THE 2026 LIVE SPORTS REPORT

Attention, co-viewing and the biggest live events, on streaming and linear TV

TVISION by VIANT.

November 2026



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THE 2026 LIVE SPORTS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

For decades, live sports and linear TV were a package deal. If you wanted the game, you turned on the network. That's changing, and it's changing fast.

Streaming platforms are going all in on live sports, and viewers are following. The biggest live events on streaming this year came from nearly every major platform. Streaming is now doing something linear has always owned: bringing people together to watch sports. Live sports on streaming pull more viewers into the room. Younger viewers are giving the game on streaming the same attention they give linear. That's a clear sign of where the audience is headed.

Linear still holds an edge in some key moments, but the gap is narrowing. For brands, the question is no longer whether live sports works on streaming. It's how to buy them.

That's where reach falls short. A big audience tells you the game was on. It doesn't tell you who was in the room, who was actually watching, or whether anyone saw your ad.

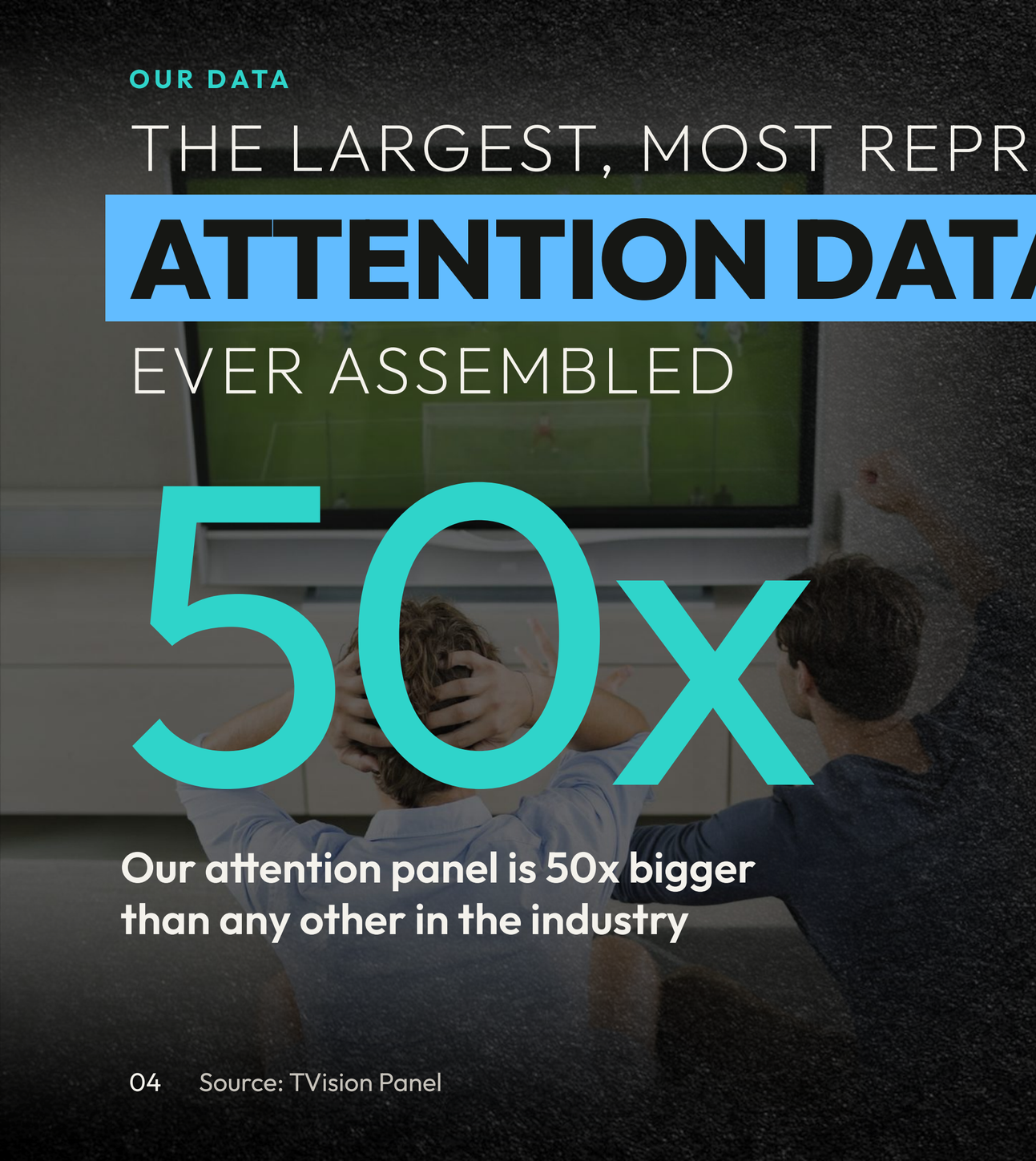
The 2026 Live Sports Report answers those questions. Using second-by-second, person-level data from the largest, most representative attention panel in the industry, TVision looked at how people watch live sports on streaming and linear TV: who shows up, who watches together, when attention peaks and where new ad opportunities are opening up.



OUR DATA

TVISION by VIANT.

THE LARGEST, MOST REPRESENTATIVE ATTENTION DATASET EVER ASSEMBLED



50x

Our attention panel is 50x bigger than any other in the industry

15	**BILLION** **Viewing seconds measured**
14	**MILLION** **Viewing sessions**
350K	**UNIQUE** **Pieces of content measured**

Nationally Representative

A high-quality, U.S. nationally representative panel. Not just the biggest, the best.

Source: TVision Panel

PART 1

STREAMING VS. LINEAR

Attention, co-viewing and who is in the room



05 →
Streaming keeps people in the room



06 →
Linear still wins the break



07 →
Fight Night: the biggest crowds



08 →
Who pays the most attention

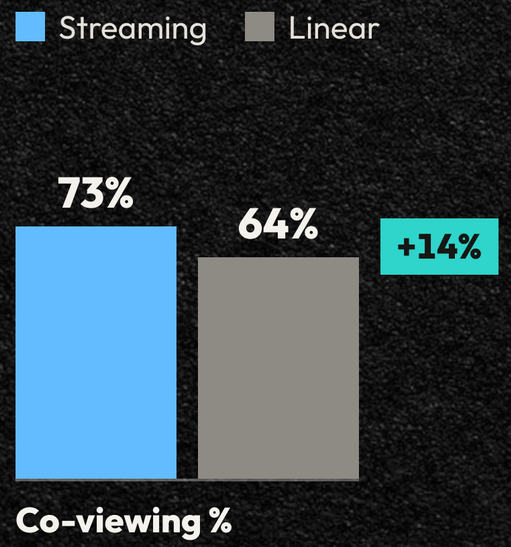
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STREAMING LIVE SPORTS KEEPS PEOPLE IN THE ROOM

Attention is similar whether viewers watch on linear or streaming.

Sports are sports. Whether watching on linear or streaming, viewers pay the same amount of attention to the game. The difference is streaming keeps people in the room. Streaming live sports outpaces linear live sports for co-viewing by 14%.

Attention Is Consistent, but Streaming Tops Linear When It Comes to Co-Viewing





51%

ATTENTION RATIO

Streaming or linear live sports

Source: TVision Panel | Sep 1, 2025 to Aug 31, 2026 | P2+

LINEAR STILL WINS

THE BREAK. FOR NOW.

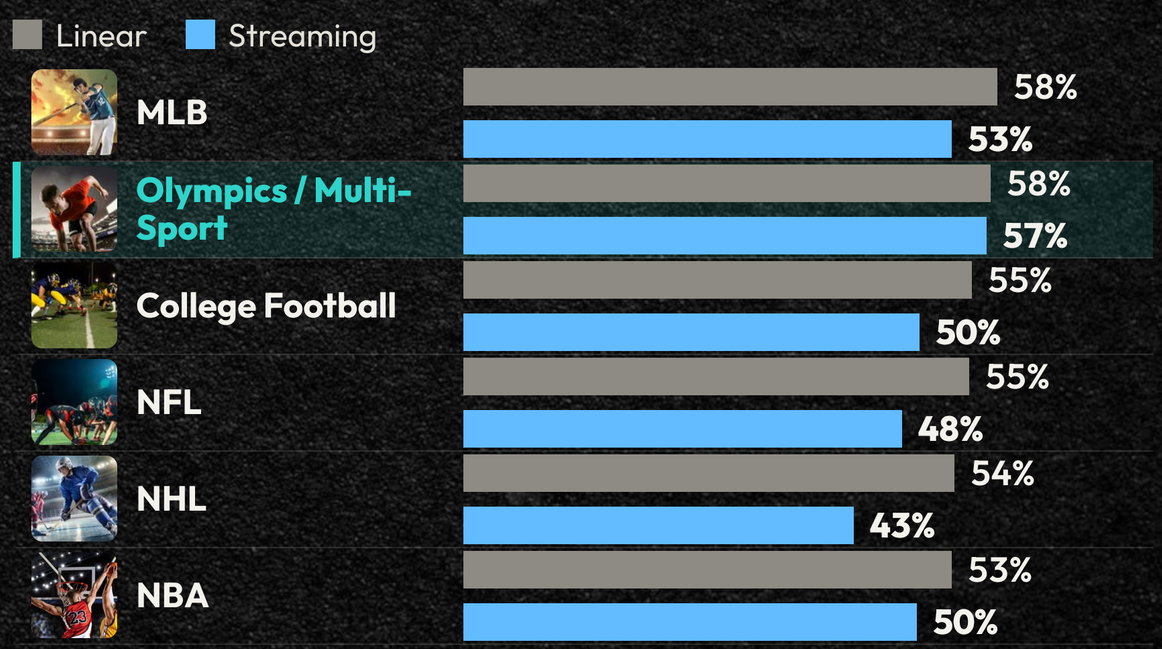
Across all leagues, linear live sports advertising outperforms CTV advertising. This is not necessarily surprising as linear viewers are more accustomed to watching ads and skew older than CTV viewers. Older viewers are also more likely to pay attention to ads.

