

Fast Facts



What you need to know about new & emerging trends, platforms or technology

Fast Break

20 Facts on Sports Fandom, Viewership & Advertising Impact





Passionate fandom and scale of sports delivers full-funnel outcomes for brands

Sports fandom runs deep with emotion and engagement, with hundreds of millions of fans gathering to watch events with friends and family while participating in gameday rituals and superstitions.

Live sporting events is **the ultimate appointment viewing** for fans across platforms, as they tune in ‘real time’ and stay connected to their favorite teams and leagues.

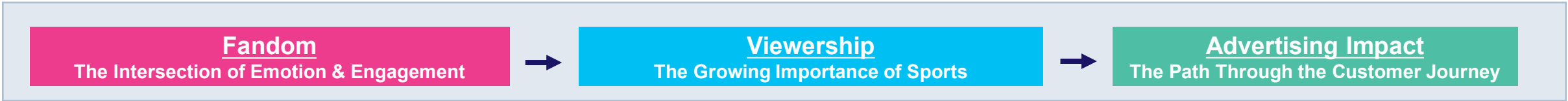
Passionate fandom extends beyond the game, as they’re also attentive to the advertising that surrounds their favorite teams and sports. Sports, and their passionate fans, drive **outcomes for brands across each stage of the customer journey**.

Get your head in the game and dive in to find out more!

In this report, we will focus on three critical aspects of sports – **fandom**, **viewership** and **advertising impact**



20 Fast Facts on Sports Today



1
84% of U.S. adults identify themselves as a sport fan

2
Fandom encourages obsessive emotion and high, habitual engagement

3
Fandom creates touchpoints across multiscreen content, well beyond the game

4
Women's sports is not just a moment, it's a movement

5
The average sports fan follows multiple sports throughout the year

6
Sports is a popular content hub on connected TVs, which helps further fandom

7
Live sports telecasts on TV have increased by 14% over the last five years

8
Sports' share of TV imps have more than doubled among adults 18-34

9
Sports is the ultimate appointment viewing as they're watched in 'real time'

10
Nearly nine out of ten sports fans prefer watching live sports on TV

11
64% of CTV viewers watch sports through both traditional TV & streaming

12
Live digital sports viewers continue to grow as leagues expand across platforms

13
CTV app access points are growing, while further opportunities exist with FAST

14
Sports streaming audiences are growing by double-digits

15
Out-of-home viewing gives a sizeable boost to sports ratings

16
Sports creates relevancy for advertisers, especially SMBs and local businesses

17
Live sports is proven to drive brand consideration for advertisers

18
Many fans are very likely to try products from official league sponsors

19
Almost half of avid fans have purchased products they've seen advertised

20
Measurement innovations are better quantifying the value of sports content

1

Sports Fandom

The Intersection of Emotion & Engagement



1

84% of U.S. adults identify themselves as a sports fan, a group that is representative of the U.S. population across both gender and age



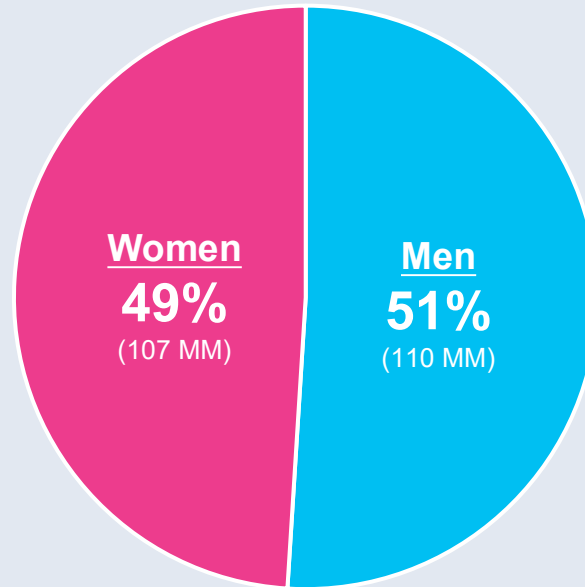
217 million

U.S. adults are **sports fans**

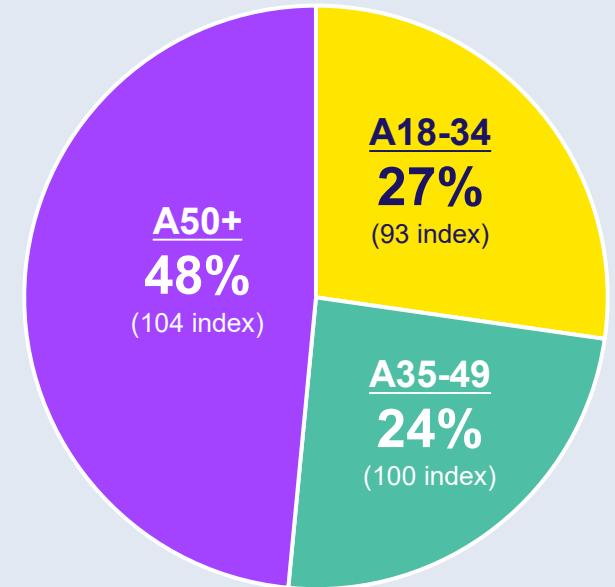
which accounts for **84%** of U.S. adults

U.S. Adult Sports Fans by Demo

Gender



Age Group



Source: VAB analysis of MRI-Simmons Winter 2025 Study, A18+, Men 18+, Women 18+, A18-34, A35-49 & A50+. Base = 'Sports Fan' - Interest in Sports (Any), interest levels 1-10. Index vs. U.S. population.

2

Sports fandom encourages **obsessive emotion** and creates **high, habitual engagement**

% of sports fans that...



Nearly 60%

say **rituals** (like wearing their lucky jersey) **and superstitions play some role in their fandom**



56%

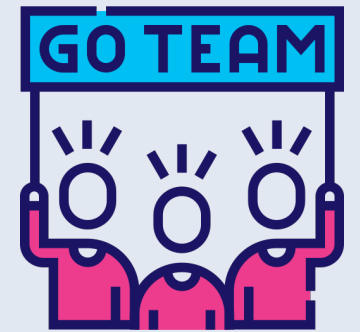
watch some type of **sporting event at least once a week**

(Sports fans spend **3.2 hours** watching sports content weekly on average)*



51%

reported that their **favorite team or athlete's performance affects their overall mood** at least **moderately**



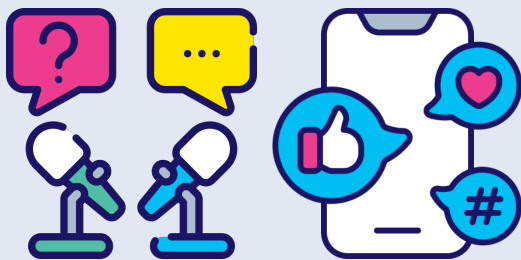
46%

say they show off their fandom by **getting together with friends and family**

Source: PMG, *State of Sports Report - Beyond the Game: Connecting with the Modern Sports Fan*, May 2025. *Comcast Advertising, *Behind the Remote: A Deep Dive into Sports Viewership & Fandom*, October 2024. Base: Watched sports content (game, highlights, talk show, etc.) in the past six months.

