

Encore: Storm and Kremer make Amazon return for 2nd NFL season

By **JOSH DUBOW**
AP Pro Football Writer

Hannah Storm and Andrea Kremer had so much fun in their first season calling NFL games on Amazon Prime that they are coming back for an encore.

Amazon announced Thursday the veteran announcing duo will return next season to call the Thursday night package on Amazon's prime video service.

"It's validation," Kremer said. "You want to be able to show with actions not just words that what we did was meaningful and entertaining and people wanted to watch and listen to us and considered us a viable option to the other great choices that are out there. The fact that Amazon made this decision sooner than we expected was just a real joy to us and made us feel like we were the right choice."

Storm and Kremer were hired last August to do the 11 Thursday night NFL games on Amazon on an alternate English-language feed to those who wanted something different from the Fox broadcast with Joe Buck and Troy Aikman.

Amazon did not release numbers on how many people chose to listen to Storm and Kremer as opposed to the Fox feed featuring Joe Buck and Troy Aikman, but head of live sports Jim DeLorenzo said the feedback was extremely positive.

It was a new role for both. Kremer spent most of her career as an Emmy Award-winning reporter who was honored by the Pro Football Hall of Fame last year with the Pete Rozelle Radio-Television Award.

Storm has had a long career as a studio host and anchor, who had only limited play-by-play experience on the WNBA.

But they both took the opportunity to do something new, becoming the



Amazon via AP, File

In this Sept. 21, 2018, file photo, Andrea Kremer, left, and Hannah Storm pose for a portrait at Pier 59 studios in New York.

first all-female booth to call any major men's team sport in the United States.

"When you do something no one has ever done before, you open yourself up to a certain level of risk because you can be at times heavily criticized," Storm said. "They're people who might not like the idea of women doing football or basketball or baseball. There will always be people who push back on something that is not the norm. We wanted to make sure we were comfortable with that element of it, which we were."

Storm and Kremer are part of a trend of more women getting the chance to do play-by-play or analysis on men's sports.

Doris Burke has transitioned from being solely a sideline reporter to a role as a game analyst on ESPN's NBA coverage. Jessica Mendoza has been a lead analyst on ESPN's Sunday night baseball coverage since 2015. AJ Mleczo went from covering women's hockey at the Olympics to analyzing NHL games for NBC Sports Network.

Beth Mowins has called NFL games as a play-by-play announcer for both CBS and ESPN.

"When Hannah and I were discussing this, she said to me, 'If not us, then who,'" Kremer said. "That's pretty significant. If we do this, we're opening up opportunities for other women. If we don't do it, that's a responsibility that we have. I hope that more women get opportunities but I hope it's the right women for the right reasons."

The addition of an alternate audio feed with Storm and Kremer was the biggest change in Amazon's second season streaming Thursday night NFL games. After making its debut in 2017, the online retailer signed a two-year, \$130 million contract last year to keep the streaming rights to the games.

Amazon's 11 games on Prime Video and Twitch reached 24.4 million total viewers, a 33 percent increase from its first season. The average audience topped 500,000 per minute, a 61 percent increase, with the average viewer watching

for 59 minutes.

In all, more than 1 billion minutes of live NFL game content was watched on Prime Video and Twitch.

Amazon is expanding its sports coverage with deals in place for PGA Tour Live and NBA League Pass, to go along with deals in the United Kingdom for ATP Tennis and a small package of Premier League soccer games.

How much more live sports the company bids for remains to be seen.

"Any time that we're looking at additional opportunities, we're always starting with the customer to see if it's content that we think they will really love," DeLorenzo said. "We are still pretty early on in the life cycle of Amazon offering live sporting events to our customers. It's been a great learning experience for us and we're continuing to look at the data to determine what we want to do going forward."

Seattle Mariners won't promise spot to Ichiro after Japan trip

By **TIM BOOTH**
Associated Press

SEATTLE — The plan seems to be in place for Ichiro Suzuki to be on the Seattle Mariners' expanded roster when they open the regular season with two games in his native Japan.

