

Democrats say no upcoming presidential debates on Fox News

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Donald Trump/AP

New York: The Democratic National Committee said Wednesday that it won't pick Fox News to televise one of the upcoming debates being held for its 2020 presidential contenders.

The party chairman, Tom Perez, said he has concluded that the network isn't in a position to host a fair and neutral debate. He cited a New Yorker magazine article released Monday that detailed how some Fox News personalities and President Donald Trump echo each other.

Even before that story, some Democratic activists were complaining about the committee's consideration of Fox as a potential broadcast partner.

Perez has said that it is important for Democrats to expand the electorate and reach all voters, and that was why he had considered Fox. The Democrats have announced 12 debates for later this year; NBC News and CNN are set to broadcast the first two.

Trump weighed in on Twitter, threatening to sit out general election debates on "the Fake News Networks." Trump has frequently slammed NBC, MSNBC and CNN, among others, for their coverage of his presidency.

Fox said it hoped the Democrats would reconsider its decision to host a debate that would be moderated by Chris Wallace, Bret Baier and Martha MacCallum.

"They're the best debate team in the business and they offer candidates an important opportunity to make their case to the largest TV news audience in America, which includes many persuadable voters," said Bill Sammon, senior vice president and managing editor of Fox's Washington bureau.

Evening news anchor Baier tweeted that the decision was "really a shame."

Fox presents a challenge for Democrats running for president. It is usually the most-watched network on cable television, yet many of those viewers are avid Trump fans. For some among the Democratic electorate, even consorting with Fox is a stigma.

Democratic contender Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota senator, appeared on Baier's show Feb. 12. Perez has been interviewed by both Baier and Wallace this year.

The decision is also ominous for Fox. Despite the pro-Trump views of its opinion show hosts and commentators, the network has veteran journalists on the payroll. Also, the prospect of being largely a spectator for the story of who will challenge Trump has to concern its management.

- AP