



TV MIDTERM REPORT CARD

WE ALL KNOW TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. BUT THIS IS GETTING RIDICULOUS

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TV got a lot smarter this fall – and a lot more complicated.

A season that has given viewers something to think about has also been hard to follow, thanks to more changes than there are channels. A handful of expensive fall series got off to inauspicious starts, with the inevitable result: quick cancellation.

Sudden dismissals of heavily promoted programs are now routine in a business driven by high costs and reliant on instant overnight ratings.

Even so, the abruptness of some fiats – the

death sentence handed the Ray Liotta/Virginia Madsen crime saga *Smith* after just three episodes, for example – has taken observers by surprise.

And then there are the last-minute schedule changes, the sudden shuffling of programs judged to be in trouble, the delay of some returning favourites and the last-minute insertion of others that weren't supposed to reappear until midseason.

The problem for viewers at home has been keeping track of it all.

For every new series that is cancelled or

moved to a new night to shore up flagging performance, another program is pencilled in at short notice.

The result has been a primetime schedule that has been harder to read some nights than a map of Kazakhstan in the original Cyrillic alphabet.

In a bid to make your viewing life a little easier, here's a night-by-night breakdown of what's going on. Remember, as with anything to do with TV, it's subject to change.

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