

Ebersol to advise Bell on NBC's Olympics coverage

Matt Cutler

Jim Bell, the executive producer of NBC's 'Today' show, has been handed the responsibility of steering the US network's coverage of the London 2012 Olympics, although his predecessor Dick Ebersol will remain involved in the channel's output.

Bell, who will continue to oversee 'Today', worked for NBC Sports for 16 years before switching to the network's flagship programme in 2005. However, Ebersol, who announced his shock resignation just weeks before NBC secured a new four-Games broadcast package for the 2014-20 Olympics earlier this year, will be brought in to act as an advisor to his successor on the network's Olympics coverage as well as National Football League programming.

Ebersol, who led NBC Sports for more than two decades, claimed earlier this year that he was stepping down as chairman after failing to agree a new contract with the network's new parent company, Comcast. NBC Sports Group chairman Mark Lazarus said that "Dick's experience and knowledge will be of great benefit to our product", according to The Associated Press. "I look forward to continuing my 15-year relationship with him."

On the appointment of Bell, Lazarus added to Reuters: "Jim's unique background in both sports and news at NBCUniversal makes him the perfect choice to lead our London Olympics production." In 2004, Bell served as co-ordinating producer for NBC Olympics, overseeing nearly 100 hours of afternoon and late night coverage during the Athens Games. Bell won Emmys for his work on the 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2002 Olympics and five more gongs during his time at 'Today'.

On Tuesday, NBC also outlined its coverage plans for the 2012 Games, announcing that it would show every event live across its range of platforms. NBC will air primetime coverage that will focus on the top events, while online - a key experimental platform for the network during the 2008 Beijing Games - will provide further action. The network also plans to carry complementary coverage on its cable TV channels such as MSNBC and Versus, with the latter being renamed NBC Sports Network next year.

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