3

While live sports action is the centerpiece, fandom goes well beyond the game creating **additional touchpoints across multiscreen content**



69%

of Americans **engage with sports content outside of the game** (talk shows, social media, etc.)



Source: Comcast Advertising, *Behind the Remote: A Deep Dive into Sports Viewership & Fandom*, October 2024. Base: Watched sports content (game, highlights, talk show, etc.) in the past six months.

4

With mainstream audience interest and a desire for even more content, women's sports is not just a moment, it's a movement

*“What really sets sports apart from everything else is that it's **truly appointment viewing**, and I think this is what makes it **so appealing to advertisers**.”*

- Michelle Auguste, Global Media Insights Team, NBA Advertising Week New York 2024

185MM

Adults 18+ are interested in women's sports*

60MM

Adults 18+ are more interested in women's sports than last year**

108MM

Fans wish there was more media coverage of women's sports***

67%

of women sports fans make it a point to support brands that invest in women's sports***

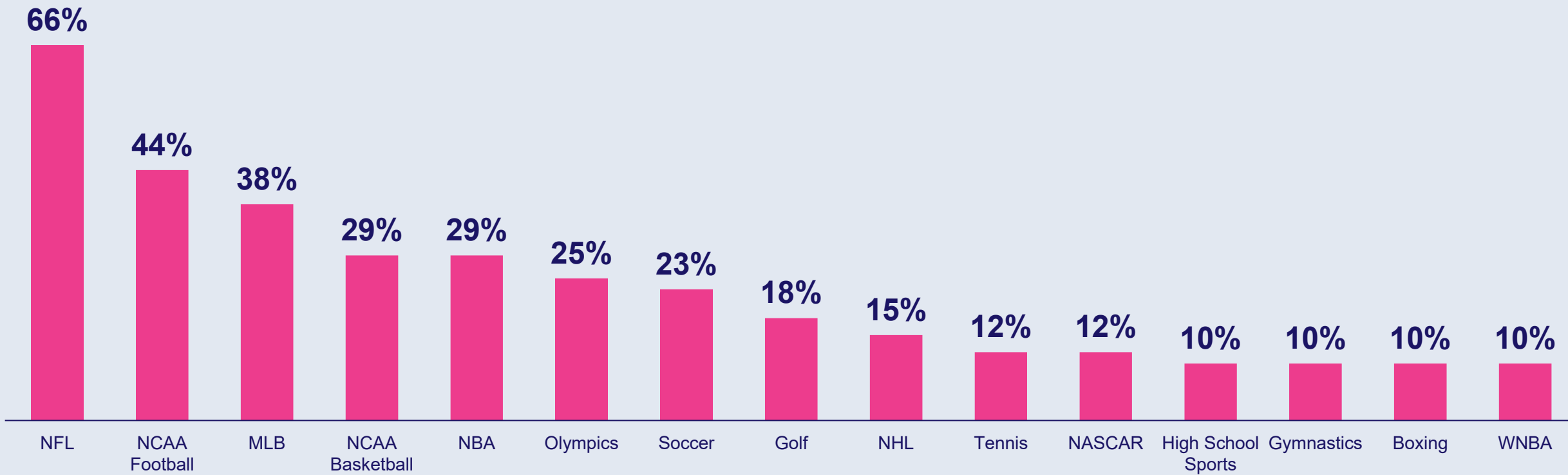
Source: VAB analysis of 2024 Fall MRI-Simmons USA Study, A18+. *Reflects respondents who are 'very interested', 'somewhat interested' or 'a little bit interested' in the following women's sports. **VAB analysis of MRI-Simmons 2024 Q4 Trending Topics Study, A18+. ***SBJ, Horizon Sports & Experiences releases study on women's sports growth, 2/4/2024. To learn more, click here to download our Question of the Week -'How can I capitalize on the growing interest in women's sports?'

5

The average sports fan typically follows multiple sports, which allows brands to reach highly engaged sports audiences throughout the year

▶ According to Comcast data, the average sports fan watches 3 different leagues*

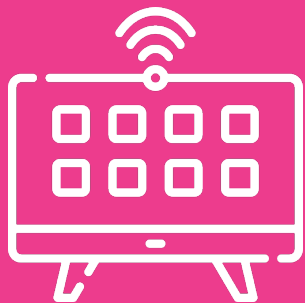
Which of the following sports have you watched on TV/online in the last 12 months?
% of Live Sports Viewers



Source: VAB analysis of MRI-Simmons, Winter 2025 study, Base: 'Live Sports Viewers' - Has watched live sports on TV/online in the last 12 months. *Comcast Advertising, *Behind the Remote: A Deep Dive into Sports Viewership & Fandom*, October 2024. Base: Watched sports content (game, highlights, talk show, etc.) in the past six months.

