43rd annual *Tire Kingdom NHRA Gatornationals* in Gainesville, Florida. As

the traditional East Coast opener, this race is known for delivering history-making performances, including the first 260-mph Top Fuel and Funny Car runs in 1984 and the first 270-mph and 300-mph Top Fuel passes, in 1986 and 1992, respectively.

The competition in Top Fuel has been blown wide open with the retirement of defending champion Del Worsham. Following a 21-year driving career that saw him claim 33 victories, 25 in Funny Car and 8 last season on his way to the Top Fuel title, Worsham has stepped away, leaving the field open for challengers like Spencer Massey, Antron Brown, Larry Dixon and Tony Schumacher. In Funny Car, Matt Hagan will attempt to defend his crown against fierce competitors led by Jack Beckman, Cruz Pedregon, Robert Hight and the legendary John Force.

The Countdown to the Championship breaks the 23-event season into two parts: the 17-race Countdown to 10 and the six-race Countdown to 1 where only the season's top 10 drivers compete for world championships over the season's final six races. ESPN presents season coverage of NHRA Drag Racing including both qualifying and race day action; final eliminations are featured at each stop. See coverage this month of the *Tire Kingdom NHRA Gatornationals* from Gainesville, Florida, airing March 12 at 01:00 (race re-airs March 12 at 16:00).

***Grand Prix motorcycle racing continues on ESPN –
Monster Energy AMA Supercross, an FIM World Championship***

Continuing in March on ESPN is the ***Monster Energy AMA Supercross, an FIM World Championship***, the world's most prestigious off-road motorcycle racing series. It's hard to believe, but 2012 could possibly top last year's spectacular season. 2011 featured an intense battle for the championship that was contested wire to wire by five riders: three past champions in Chad Reed, Ryan Dungey and James Stewart, rookie talent Trey Canard, and the eventual champion, Ryan Villopoto.

All five riders are back on the track in 2012 and fired-up to take the title. Reed, the champion in 2004 and 2008, lost last year's championship to Villopoto by a mere four points, with 2010 champ Dungey and 2009 champ Stewart following close behind. Canard won three impressive victories last season before suffering an injury and is back more motivated than ever.

The 17-race season runs January to May, with one international stop in Canada – this month's race in Toronto, Ontario – and topped off by the season-ending Shootout in Las Vegas in early May. ESPN presents season coverage, with races from both the Lites and Class divisions featured at each stop.

Schedule: S.A.

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|--------|---------------|--|
| Mar 2 | 17:00 & 18:00 | AMA Supercross, FIM World Championship – Lites & Class |
| Mar 16 | 17:00 & 18:00 | AMA Supercross, FIM World Championship – Lites & Class |
| Mar 23 | 17:00 & 18:00 | AMA Supercross, FIM World Championship – Lites & Class |
| Mar 30 | 17:00 & 18:00 | AMA Supercross, FIM World Championship – Lites & Class |

Coverage airs Taped

GOLF – The PGA Tour

More PGA Tour on ESPN in March: the Shell Houston Open

The **PGA Tour** continues on ESPN in March with coverage of the *Shell Houston Open*, always a popular stop on the schedule. Last year's event saw U.S. pro Phil Mickelson outduel Scott Verplank to take his first victory since winning his third *Masters* in April 2010. This win moved Mickelson to No. 3 in the world rankings, putting him ahead of Tiger Woods for the first time since 1997. Meanwhile, Woods's win at the end of 2011 in the *Chevron World Challenge* just might mark the return of one of the most talented golfers to ever pick up a club.

Players to watch as the season unfolds include Bill Haas, the defending FedEx Cup champion, and fellow U.S. pros Mickelson, Steve Stricker, Dustin Johnson and Webb Simpson, plus a deep lineup of impressive international talents led by England's Luke Donald and Lee Westwood, Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy, and defending Masters champion Charl Schwartzel of South Africa. ESPN's coverage this month airs LIVE.

| Schedule: | S.A. | LIVE coverage |
|------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Mar 29 | 22:00 | Shell Houston Open |
| Mar 30 | 22:00 | Shell Houston Open |
| Mar 31 | 20:00 | Shell Houston Open |

SPANISH PRIMERA DIVISIÓN

Spain's La Liga continues LIVE all month on ESPN

For skillful, fast-paced action, there's no place like the ***Spanish Primera División***, Spain's top level of football, continuing LIVE all month on ESPN. December's *Clasico* between *Real Madrid* and *Barcelona* was a scorcher, as league leaders *Real Madrid* scored after just 23 seconds on a Karim Benzema goal, only to fall 3-1 to their rivals, allowing *Barcelona* to go top of the standings. Still, the season is far from over and both sides have downplayed the importance of this one win (or loss).

Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo and *Barcelona's* Lionel Messi are again on track to battle for the Golden Boot – won in record-breaking fashion by Cristiano in 2011 – as the top scorer in the European leagues. *Real Madrid's* Gonzalo Higuaín and Benzema and *Valencia's* Roberto Soldado have also been in sharp form, with *Valencia* hanging tough with the league leaders in hopes of claiming their first title since 2004.

ESPN's weekend coverage of the Spanish Primera División airs LIVE or on short-turnaround all season. **NOTE:** Matches confirmed each weekend.

| Schedule: | S.A. | LIVE coverage |
|------------------|--------------|--|
| Mar 3 | 20:55 | Spanish Primera División Football |
| Mar 4 | 17:55 | Spanish Primera División Football |
| Mar 10 | 20:55 | Spanish Primera División Football |
| Mar 11 | 17:55 | Spanish Primera División Football |

SOCCER MAGAZINE PROGRAMS – ESPNSoccernet Press Pass

ESPN's popular roundtable talk show, ***ESPNSoccernet Press Pass***, continues six days a week, Monday to Saturday, with the Monday show expanded to one hour. Viewer email helps set the agenda as a variety of entertaining hosts – fronted by Derek Rae, Tommy Smyth, Adrian Healey and Janusz Michallik, among other experts – debate the game's hottest issues.

This popular program reviews weekend matches and previews upcoming mid-week action from the UEFA Champions League, Copa Libertadores and other notable national/international matches. Also spotlighted are recaps of mid-week matches and previews of upcoming weekend matches, plus a weekly studio segment from the United Kingdom.

ESPNSoccernet Press Pass airs Monday to Friday mornings with re-airings at 19:00, with an additional Saturday show closing the week.

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE (NHL)

More of the world's best ice hockey – the NHL on ESPN

Coverage of world-class ice hockey from the ***National Hockey League (NHL)*** continues weekly on ESPN, and concussions aside – most notably the continuing question mark surrounding *Pittsburgh Penguins* star Sidney Crosby and the season-long loss of *Philadelphia Flyers'* captain Chris Pronger – it has been a top-notch season. The *Penguins* and *Flyers* remain Eastern favorites, with the surging *New York Rangers* on fire and the defending champion *Boston Bruins* showing last season's winning form.

The West is cooking on high as well, with the *Chicago Blackhawks*, an intimidating offensive force, setting a torrid pace in a conference that also boasts the Sedin twins pacing the tough *Vancouver Canucks* – losers to the *Bruins* in the last Stanley Cup Finals – as well as the past champion *Detroit Red Wings*, the solid *St. Louis Blues* and the always-threatening *San Jose Sharks*.

ESPN features season coverage of the NHL; check listings for dates/times.

BOXING

Step in the ring with ESPN and Friday Night Fights

Friday Night Fights, ESPN's weekly program featuring live championship bouts, returns as of January 6, giving boxing fans a mainline dose of their favorite sport. In addition to fight coverage spotlighting the sport's top-rated contenders, *Friday Night Fights* has news and information, chats with in-studio guests, and features clips of classic fight footage. *Friday Night Fights* airs on Saturdays with re-airings on Friday or Saturday evenings.

PTI and PTI UK

Pardon the Interruption (PTI) shines a spotlight on the latest, most talked-about happenings in the sports world. Fast-paced, innovative and always provocative, *PTI* features top journalists Tony Kornheiser and Mike Wilbon facing-off in a lively format devoted exclusively to sports opinions and the latest news making headlines around the world. Mixing insight, analysis and humor, *PTI* gets inside the stories viewers care most about. Program airs weekdays at 00:30.

Pardon the Interruption (PTI) crosses the Atlantic with a UK version based on the original Emmy Award-winning U.S. format. ***PTI UK*** is presented by Mark Chapman and Steve Bunce, with guest appearances also on the menu. Program airs Tuesdays at 7:30 and 19:30.

ESPN'S AROUND THE HORN

Stay in the loop with ***Around the Horn***, a fast-paced and free-spirited sports talk program where Tony Reali and four leading sports reporters from across the country debate the latest sports issues, rumors and headlines via satellite.

The show is played in rounds, with two columnists 'Cut' before the final 'Showdown', with Tony giving points for a good argument and happily deducting them when he has to hit 'mute.' The winner then gets 30 seconds of 'Facetime' to opine on victory. *Around the Horn* airs weekdays at midnight.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Hunting, fishing and outdoor adventures lead the lineup on ESPN's ***Outdoor Block***, three hours of adventure programming that airs every weekend on ESPN. From off-road trekking and backwoods explorations to fishing the world's most pristine streams, ESPN's Outdoor Block offers something for all lovers of the great outdoors. The Outdoor Block airs every Saturday and Sunday, 08:00 – 11:00.

NOTE: ALL SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS.