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STREAMING SUMMIT

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Streaming Summit Happy Hour

Monday, April 20, 5pm-6:30pm

West Hall Convention Center, 3rd Floor Terrace
Open to all NAB Show badges, no RSVP needed.



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The Latest Sports Streaming Viewership Numbers and The Problems With Viewer Measurement

The Biggest Problem? Nielsen.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

CMO TODAY

NBCUniversal Says Nielsen Devalues Media Companies With Inaccurate Metrics

The measurement firm has undercounted traditional TV viewership at the expense of its largest clients, according to some network execs

By [Patrick Coffee](#) [Follow](#)

Updated April 14, 2026 at 1:38 pm ET

NBCU and others rightly complain about Nielsen's metrics, and yet, these same companies continue to use them. Why? NBCU's exec sums it up, saying, "as long as marketers have confidence that Nielsen **is better than the next best alternative**", Nielsen will likely retain its position. So, in other words, **all the platforms stink; it's just about which one stinks less.**

It's been about 31 years since content first started streaming on the internet, and today, companies still can't accurately measure or agree on what makes up a single view. Think about that for a moment. **The currency the entire streaming industry relies on is viewership data, and its foundation is completely broken.**

The Core Problem

- There is no universal metric for live streaming viewership (AMA, concurrent viewers, simultaneous, concurrent devices, unique viewers)
- OTT platforms use their own metric definitions, MAV, MAU, etc.
- Advertisers have limited cross-channel visibility
- Streaming is a technology; SVOD, AVOD, FAST, PPV are service types/business models
- Hard to compare broadcast versus streaming performance, and each requires a unique measurement approach
- Customers reward **simplicity and clarity**, not complexity or "innovation"

Netflix Steps Up to the Plate: MLB Opening Night on Netflix Scores 3 Million US Viewers

NETFLIX



Viewership numbers for MLB's opening night on Netflix (3M AMA) and opening day on NBC, Diamondbacks-Dodgers (3.2M AMA, of which 460,000 came from Peacock). As usual, the metrics being used are not comparable.

- Netflix used Nielsen's Big Data + Panel Live+SD (Live+Same Day) metric, while NBCU used Nielsen's Live+1 ratings and Adobe data.
- Nielsen's big-data measurement is new for the 2025-26 TV season, which skews viewership comparisons to past years and note that AMA does not mean concurrent streams or devices.
- NBC says that because Nielsen does not track its streaming viewership, its combined Nielsen + Adobe audience figures are comparable to Nielsen-only figures for other networks.
- Nationally televised afternoon games on opening day are not common, with this year's games being only the second time it's happened in the past five years.

It's been 11 years since MLB opened the season with a single game: a "Sunday Night Baseball" game between the Cardinals and Cubs in 2015. Netflix said its game had the highest primetime Opening Day viewership among P18–49 and P18–34 since 2017, but it's unknown why they are comparing viewership to a game from 9 years ago, especially since the 2017 game was on TV and only available in the U.S. Netflix's opening night game was streaming only and available globally.

- NBC used Nielsen's Live+1: viewing within 24 hours of the original air time
- Netflix used Nielsen's Big Data + Panel Live+SD : viewed before 3:00 AM local time on the same day

LATEST REPORTED NUMBERS

- April: The NCAA Men's Basketball Championship Game delivered 18.3M viewers across TBS, TNT and truTV, marking the most-watched title game in seven years and the biggest ever for TNT Sports. Viewership peaked at 20.4M. (Doesn't mention HBO Max, but that is included)
- April: NBA on Prime's regular season schedule averaged 1M U.S. viewers across 67 regular-season games. Across the 53 comparable game windows presented on linear networks last season, NBA on Prime averaged 1.09M viewers
- February: NBCU says Peacock had an AMA of 3.3M viewers for the Winter Olympics, accounting for 15% of total audience delivery across digital and linear.

LATEST REPORTED NUMBERS

- 2025: Prime Video finished its inaugural season of exclusive NASCAR Cup Series, and according to Nielsen's Big Data + Panel measurement, NASCAR on Prime posted a season average of 2.16M viewers across five events and peaked at 2.3M.
- Across all NFL viewership stats from broadcasters, NBC is the only broadcaster to break out streaming viewership as a percentage for the entire season. For NBC's 20th season of Sunday Night Football, streaming had an average minute audience (AMA) of 2.5M viewers across Peacock, NBCSports.com, the NBC Sports app, and NFL Digital properties. This was up 17% from the 2.2M AMA for the previous year.
- **World Cup: Most viewers watch on TV via a broadcast channel**, not streaming. In 2022, the final match on FOX had 16.7M viewers, of which 1.28M (AMA) came from streaming. Across all 64 matches, the streaming AMA was 287,064.