6

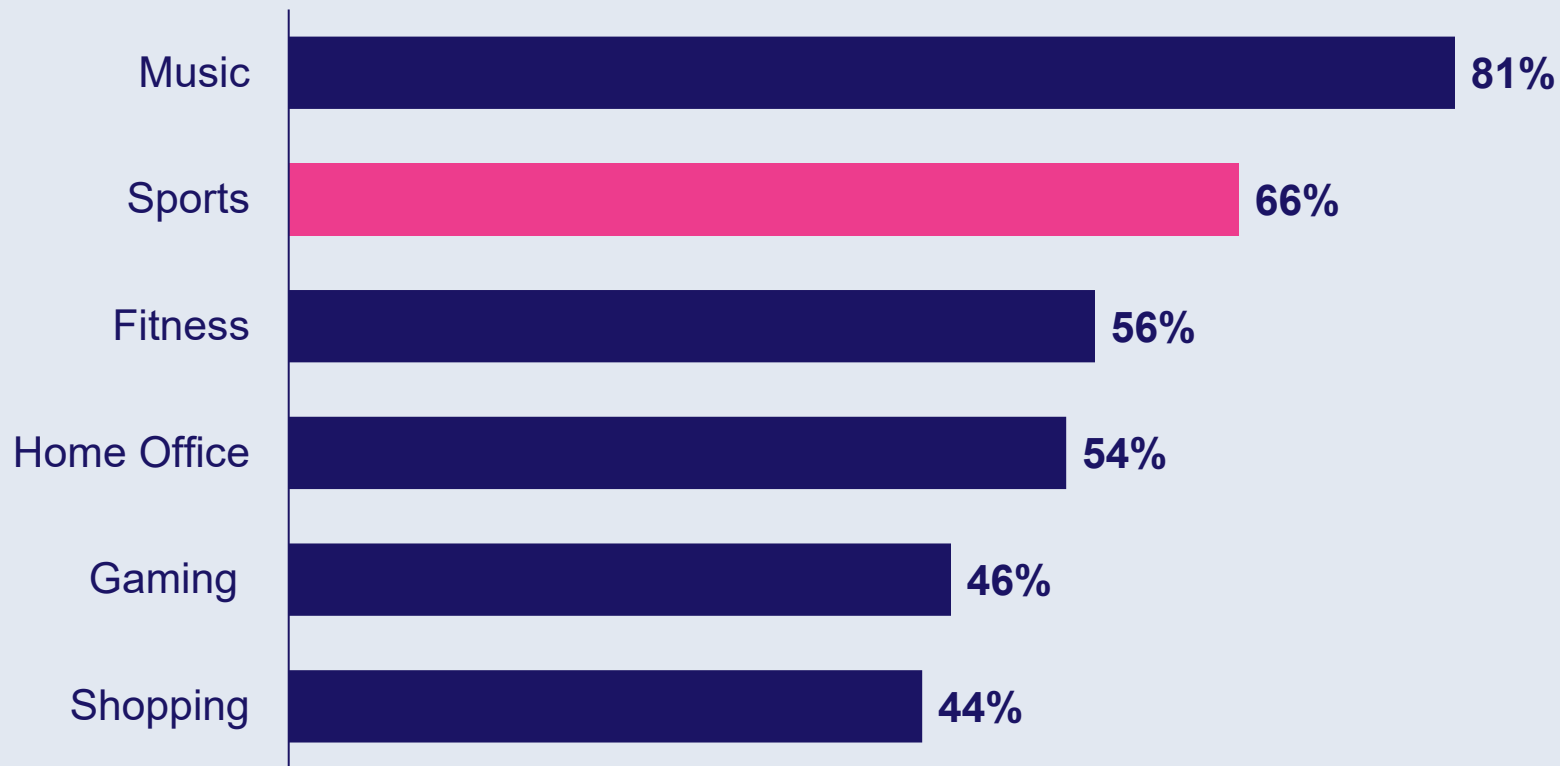
Sports is the **second most popular content hub on connected TVs**, which curates content and helps viewers further fuel their fandom



40%

of CTV viewers rely on the **TV Home Screen for content recommendation**

TV's Built-In Content Hubs Most Likely to Use



Source: LG Ad Solutions, *The Big Shift 2025: U.S. Edition*, April 2025. Note: Aided choices.

2

Viewership

The Growing Importance of Sports



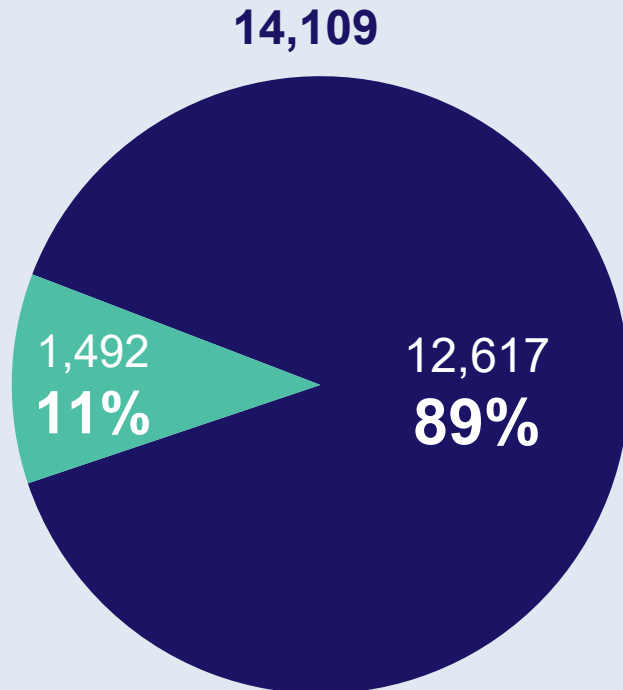
7

Live sports telecasts on broadcast TV and ad-supported cable TV have **increased by 14%** over the last five years

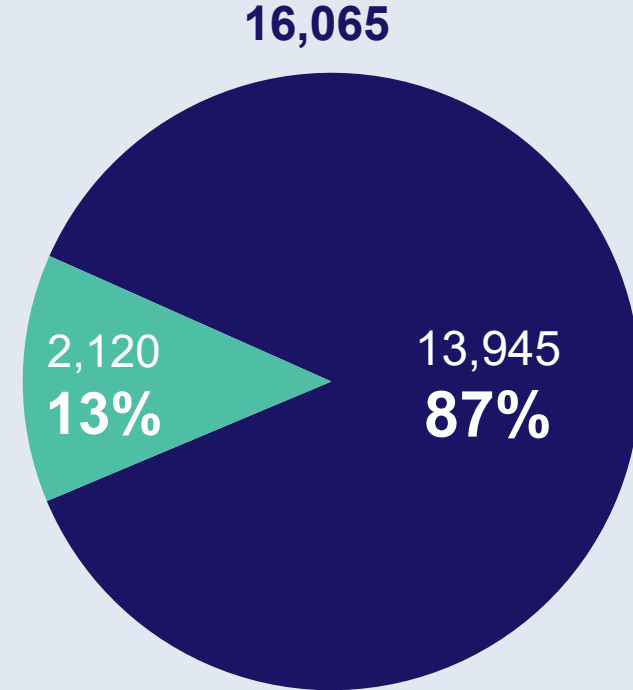
of National TV Live Sports Telecasts

■ Ad-Supported Cable TV ■ Broadcast TV

January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019



January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024



+14%
(+1,956)

