



ESPN Radio

XDS Programming Tips / FAQ

What is changed in this version:

In paragraph 3, roles have changed in Affiliate Operations. Added Emmanuel Barrow and Nicole Shannon. Removed Peter Serbegis.

In paragraph 6, added a line that the audio quality (bit rate) is the same on satellite and internet. Also added a note about setting the XDS streaming delay to less than 30 seconds if the affiliate desires.

In paragraph 8, added more details about where affiliates can get data about upcoming play-by-play games. ESPN publishes more than one grid for this.

1. Where do I get technical support for my station's use of ESPN Radio?

Start with 888-564-2539, option 3.

- If you are off the air or are losing revenue, the Transmission Operations technician who takes your call will page a Radio Engineer to call you back 24x7.
- For less-urgent issues, a ticket will be forwarded to a Radio Engineer who will respond on the same, or the next, business day.

2. Can I e-mail tech support?

Yes, send to espn.radioazhelp@disney.com , but response time will be slower. If you need an answer in less than 2 business days, please call rather than e-mailing.

3. How do I find out what the program titles and talent names are on ESPN Radio?

This information is on the ESPN Radio Affiliate Zone web site at <https://radioaz.espn.co> (not .com).

If you need a username and password for this site, please contact nicole.b.shannon@espn.com or 860-766-1701.

If you cannot find what you are looking for on this site, please contact the Affiliate Operations Manager who serves your station:

jeff.martindale@espn.com or 860-766-9562

nicole.b.shannon@espn.com or 860-766-1701

emmanuel.barrow@espn.com or 202-450-8605

4. Is there a basic manual describing how to set up an XDS receiver and to use the scheduling web site?

Yes. Go to

<https://myxdsreceiver.espn.com/aff/Documentation/ESPN%20XDS%20Satellite%20Receiver%20Configuration%20Information.pdf>

5. If I lose audio from XDS for whatever reason is there another way to get the ESPN Radio audio stream?

Yes. Go to <https://www.espn.com/radio/play> . This consumer-facing stream does not contain the correct commercials for your radio broadcast clearance obligation, but will give you an audio stream in a pinch. Of course, you will need to tie up a computer to receive it.

6. I need to set up a new radio studio location where I expect to use an XDS receiver, but I will not have a satellite downlink dish. Can I still receive ESPN?

Yes. All ESPN Radio XDS programming is available via web streams that your XDS receiver can understand. This is a broadcaster-centric feed that includes proper network commercials, Netcue contact closures and live Special Events when they occur. These broadcaster streams can only be received on an XDS receiver. You cannot use a computer to receive them.

The audio quality (bit rate) is the same on satellite and internet.

When receiving internet streams on your XDS unit, by default, live shows are delayed 30 seconds. Shows that you elected to delay in your XDS receiver will play back at the exact time you designated as long as the delay you set is at least 30 seconds later than the live network feed.

You can set the streaming delay to be less than 30 seconds by using the web site <https://myxdsreceiver.espn.com> . If you have a stable internet connection with few slow-downs, you can probably set the streaming delay to be as little as 10 seconds.

Internet transmission is generally less reliable than satellite. Neither the affiliate nor ESPN control the entire internet transmission pathway to you. Internet Service Providers can interrupt or degrade service, accidentally or on purpose, at any time, without warning.

As always with XDS, affiliates can log in to <https://myxdsreceiver.espn.com> to adjust what programming you receive, whether live or delayed, and to switch to and from Special Events (play by play games).

As of late 2023, about 7% of ESPN Radio affiliates are using XDS streaming instead of satellite.

7. Where do I find a list of ESPN Radio Netcues and their functions?

Go to

https://myxdsreceiver.espn.com/aff/Documentation/ESPN%20Affiliate%20Netcue%20Information_20210223.pdf . It is a downloadable one-page PDF file.

8. How do I find out when live play-by-play games and events are scheduled?

In addition to any e-mails you may receive from ESPN Radio, there are three other places you can look:

(a) Log on to <https://radioaz.espn.co/espn-radio-pxp-xds-channels-netcues-for-this-week-2/> . Games are usually listed in the grid on this page about a week ahead of air time, and include details like start time, participating team names, and which format clock and Netcues to use.

(b) An additional schedule grid with details for each sport is listed behind this page: <https://radioaz.espn.co/live-events/> . Click on the sport you want first, then look for links under "Schedule".

(c) You can also see a list of games in XDS at <https://myxdsreceiver.espn.com> . You will need to visit that site every week to schedule the Special Events you want. Once logged in, go to **Programming and Scheduling > Special Events**. The XDS view does not contain details like game brand names (such as "Fiesta Bowl") nor opponents (such as "Alabama vs Michigan") nor a start time.

If a sports league or a rainout cancels a game at the last minute, this will NOT be reflected on the grid or in the list in XDS. The rained-out game will simply not start on that day.

If the game is rescheduled, it will appear again, on its new broadcast date, on the grid at <https://radioaz.espn.co/espn-radio-pxp-xds-channels-netcues-for-this-week-2/> .

9. What happens if I schedule two play-by-play Special Events that overlap in time?

Your XDS receiver audio port will play whichever game starts first, in its entirety, including the post-game show. Then it will switch to the later-starting game, in progress. You can also schedule a third or fourth game the same day, and the same rule will apply until the last overlapping game ends.

10. In my market, there will be a particular game that is important to my audience because a hometown team is playing. That game is not the first overlapping game of the day, but I want that game to “butt in” whenever it starts, interrupting whatever game is in progress on my radio station at the time, and to ignore the rule above. How do I schedule that?

There is no automated feature in XDS to handle this case. You'll probably want to assign a board operator to run your air studio during this time. We recommend that the important game be placed on a separate receiver port - and on a separate fader - so your board operator can get to it quickly.

If you don't have enough XDS receiver ports authorized to get play-by-play Special Events for cases like this, please call us in advance at 888-564-2539, option 3, and we will assign an engineer to set up a port for you.

11. In <https://myxdsreceiver.espn.com> , I see that Special Events are listed twice, once in the main Program List tab, and once in the Special Events tab. Can't I just use either one?

No. If you use the game listing from the main Program List tab, you will not like the results. Each Special Event is assigned a block of time, usually 12 to 14 hours, which is far longer than the actual game. Most of that 12 to 14 hours will be silent, with the real event, including its pre-game and post-game shows, contained somewhere in the middle. If you schedule the entire time block from the main Program List tab, you will broadcast many hours of silence before and after the game.

Please use the separate Special Events tab, which takes into account the actual game start and end times.

12. Where do I find format clocks for ESPN Radio programs?

Format clocks for **24x7 studio talk shows** are at <https://radioaz.espn.co/programming-schedule/> . You'll need to log in, and scroll down to see them in the right-hand column.

Format clocks for **Special Events and live play-by-play** are at <https://radioaz.espn.co/live-events/> . You'll need to click on a sport to get to the correct page, then look for **Formats** in the right-hand column.

13. The commercial clock for play-by-play events is different than for the 24x7 ESPN studio shows. How do I know that a Special Event or play-by-play has started?

Each Special Event has a cue on the published Netcue list called **Start of Game** which you can map in XDS to close a relay contact to tell your automation system that the “game clock” is now in effect.

If a game is rained out, the **Start of Game** Netcue will not be sent and your automation (and your XDS receiver port) will remain on the normal 24x7 format clock.

There is also a published **End of Game** Netcue for each Special Event, which you can use to return your automation to the “normal format clock”.

14. Why is there a program title called Silence in the XDS system?

At some affiliates, there are not enough inputs for all sources to have their own fader or routing switcher position. You may need an XDS receiver audio port to go silent so that it will not interfere with other programming that is mixed with it (or wired in parallel with it) at your station. Choose the Silence program and schedule it to force that receiver port to be silent.

Second use case for Silence: If you are an XDS streaming-only affiliate who does not use satellite, you should also program any unused hours between programs on your receiver ports to carry the Silence program. This prevents the receiver from repeatedly looking for a stream of a program that has already ended (or that has not started yet) which then fills up its log with inaccurate Fault reports. (Filling up the receiver’s log makes it more difficult, or impossible, to troubleshoot your receiver if you have an issue with it later.)

15. I get too many contact closures for local commercial starts when I have a play-by-play event on my main radio station port, while another program is on a second XDS port that drives my web stream. How can I stop those extra cues?

You need to separate the Netcue closures for play-by-play from those for 24x7 studio shows. When an XDS receiver is receiving more than one show at a time (on different ports) the cue closures for ALL of those shows will appear wherever you mapped them on the relay connectors.

First solution: You should separate the closures for the 24x7 studio shows, which are –

237 Start of local break

T98 Rejoin liner

EID Legal ID at :59:50

– from the cues used by play-by-play events by placing them on different physical relays. You also need to separate them onto different cue inputs on your automation system. Wiring the 24x7 cues and the PxP cues in parallel on the same few relays will result in “too many” cues driving your automation at the wrong times.

Second possible solution: When a Special Event game is in progress on your main radio station port, use the **ESPNNews** TV feed as cover programming on your web stream. This program has only one Netcue (**U20** for “ESPNNews Plus HD local break start”, which few affiliates need to use).

In <https://myxdsreceiver.espn.com> , look for the program title **ESPN News Streaming Cover**. If you don't see that title in the Program List tab, call 888-564-2539, option 5, to have your receiver's web-streaming port authorized for it.

Third possible solution: Tune (or schedule) all unused XDS audio ports to Silence when a game is in progress.

16. I made a last-minute edit to a Special Event or other program in the web site

<https://myxdsreceiver.espn.com> . How do I make sure that change is sent to my XDS receiver as quickly as possible?

Within the site, <https://myxdsreceiver.espn.com> go to **Configuration > General**, then click the check box next to “**Steer my audio ports to match my program schedule**” and click the gray **Update** button at the bottom (you may need to scroll down to see it).

This only sends the updated schedule to the single receiver you are currently logged in to, not to audio ports that have the same call letters on another receiver (i.e., a backup receiver). If you have 3 receivers mapped to the desired call letters, you'll need to log out, and then log back in again to <https://myxdsreceiver.espn.com> for each additional receiver and do the “Steer my ports” action again.

17. One audio port on my XDS receiver is stuck, and will not change to or from Special Event games. What is wrong?

Someone at your station may have inadvertently locked that port. There are 2 ways to check or fix this:

(a) In front of the receiver: From the main **ESPN logo screen**, go to **Set > Audio Ports** > scroll left or right to the **letter for the port** you want to check > when the **Program** name is showing, press **Set** a second time. If there is a **flashing lock icon** next to the word “Program”, that port is locked. Press the “3” soft key below the display (labeled with an **UNLOCK** icon) to unlock it.

(b) Your engineer or I.T. manager can also unlock a port (or all ports) remotely if they have remote access to the Console serial port on the rear panel, or to the Console page within the receiver's internal web site. Login as **tech radio** or as **admin flash!** Then, at the Hudson prompt, type **PORT UNLOCK,A** (to unlock Port A) or **PORT UNLOCK,ALL** (to unlock all ports).