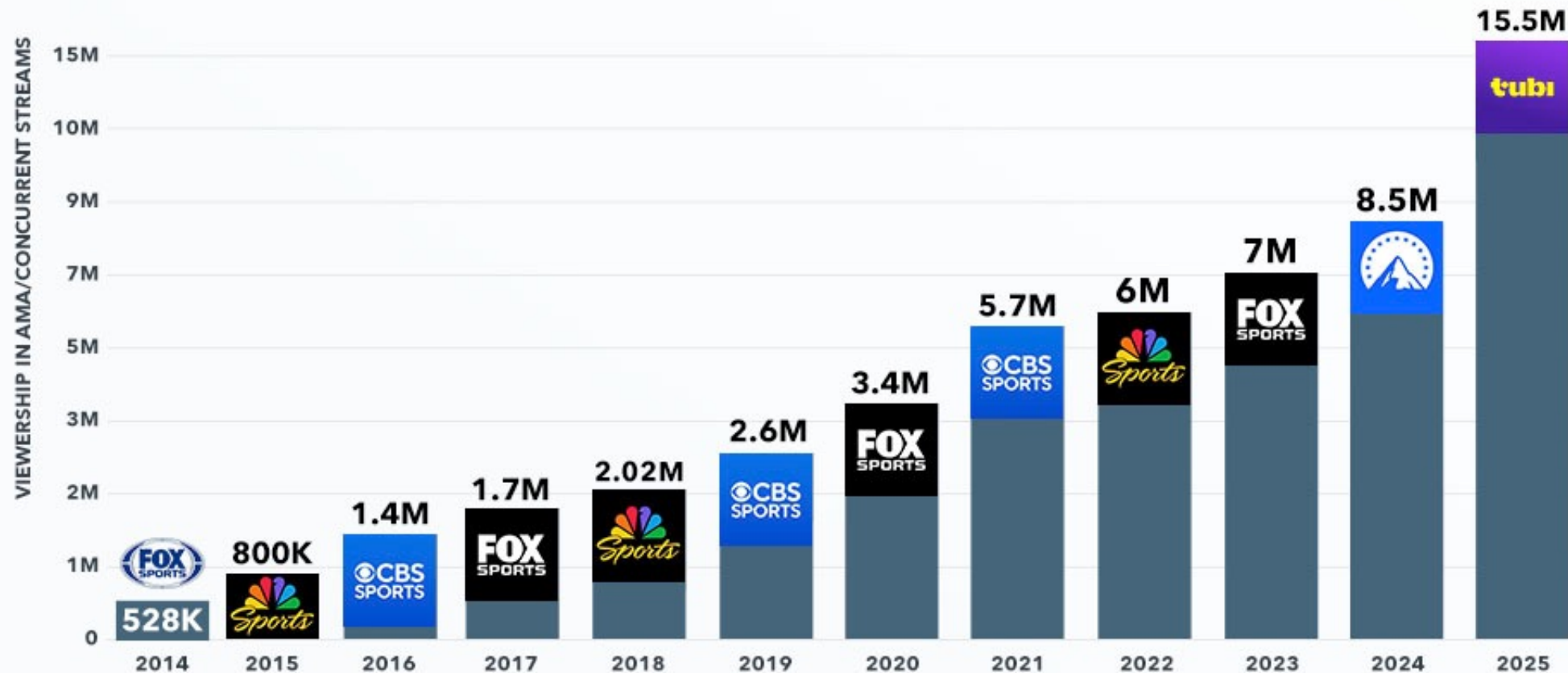
Netflix's NFL Games on Xmas

Netflix released viewership numbers for its NFL games on Christmas, but did not break out viewership just for its platform or streaming. The Lions/Vikings game averaged 30.5M global AMA, with 27.5M viewers from the U.S. and the Cowboys/Commanders game averaged 22.4M global AMA, with 19.9M viewers from the U.S.

The numbers include viewership from streaming on Netflix, NFL Game Pass, NFL+, out-of-home viewing, local-market CBS (broadcast TV) viewing, and the NFL's international distributors. While Netflix is calling the Lions/Vikings game the "most streamed NFL game in history," we don't know what percentage of the viewership was delivered via streaming, and Netflix's 2024 Christmas games had a higher AMA viewership. It's unclear how Netflix is defining "most streamed."

SUPER BOWL STREAMING VIEWERSHIP — 2014-2025

SEE MY POST AT [SUPERBOWLSTREAMING.COM](https://www.superbowlstreaming.com) FOR THE FULL EXPLANATION OF THE NUMBERS



*2012/2013 NOT LISTED DUE TO NO COMPARABLE STATS



DAN RAYBURN

SOME NUMBERS REPORTED ARE AVERAGE MINUTE AUDIENCE (AMA), OTHERS PEAK VIEWERS DOES NOT INCLUDE VIEWERSHIP FROM vMVPDs (YOUTUBE TV, FUBO, HULU + LIVE TV ETC)

2026 Super Bowl: NBC didn't report any streaming viewership numbers, a first for 15 years of the Super Bowl being streamed.

See: [SuperBowlStreaming.com](https://www.superbowlstreaming.com) for a history of all numbers.

*Many report numbers, without taking the time to detail or **understand the methodology.***

If you can't measure it, you can monitor it.

The solution? Use the concurrent stream number provided by CDNs.

Want the real numbers? Follow me on LinkedIn. Search in Google on “largest live streaming events.”

***Dan Rayburn
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