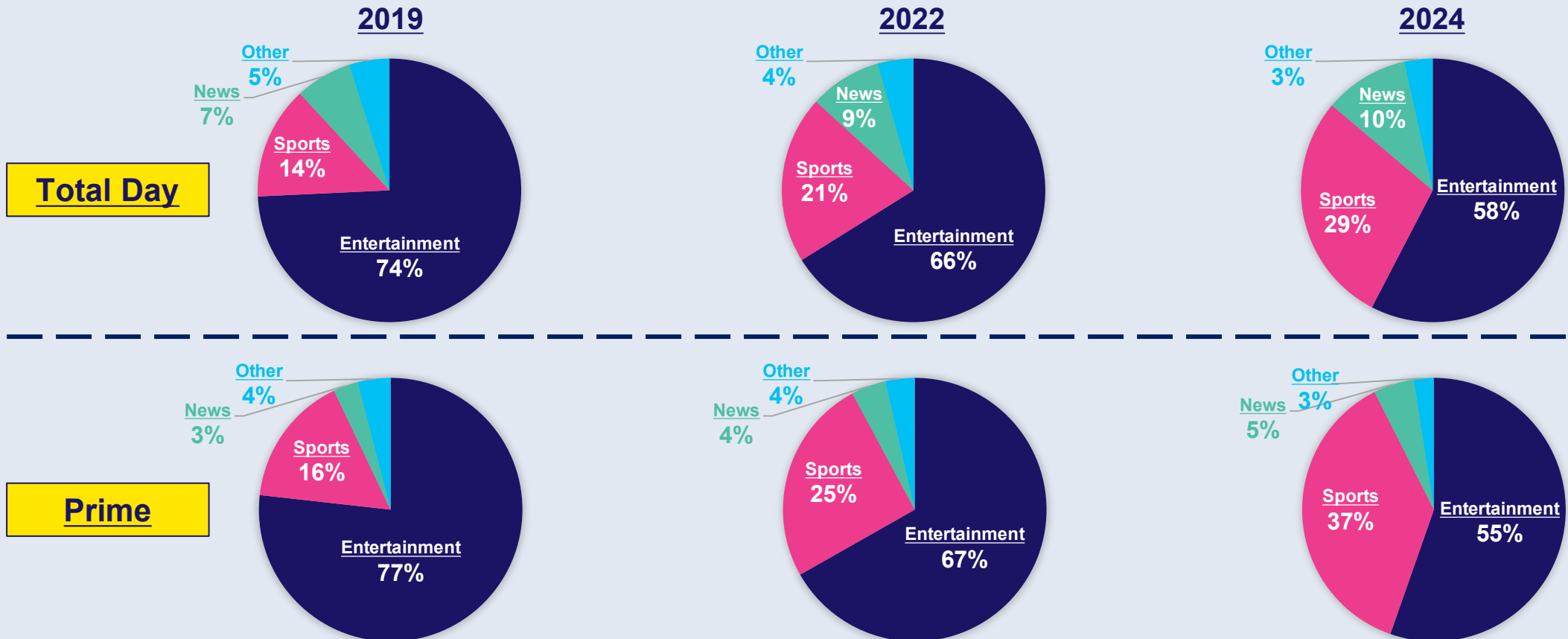
Source: VAB analysis of Nielsen NPower Ratings Analysis Program Report, Total Day, January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019; January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024; includes Spanish language networks; excludes regional sports networks, local broadcast airings and digital airings of sports through MVPD / network TV apps. Reflects live sporting events only. Telecast count Includes simulcasts of sports events across multiple networks, Spanish language networks, etc.

8

The share of sports within total TV impressions has **more than doubled** among adults 18-34 in both total day and prime over the last five years

National TV Equivalized Ad IMPs by Program Genre: Adults 18-34

Broadcast TV + ad-supported cable TV



Source: VAB analysis of Nielsen Ad Intel, as of 5/23/25. National TV: broadcast & cable TV including Spanish-Language TV networks, excludes PSAs and promos. 1/1/19 – 12/31/19; 1/1/22 – 12/31/22; 1/1/24 – 12/31/24. Nielsen program genres were rolled up into four groups. Entertainment - comedy, drama, film, kids, music, specials, variety / game shows; news – news, news documentaries, political; sports – live events, commentary shows, anthologies; other – instructional, devotional, varied format, unclassified.

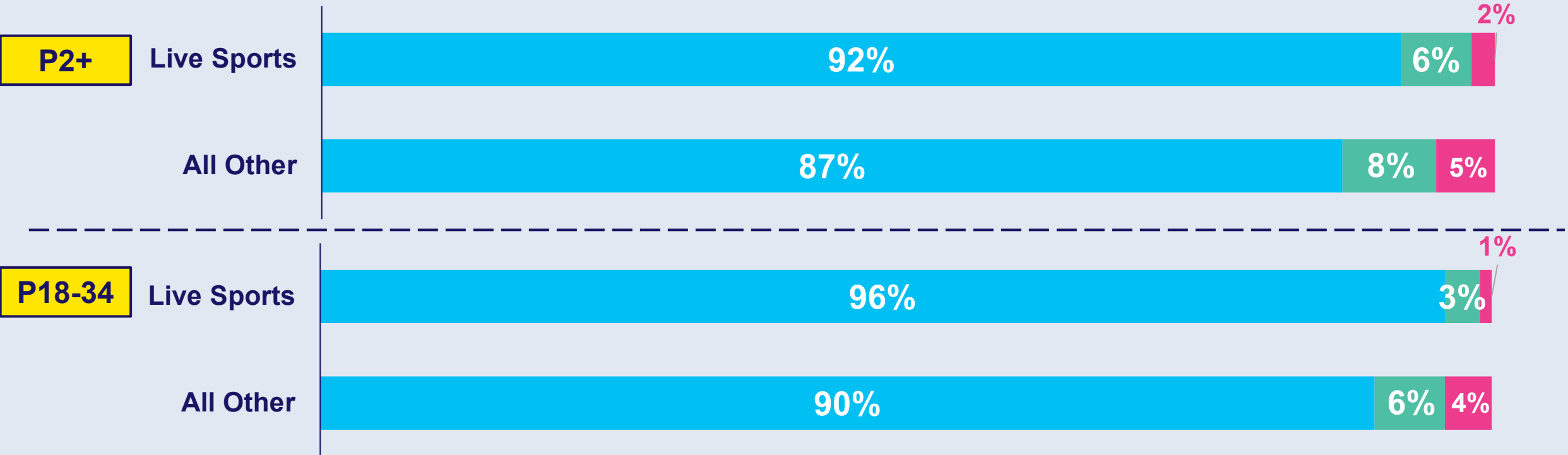
9

Sports is the **ultimate appointment viewing** as live events are watched almost entirely in ‘real time’ on broadcast and cable TV

National TV Telecasts: Viewership By Stream

% of Total Viewing Hours, May 2025

■ Live ■ Live+SD ■ Live+7



Source: VAB analysis of Nielsen NPower R&F Program Report, Total Day, P2+ & P18-34, ad-supported cable TV & broadcast TV, May 1, 2025 – May 31, 2025; includes Spanish language networks; excludes regional sports networks, local broadcast airings and digital airings of sports through MVPD / network TV apps. Reflects live sporting events only. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

