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## Time Warner Cable Sues DirecTV

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NEW YORK (AP) - Time Warner Cable has sued DirecTV Group Inc., accusing the satellite television broadcaster of deceptive trade practices and false advertising regarding the NFL Network.



The lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Manhattan claims DirecTV lied about the accessibility of professional football broadcasts in an attempt to pry away customers from Time Warner Cable.

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The suit sought unspecified damages and a court order to stop DirecTV from saying in advertising that Time Warner Cable subscribers cannot watch their local NFL team play games when DirecTV is showing NFL Network games.

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"These ads are blatantly false," the lawsuit filed Thursday claimed, citing newspaper advertisements claiming that the Dec. 30 game between the New York Giants and the Washington Redskins will not be available to 4.4 million people in New York unless they join DirecTV.

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In fact, Time Warner Cable's lawsuit said, the game will be broadcast to Time Warner Cable customers in New York on WNBC-TV, even if the residents are not DirecTV customers.

Robert Mercer, a DirecTV spokesman, said the company had no immediate comment on the lawsuit.

In its lawsuit, Time Warner Cable said the false ads were hurting it because once customers switch from cable to satellite, it is difficult to convince them to switch back because of the costs involved and lengthy contracts.

The lawsuit accused DirecTV of making similar claims about football broadcasts in advertising aimed at people in Green Bay, Wisc., Cincinnati and elsewhere when games feature cities' home teams.

"These false ads were obviously targeted at markets where DirecTV believes that loyalty to the local football team will drive consumer purchasing decisions," the lawsuit said.

Time Warner Cable also accused DirecTV of using advertising featuring actress Jessica Simpson and actor William Shatner to say its high definition television service provides a picture quality that is superior to Time Warner Cable's high definition television service.

Time Warner Cable said those ads were also false because both companies provide exactly the same screen resolution. At best, the lawsuit said, DirecTV's picture quality is "merely equivalent."

Time Warner Cable said DirecTV agreed to change its advertising to delete false statements, but ran ads in newspapers and on television and radio after it had agreed to stop them.

Time Warner Cable is a unit of Time Warner Inc., a major media conglomerate. News Corp. controls DirecTV but has reached an agreement to transfer its stake in the company to Liberty Media Corp. in a swap for Liberty's 19 percent voting stake in News Corp.

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