



Both **ESPN** and **Fox** are debating how best to present the day when [Barry Bonds](#) ([current contract information](#)) breaks Hank Aaron's all-time homerun record. With the controversy surrounding Bonds, the networks are dancing between the magnitude of the record being broken with Bonds' lack of popularity given steroid allegations. As [reported by Variety](#) :

"We'll be gauging the public's reaction as the season goes along," says [Fox network's] **Lou D'Ernilio**. "If we sense there's a lack of interest, then we might not go as far out of the way in our coverage." And if fan enthusiasm is there? "Then we go for it."

ESPN, on the other hand, is trying to synthesize the two approaches. The net will use "every asset in our arsenal" on the chase, says senior veep of programming and acquisitions Len DeLuca.

But it is also hoping to leaven the quest with hard news. "It will be very different from 1998. It will be less celebratory and more reportorial," Scanlan says. One change, he says, is more coverage of the record's context.

Most strikingly, ESPN will take its cue from an unlikely group: the home crowd. "A Bonds home run will be reflective of the venue," Scanlan says. "If he hits a home run in San

ESPN, Fox Debate How to Deal with Bonds

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Francisco, it will be called differently from the way it's called in Philadelphia."