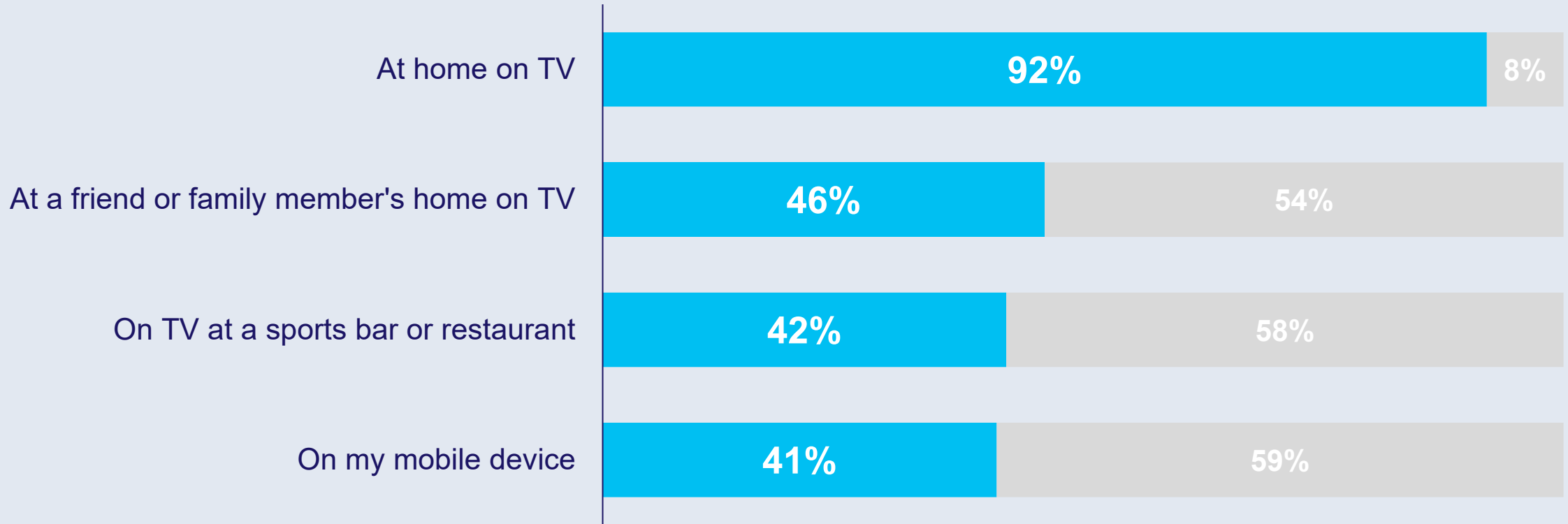
10

Nearly nine out of ten sports fans prefer watching live sports on TV whether it's at home, at someone else's place or at their 'third place'

▶ 85% of fans prefer watching live sports on TV rather than in-person

Where Sports Fan Watch Live Sports

■ At Least Half of the Time ■ Less Than Half of the Time

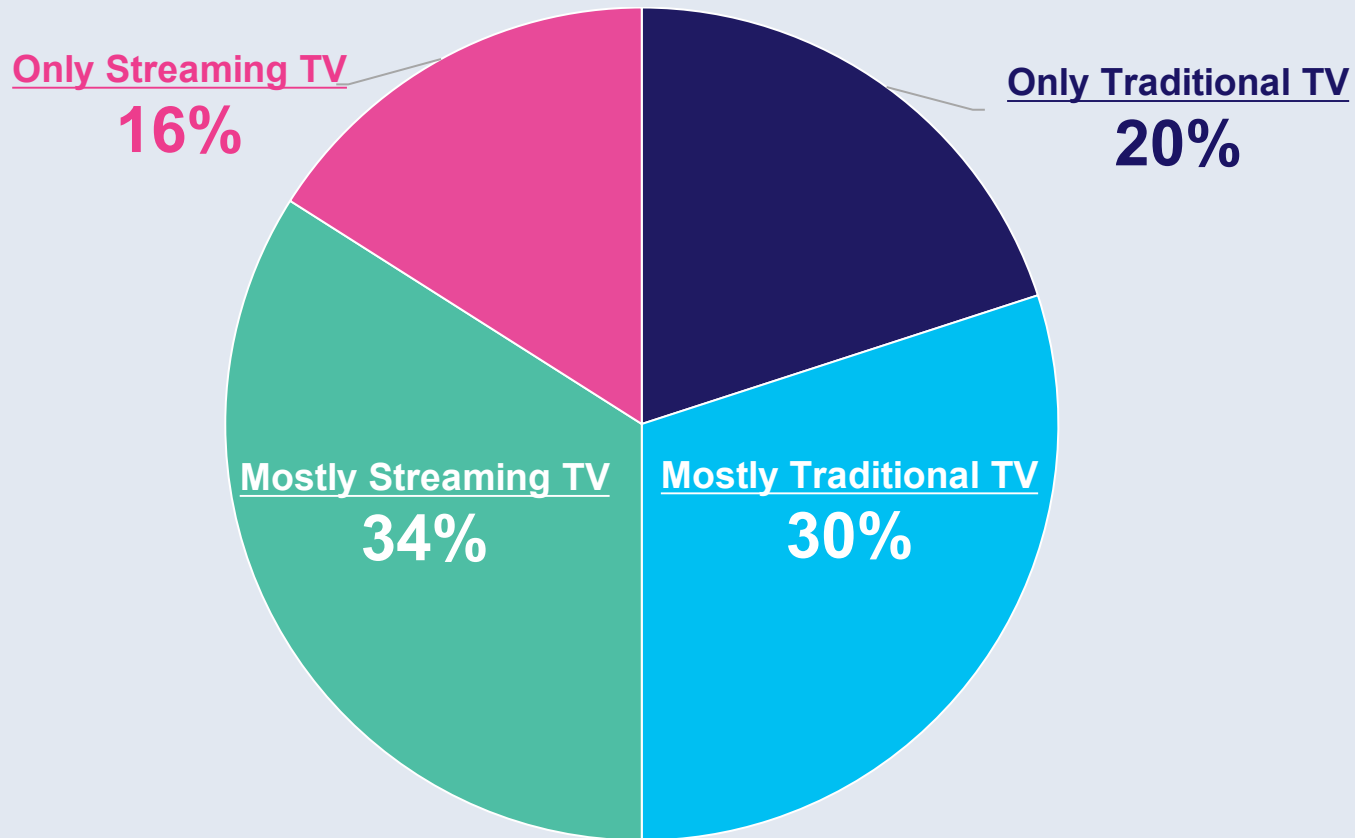


Source: Comcast Advertising, *Behind the Remote: A Deep Dive into Sports Viewership & Fandom*, October 2024. Base: Watched sports content (game, highlights, talk show, etc.) in the past six months.

