

CABLE NETWORKS IN FURIOUS RACE TO OUTPACE EACH OTHER: BUT WHO WILL BREAST THE TAPE?



The 2012 presidential election has entered the knockout phase and makes for captivating news. It has captured the viewer's attention like no other presidential campaign before it. So much so that it has spawned a fight between rival cable news networks to capture as many viewers as possible. According to Pew Research Center's News Interest Index, people opt for cable news, rather than other media, for information about the 2012 presidential campaign. The end of the August the cable channels will have another great opportunity to pull non-viewers to their side, when the Republican and Democratic conventions will be held to officially nominate Mitt Romney and Barack Obama. The networks too are following in the candidates footsteps and are exchanging sharp blows at one another. MSNBC's Phil Griffin reacted sharply to a recent CNN release that claimed that it would be the only "unbiased" network covering the conventions. Speaking to a newspaper he said, "When you're desperate, you start calling different things out." Griffin also responded to CNN's Washington bureau chief in statement to a newspaper claimed that CNN was the only cable news channel hasn't shown a preference for either side and that CNN would give equal prominence to hear both sides and decide for themselves who they should vote for. Griffin while dismissing Feist's comments saying that he would let his "words speak for themselves," added that "Not every voter wants to be told how to vote." Griffin flaunted the grand plans MSNBC had for covering the convention and said that the network would air twenty hours of live coverage a day during the RNC in Tampa and the DNC in Charlotte. He said that his networks popular personalities would be a major draw and that primetime broadcasts would be hosted by Rachel Maddow with Chris Matthews. Ed Schultz, Lawrence O'Donnell, Rev. Al Sharpton, Chris Hayes and campaign strategist Steve Schmid would also be actively involved in the coverage. "That's what we've made our name on in the past year and that's what we're gonna continue to do," he said. "The opportunity for us is that people will get to see us and how we do politics." He also said that the changes in the network had worked for the network and from being a distant third in 2008, had worked their way to the top. "We were a distant third," he recalled. "We were just beginning to find our voice. Rachel [Maddow] didn't even have a show then. Our line-up was different. We really made a name for ourselves during the conventions and in the run-up to the election." Griffin mentioned the names of the shows and hosts that the network has added since the last presidential elections and said that it had overtaken CNN, and was neck-to-neck with Fox News. Certain MSNBC would merit Griffin's claims and come close to equaling Fox in popularity, but it still is considerably behind Fox in terms of total viewers. "I love the position we're in," he said, describing the network as being "neck and neck" with Fox News at 9 and 10 p.m. As a knockout punch Griffin emphasized that politics is a staple at MSNBC. "I bet you that we play more speeches than anyone else," he said. "We're not doing Whitney Houston for a week. We don't follow every silly story out there. We do politics and we do it well. People trust us."