

Basketball: Gym bleachers are much like church pews

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wife, who, like me, never played high school basketball, but still loves to watch the games.

Maybe eventually the rise of TV and the internet will one day starve small-town basketball of this community function. After all, participation in all high school team sports is now declining for varied and uncertain reasons. Fewer kids may tolerate getting back late from far-flung towns with schoolwork due the next morning.

Ironically, too much professionalization and year 'round leagues may be making participation less attractive to the casual athlete with no expectation to play beyond the high school level. Other opportunities, rising costs to play and cuts to school sports programs may be factors.

As in all things, the future is uncertain.

In the meantime, I sit next to neighbors and strangers. The heat of so many bodies prompts us to strip off winter coats. Between quarters we ask how so-and-so is doing now that she's out of the hospital, while toddlers climb up and down the bleachers. Generations watch generations of grandkids, nephews and nieces out on the court. Newcomers to town settle in.

Gym bleachers are much like church pews, except there is more talking amongst the seated, more cursing under your breath and cheering out loud, too.

As the lights from the rafters shine on the glass like gym-sealed maple below, as the near-freezing rain pours down outside, it is still warm and lively in this echoing wooden box.

Showtime is keeping 'Circus' political show minus Halperin

By DAVID BAUDER Associated Press

NEW YORK — Showtime says it is keeping its political television series "The Circus" alive despite the loss of co-host Mark Halperin on sexual misconduct charges.

The network announced Wednesday that the show will return on April 15, with Alex Wagner of CBS News and the Atlantic magazine joining holdover hosts John Heilemann and Mark McKinnon. The series explores the character and strategies of politics, and will focus this season on the upcoming mid-year elections.

The show's future was in doubt when Halperin was dropped in

late October. The veteran political reporter was accused by multiple women of unwanted advances and lewd behavior when he worked at ABC News.

Behind the scenes, Showtime executives had continued to stress their support for the show, McKinnon said. "Everyone said we hope the show goes on," he said.

Showtime would not make an executive available on Wednesday to discuss the factors that went into continuing the show, and producers didn't respond to requests for comment.

Wagner had appeared on "The Circus" in a couple of episodes during the first two seasons and there

were already discussions about making her a regular before the news about Halperin broke. Halperin also lost his job at NBC News, a contract for a book about the 2016 presidential campaign and an HBO miniseries that was to be based on the book.

There's no question that it's a plus that Halperin is being replaced by a woman, McKinnon said.

"It's even more important given all that is happening, not just the stuff with Mark, but culturally" with the flood of news reports about men behaving badly, he said.

Besides reporting on politics, Wagner is a co-anchor for the Saturday edition of "CBS This Morning," having joined the network from MSNBC. She is a contributing editor at the Atlantic and co-hosts a weekly podcast for the newsmagazine.



Mark Halperin

TV SCHEDULE THE DAILY ASTORIAN Evening listings FRIDAY—SUNDAY

FRIDAY EVENING schedule grid with columns for time slots (6 PM to 11:30 PM) and channels (KATU, KOMO, KING, KOIN, KIRO, KGW, KRCW, KOPB, KPVT, KPXD, KCPO, TBS, KZJO, ESPN, ESPN2, NICK, DISN, FAM, FMC, LIFE, ROOT, FS1, SPIKE, COM, HIST, A&E, TLC, DISC, NGE0, TNT, AMC, USA, FOOD, HGTV, FX, CNN, FNC, CNBC, BRAV, TCM, SYFY, RFD).

SATURDAY EVENING schedule grid with columns for time slots (6 PM to 11:30 PM) and channels (KATU, KOMO, KING, KOIN, KIRO, KGW, KRCW, KOPB, KPVT, KPXD, KCPO, TBS, KZJO, ESPN, ESPN2, NICK, DISN, FAM, FMC, LIFE, ROOT, FS1, SPIKE, COM, HIST, A&E, TLC, DISC, NGE0, TNT, AMC, USA, FOOD, HGTV, FX, CNN, FNC, CNBC, BRAV, TCM, SYFY, RFD).

SUNDAY EVENING schedule grid with columns for time slots (6 PM to 11:30 PM) and channels (KATU, KOMO, KING, KOIN, KIRO, KGW, KRCW, KOPB, KPVT, KPXD, KCPO, TBS, KZJO, ESPN, ESPN2, NICK, DISN, FAM, FMC, LIFE, ROOT, FS1, SPIKE, COM, HIST, A&E, TLC, DISC, NGE0, TNT, AMC, USA, FOOD, HGTV, FX, CNN, FNC, CNBC, BRAV, TCM, SYFY, RFD).