11

64% of CTV viewers watch sports through a combination of traditional TV and streaming which shows the strength of multiplatform access

How US Connected Sports Viewers Watch Live Sporting Events



Source: LG Ad Solutions, *Stadium to Screen: Streaming Live Sports in 2025*, February 2025

12

Live digital sports viewers are steadily growing at an average annual rate of 9% as leagues and events continue to expand across platforms

U.S. Live Digital Sports Viewers
In Millions



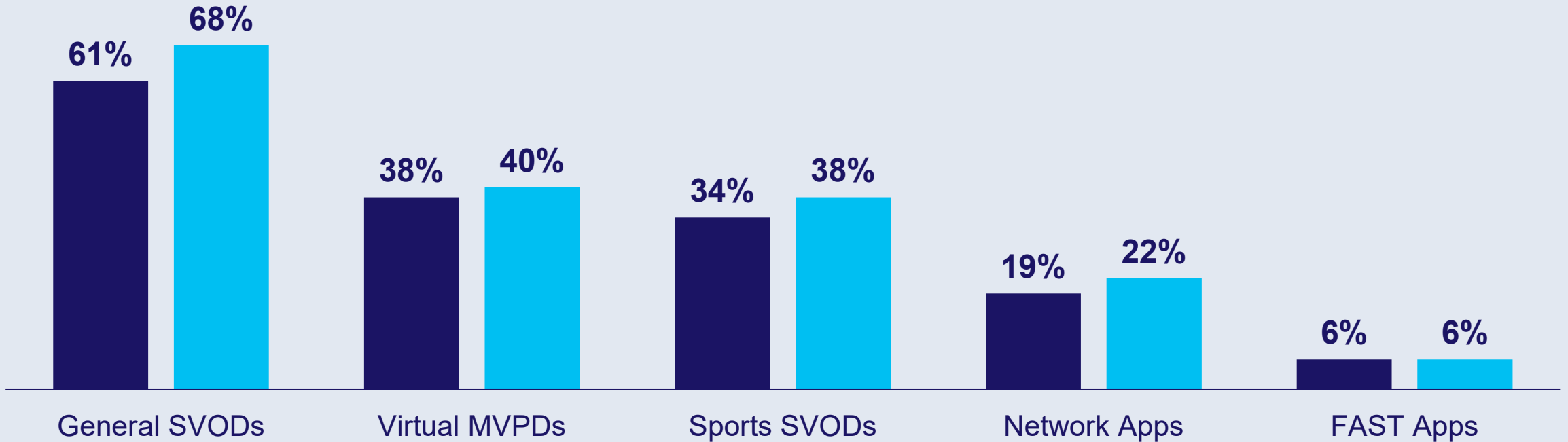
Source: EMARKETER, *Live Sports Viewers Increasingly Embrace Digital*, September 2024. Sports viewers are individuals who watch live sports content at least once per month over the course of the season of at least one sport via referenced distribution methods; excludes highlight viewing and viewing of non-live content; excludes esports & Olympic content. Digital includes platforms such as OTT, TV Everywhere and vMVPDs.

13

All CTV app distribution methods continue to grow while a major opportunity exists to expand sports exposure on FAST services

CTV Apps Used to Stream Sports

■ 2024 ■ 2025



Source: LG Ad Solutions, *Stadium to Screen: Streaming Live Sports in 2025*, February 2025

14

Sports streaming audiences are growing by double-digits, however comparative viewership is still not as large as broadcast TV yet

P2+ Average Audience (Weekly Average, Per Min) 2024 Exclusive Streaming Games vs. 2023 Comparable Games




Peacock Exclusive
9/6 Packers @ Eagles

14.0 MM

+91%
vs. 2023

12/23 Bills @ Chargers (Peacock)



Black Friday
11/29 Raiders @ Chiefs

13.5 MM

+41%
vs. 2023

11/24 Dolphins @ Jets (Amazon Prime)



Christmas
Chiefs @ Steelers
Ravens @ Texans

24.3 MM

-16%
vs. 2023

Raiders @ Chiefs (CBS)
Giants @ Eagles (Fox)

Source: VAB analysis of Nielsen Ratings Analysis Program Report, Peacock Exclusive (Peacock Streaming Data), Black Friday (Amazon Prime (incl local broadcast for in-game markets only)), Christmas (Exclusive game on Netflix). Live+SD_P2+_Panel data. **CBS and Fox reflects linear TV audience only and does not include audiences gained from their digital / app streaming.** The comparable games reflect the same event or streaming service that aired NFL primetime games in 2023. The Christmas two games on Netflix is compared to the Christmas games that aired on linear TV in 2023 at the same daypart (afternoon games). [To learn more about the 2024 NFL Season Viewership Trends, click here to download VAB's 'Huddle Up' report.](#)

15

Out-of-home viewing gives a sizeable boost to sports, especially during holidays, which maximizes brand impact during key periods

▶ 73% of fans watch regular season games in **groups of 3+ people**, which is even higher for playoffs or championships*

Out-of-Home Contribution to P2+ Average NFL Audience 2024 Full Season 'NFL Primetime' Games (Weekly Average)



+10.0%

Average Viewership Contribution



Halloween
+10.6%



Black Friday
+20.4%



Day After Christmas
+13.9%



+9.8%

Average Viewership Contribution



Peacock Exclusive (9/6)
+16.3%



Thanksgiving
+27.6%



w/o Christmas
+10.7%



+6.5%

Average Viewership Contribution



Doubleheader (9/23)
+7.4%



w/o Christmas
+9.7%



New Years Eve
+8.5%

Source: VAB analysis of Nielsen Ratings Analysis Program Report, Sunday Night Football (NBC, Universo, Telemundo), Monday Night Football (ESPN, ESPN2, ESPN Deportes, ABC) and Thursday Night Football (Amazon (incl. local broadcast for in-game markets only)), excludes pre- & post-game shows, Live+SD, P2+, Panel data. NBC, Universo, Telemundo, ESPN, ESPN2, ESPN Deportes and ABC reflects linear TV audience only and does not include audiences gained from their digital / app streaming. The full season comparison reflect all weeks in the regular season (9/12-12/26 for TNF; 9/5 – 12/29 for SNF; 9/9 – 12/30 for MNF). NBC Sunday Night Football includes Universo and Telemundo simulcast viewership and exclusive viewership on Peacock on 9/6). ESPN Monday Night Football includes ESPN2 and ESPN Deportes simulcast viewership. Note: ESPN MNF data also includes ABC simulcast data. MNF weeks 3, 4 and 15 include two matchups on broadcast (ABC) and Cable (ESPN, ESPN2, ESPN Deportes); MNF week 7 includes exclusive game streamed on ESPN+. See [appendix](#) for schedule and single game details. *Comcast Advertising, *Behind the Remote: A Deep Dive into Sports Viewership & Fandom*, October 2024. Base: Watched sports content (game, highlights, talk show, etc.) in the past six months. [To learn more about the 2024 NFL Season Viewership Trends, click here to download 'Huddle Up'.](#)