After that? Seattle general manager Jerry Dipoto isn't promising anything to the 45-year-old, especially if it gets in the way of developing some of the younger players who are part of the club's rebuilding plans.

"First we have to envision him being on the 28-man when get to Tokyo," Dipoto said. "Obviously we did agree on a minor-league deal for Ichiro to come to spring training. We do have hope when we break for Tokyo he is healthy and ready to go. If that is the case we're going to give him an opportunity to play. But this season for us is about giving an opportunity to young players."

Suzuki was announced as one of Seattle's spring training invitees on Thursday after he agreed to a minor league contract with the club. If Suzuki is added to the major league roster — as is expected for the games against the Oakland Athletics in Tokyo on March 20 and 21 — he would receive a one-year contract paying \$750,000 while in the major leagues.

But Dipoto made clear on Thursday that developing younger players will be critical as part of Seattle's intent to be able to contend for the 2021 season.

"A lot of it is going to be up to Ichiro. Our intent with Ichiro is to bring one of the great players in the

history of baseball ... back to the playing field and see what happens, especially since this is what he wants to do. We want to handle Ichiro with all the respect and gratitude in the world for what he has done for the Mariners organization and really celebrate him for what he has done globally for baseball," Dipoto said. "What happens after we come back from Tokyo? First we have to ensure he's healthy enough to be on our roster in order to go, but when we come back our goal is to develop our young players. I don't know how more clearly I can say that."

Suzuki started last season playing for the Mariners but transitioned into a front-office role as a special assistant to the chairman that allowed him to take part in pregame workouts and batting practice but not to be in the dugout during games. The move ended his season abruptly but with the knowledge that Seattle was opening 2019 in Japan, which would be a highly anticipated opportunity for him to play in his home country. Suzuki was hitting .205 in 44 at-bats during his limited action in 2018, and all nine of his hits were singles.

But Suzuki has worked out through the offseason with the intent of being ready to open the 2019 season with the big league club.

Suzuki was voted both the 2001 AL Rookie of the Year and MVP with the Mariners and won a pair of AL batting titles. He was traded to the Yankees midway through 2012, played parts of three seasons with New York, then spent three seasons with Miami.

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Meatless Wednesday: Flavortown Market goes to the greens and beans

By Andrew Warren
TV Media

In the first round of the competition, host Guy Fieri gives the competing chefs a list of ingredients that their dishes must feature. Then, in the second round, the chefs spin a wheel that randomly gives each of them a meat dish that they must make vegetarian. Finally, Guy gets tricky in the final round and takes away the remaining competitors' shopping carts before sending them out to shop for the ingredients needed to make their guilty pleasure dishes.

"Guy's Grocery Games" is similar to other cooking competition shows, with a chef getting the six after each round since the judges have had a chance to taste and evaluate all of the dishes. The contest is held twice of a year.

parameter, and the competitors are required to "shop" for their own ingredients from the store's shelves, and all sorts of twists tie into the unique theme.

The judges that Guy has brought in to taste the week's menus usually are a who's who of Food Network celebrity chefs. There's a pair of "Food Network Star" winners in Dan Snierson and "Southern at Heart" and "Art of the Party" along with frequent judge and "Top Chef All-Stars" winner Richard Blais.

Vegans don't have to be buying, and with those three discerning judges ready to taste everything on the plate, the contestants in this week's "Guy's Grocery Games" have to pack as much punch into their dishes as they can.

cooking this week

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12:00 p.m. CBS The Great British Bake Off (UK)	12:00 p.m. CBS The Great British Bake Off (UK)	12:00 p.m. CBS The Great British Bake Off (UK)	12:00 p.m. CBS The Great British Bake Off (UK)	12:00 p.m. CBS The Great British Bake Off (UK)	12:00 p.m. CBS The Great British Bake Off (UK)	12:00 p.m. CBS The Great British Bake Off (UK)
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