

TV Feature: The 5 Network Shows Most on the Bubble

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 17, 2013 - 12:25pm

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CHICAGO – As the networks finalize their schedules, there are more periods than question marks. CBS has already renewed most of their line-up while some programs on other networks have nothing to worry about. At the same time, there are some axes that everyone knows are going to fall. But what about the shows in the middle? What are the biggest question marks this year and which way will they fall off the bubble? Let me guide the way.

1. “Go On” (NBC)



Go On

Photo credit: NBC

Could Matthew Perry fall again? “Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip” and “Mr. Sunshine” had fans but not the ratings to warrant renewal. And now Perry finds himself right on the bubble with his often very funny “Go On,” a show that deserves renewal but finds itself a part of the odd story of NBC in the 2012-13 season. Few networks have ever had more peaks and valleys than NBC did this year, bolstered by the Olympics and “The Voice” but lost whenever those programs weren’t on the air. The series premiere of “Go On” was watched by 16.1 million people as it was piggybacked with Olympic coverage. The season finale? 2.7 million. When “The Voice” is on, that number sometimes doubles to 5-6

million. But sitcoms need to be on all year in today's market and "Go On" can't find an audience from Fall through Spring. So what happens? I think NBC gives it more time. Perry has a decent shot at a Lead Actor in a Comedy nomination given the shallow pool that makes up that category and more critics like the program than don't (something that can't be said about obvious failures like "1600 Penn" and "Guys with Kids"). "Go On" needs time. And NBC can't cancel everything. Although this could be the last one through the door to renewal.

Prediction: Renew

2. "Vegas" (CBS)



Vegas

Photo credit: CBS

Strong reviews, an A-list cast, high production values — what happened here? It feels like CBS's audience simply doesn't want anything but standalone mysteries ("The Mentalist," "CSI," "NCIS") or reality shows. Programs with plotlines that string from one episode to the next simply wither on the vine ("The Good Wife" has been on the edge for years and, somewhat surprisingly, was included in the wave of early renewals from the net). Although this isn't much of a wither. "Vegas" gets numbers that would make it a smash hit on most networks but CBS is the King right now and just winning your time slot isn't enough to justify renewal. The last time that "Vegas" aired on a Tuesday night, it lost 6.75 million viewers from its lead-in, "NCIS: Los Angeles." That's not OK at CBS. And the move to Friday nights hints at more problems to come. Maybe. I do see a scenario where a lower budget "Vegas" is left on Fridays with "Blue Bloods" due to their similar audiences. It's going to come down to the strength of their pilots, something that's impossible to know right now. So I'll guess...

Prediction: Cancel (and it will be the highest-rated show to get the axe)

3. "Happy Endings" (ABC)



Happy Endings

Photo credit: ABC

“Happy Endings,” one of the funniest and smartest shows on network TV, has been a victim of the schedule shuffle, airing in 8 different time slots on 4 different nights since its 2011 premiere. Now that it’s settled on Friday nights in two-episode form, it doesn’t matter that it’s been as funny as ever, it’s clear that the network has given up on trying to find it a home. Picture executives trying to put together a schedule. Can you see them moving a show like this back to their power line-up on Wednesday or to anchor a new block of comedies? Of course not. Comedies go to Fridays to die. Luckily, the producers have been talking to other networks about picking it up a la “Cougar Town,” which has done surprisingly well for TBS. I think that model will be followed by USA, who have reportedly been trying to launch a comedy block. While “Happy Endings” may not fit for ABC, it’s a known quantity to lead new programming on cable, where it will hopefully be on for years and maybe even win a few awards to give a middle finger to the network that could never really figure out what to do with it.

Prediction: Cancel (but moved to USA)

4. “The Carrie Diaries” (The CW)



The Carrie Diaries

Photo credit: The CW

Oh, The CW. The most difficult network to predict because it's so impossible to determine what could really be called a hit. I actually think the day will come when the whole network goes down. The fact is that we're seeing the most notable ratings erosion from the networks that skew youngest as the next generation views more on their phone than on their TV. That means FOX and The CW are going to be the true canaries in the coalmine and this birdie is dead. There are four shows in question for The CW - "The Carrie Diaries," "Beauty & the Beast," "Nikita," and "Hart of Dixie." "Nikita" has stabilized enough to develop a decent following. It seems a likely renewal. So does "Beauty & the Beast" which hasn't taken off like the network wanted but has a loyal following. Who is watching "The Carrie Diaries"? And how do they expect this audience to grow? The target demo for this program is one that's increasingly difficult to reach. And I don't see them trying again for another year.

Prediction: Cancel

5. "Community" (NBC)



Community
Photo credit: NBC

Have you seen “Community” this year? Do you think as I do that it was delayed from the Fall mostly because it was awful? The Dan Harmon-less version of this once-great show has bordered on unwatchable in the last few weeks as the talented cast does their best to keep it afloat and maybe find it a new identity. Trying too hard to replicate what Harmon did the first three seasons, this installment of “Community” has been a true disaster. However, the cast is strong enough that they could right the ship at any moment. The writers need to change directions. And I think NBC will give them a chance to do just that given the glory of syndication. A shortened season will give “Community” enough episodes for syndication and Sony, who owns the show, will go to NBC and basically give them the program for free to make that happen. Expect a shortened season (“30 Rock”) and then a merciful death. Can we start a Kickstarter campaign to get enough money for Harmon to come back for it?

Prediction: Renew (shortened season)

Runner-ups:

6. “The Neighbors” (ABC)
Prediction: Cancel

7. “Whitney” (NBC)
Prediction: Cancel

8. “Beauty & the Beast” (The CW)
Prediction: Renew

9. “Rules of Engagement” (CBS)
Prediction: Cancel

10. “Malibu Country” & “Last Man Standing” (ABC)
Prediction: Renew

Predicted Renewals That Haven’t Happened Yet*:

- ABC - “Grey’s Anatomy,” “How to Live with Your Parents,” “Last Man Standing,” “Malibu Country,” “The Middle,” “Modern Family,” “Nashville,” “Once Upon a Time,” “Revenge,” “Scandal,” “Suburgatory”
CBS - “Criminal Minds,” “Two and a Half Men”
The CW - “Beauty & the Beast,” “Hart of Dixie,” “Nikita”
FOX - “Glee”
NBC - “Chicago Fire,” “Community,” “Go On,” “Grimm,” “Hannibal,” “Law & Order: SVU,” “Parenthood,” “Parks & Recreation,” “Revolution”

Predicted Cancellations That Haven’t Happened Yet*:

- ABC - “Body of Proof,” “Happy Endings,” “The Neighbors,” “Red Widow”
CBS - “CSI: NY,” “Golden Boy,” “Rules of Engagement,” “Vegas”
The CW - “The Carrie Diaries”
FOX - “The Cleveland Show,” “Touch”
NBC - “1600 Penn,” “Deception,” “Guys with Kids,” “The New Normal,” “Smash,” “Whitney”

*Subject to change before final predictions after the next few weeks of ratings.



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