3

Advertising Impact

The Path Through the Customer Journey



16

Live sports creates relevant and related opportunities to connect with fans, especially for small and localized businesses

Sports Fans' Perceptions of Ads During Live Games



57%
prefer when ads are related to / compliment the sport they're watching

52%
like to see ads for small businesses when watching live sports

50%
can relate to the ads shown during live sports

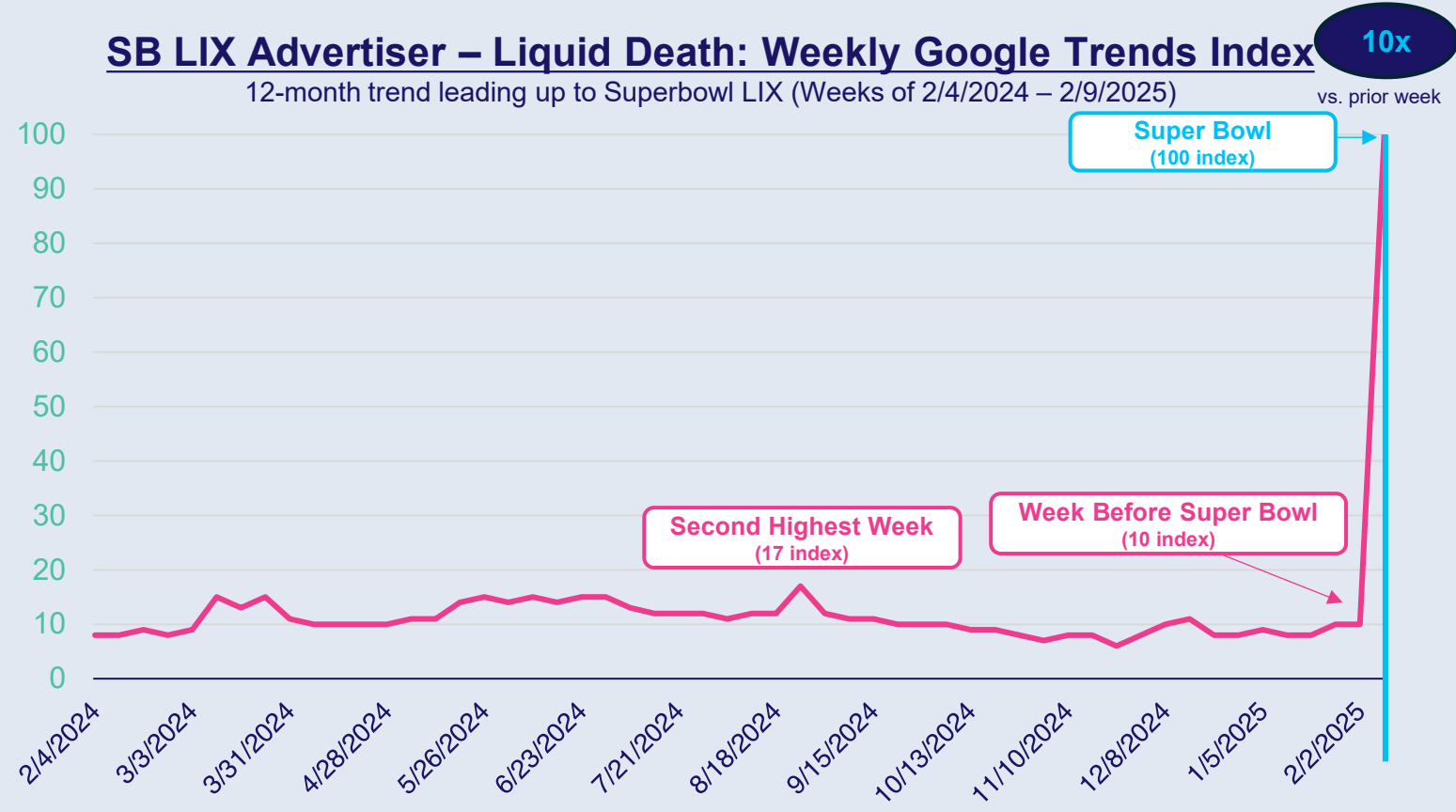
48%
agree there are just the right amount of ads shown during games

Source: Comcast Advertising, *Behind the Remote: A Deep Dive into Sports Viewership & Fandom*, October 2024. Base: Watched sports content (game, highlights, talk show, etc.) in the past six months.

17

Live sports is proven to drive mid-funnel results like online branded search for advertisers looking to expand their customer base

▶ Search increased 10x on Super Bowl night vs. week prior and was almost 6x higher than the second highest week over the last 12 months



Download our full report to see [search results the 15 Super Bowl advertisers we analyzed](#)

Source: VAB analysis of Google Trends, United States only, All Categories, Web Search, Weeks of 2/4/24 – 2/9/25. Google Search Index represents search interest relative to the highest point on the chart for the given region and time period, a value of 100 is the peak popularity for the term, a value of 50 means that the term is half as popular. Note: Light blue line marks the date of Super Bowl LIX. Click here to view Liquid Death's Super Bowl commercial (via iSpot.tv).

Liquid Death

“While we have a massive audience of loyal fans, the Super Bowl is a great opportunity to **introduce ourselves to new people** and **educate everyone** about our entire line of healthy beverages.”

Andy Pearson
VP of Creative, *Liquid Death*
(Muse by Clios, 2/9/25)

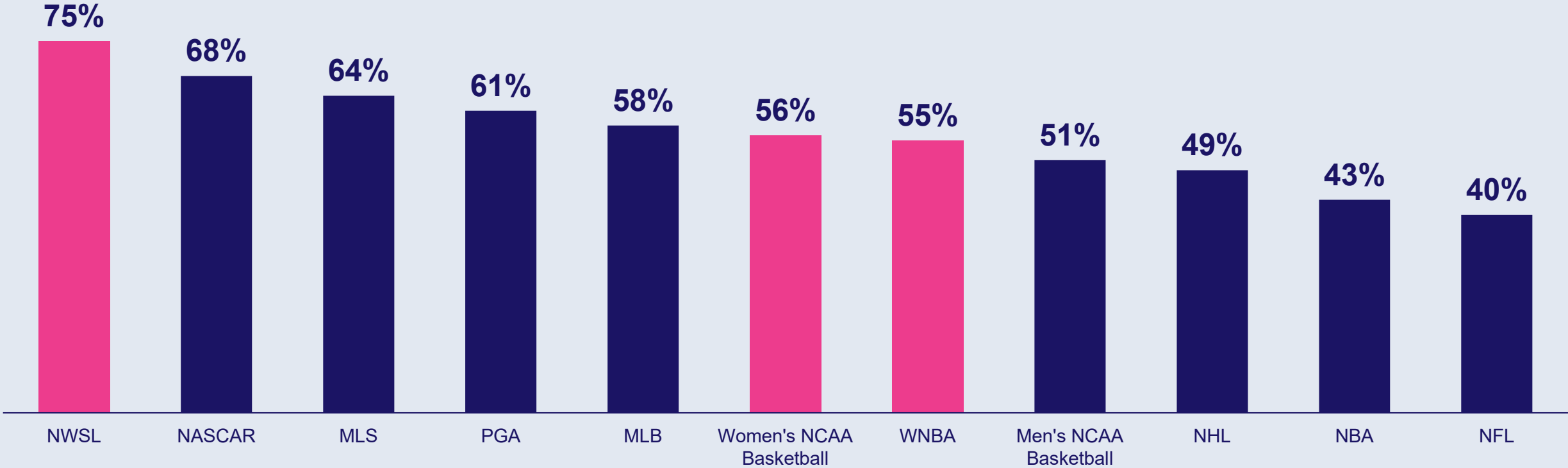
“[There is] no cheaper way to reach over **100 million unique people** who want to pay attention to the commercials.”

Mike Cessario
CEO, *Liquid Death*
(Adweek, 2/9/25)

18

Fandom extends beyond the screen as league fans are **very likely to try official sponsors' products**, especially among women's sports

Fan's Likelihood to Try the Products of an Official League Sponsor
2024 Season



Source: Marketcast, *Women's History Month: Sports Fandom Study*, March 2025

19

Almost half of all avid sports fans have purchased a product they've seen advertised while watching live sports



39% / 46%

of average / avid sports fans purchased a product that they saw while watching live sports



Source: Comcast Advertising, *Behind the Remote: A Deep Dive into Sports Viewership & Fandom*, October 2024. Base: Watched sports content (game, highlights, talk show, etc.) in the past six months. 47% of sports fans who purchased a product did so because it would enhance their game day viewing experience

20

Marketers can leverage data and tech innovations from measurement providers to better quantify the impact and value of sports content

Three Innovations in Sports Measurement



Big Data Usage

The integration of big data in modern measurement solutions provides **more accurate measurement of sports viewership and advertising**

Example Companies

iSpot.tv comscore videoamp
 SAMBA TV INNOVID Nielsen

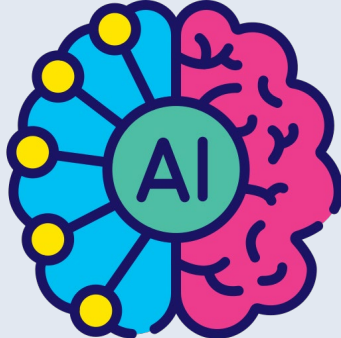


Out-of-Home (OOH) / Location-Based Measurement

Robust identity solutions that tie location data to out of home viewing are increasing marketers' ability to **quantify the full picture of sports viewership**

Example Companies

ATMOSPHERE videoamp relo GSTV
 IN|MARKET FOURSQUARE precisely



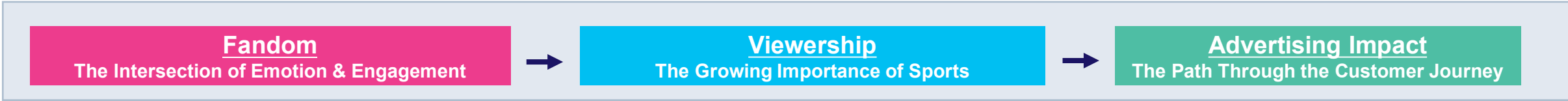
AI & Computer Vision

The innovative use of technologies like AI & computer vision is enabling brands to **analyze the impact of logo placements and sponsorships** in live sports broadcasts and beyond

Example Companies

mediaprobe SAMBA TV relo METRICS

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Measurement innovations are better quantifying the value of sports content

Key Marketer Takeaways

- ▶ There are 217 million sports fans in the U.S. and fandom runs deep within many of them - they're emotionally invested, highly engaged and loyal
- ▶ Sports continues to grow in importance across the video ecosystem and live events are the ultimate appointment viewing which gives brands the opportunity to reach 'leaned in' audiences at scale and in real time
- ▶ With fans attentive and responsive, sports offers a high-performing environment for brands to lead audiences down the path to purchase, especially for relevant and relatable advertisers including SMBs and local businesses

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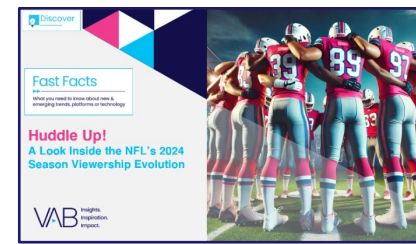
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Check out this related VAB content

Visit our [Multiscreen TV Attribution Resources](#) to learn from the winning marketing strategies of brands who utilize premium video platforms to achieve full-funnel outcomes, ranging from incremental reach to favorability to website visits and sales.



Huddle Up!
A Look Inside the NFL's 2024 Season Viewership Evolution



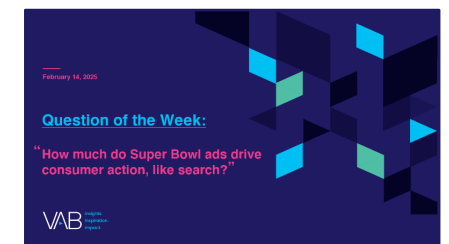
What are the most popular sports to reach audiences through streaming?



The Best Seats In The House
Recreating The Gameday Sports Experience At Home



Bigger, Bolder, More Ad-Supported
25 Streaming Trends That Are Impacting Marketing Plans in 2025



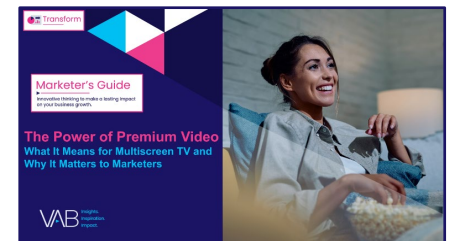
How much do Super Bowl ads drive consumer action, like search?



In a League of Their Own
Exploring the Rising Popularity of Women's Sports



How can I capitalize on the growing interest in women's sports?



The Power of Premium Video
What It Means for Multiscreen TV and Why It Matters to Marketers

About VAB

VAB plays a dual role in the video advertising industry. We are leading the change to bring about a more innovative and transparent marketplace. We also provide the insights and thought leadership that enables marketers to develop business-driving marketing strategies.

Drawing on our marketing expertise, we **simplify** the complexities in our industry and **discover** new insights that **transform** the way marketers look at their media strategy.



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