Ad attention for the Olympics was similar on linear and streaming. This may be because the Olympic viewing experience is a unique event, rather than a season-long experience. Olympic viewers are tuned in and engaged at a high rate.

Outside the Olympics, the NBA comes closest to closing the gap between streaming and linear ad attention.



AD-TIME ATTENTION %



Source: TVision Panel | Sep 1, 2025 to Aug 31, 2026 | All timeshifted viewing | P2+ | Ad time only

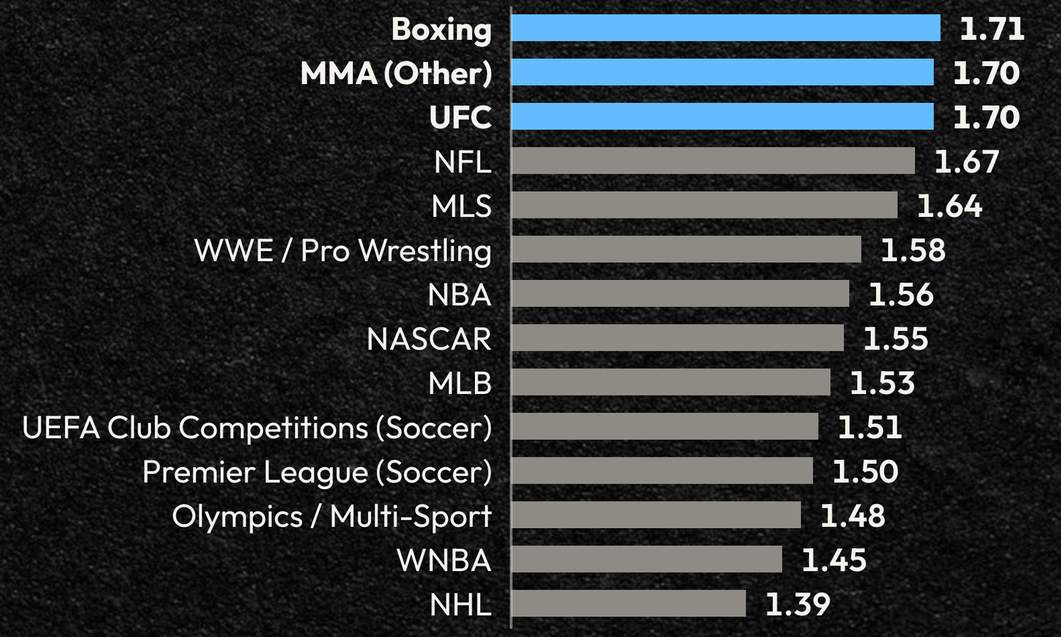
FIGHT NIGHT

DRAWS THE BIGGEST STREAMING CROWDS TO THE TV ROOM

Boxing, MMA and UFC all punch above their weight when it comes to co-viewing. People are more likely to watch this type of streaming live sports programming together than any other. It's not really a surprise. Inviting friends over to watch the big fight is a long-running tradition, and friends gather around the TV to take it in.

CO-VIEWING ON STREAMING (CTV), BY LEAGUE

Average viewers per TV



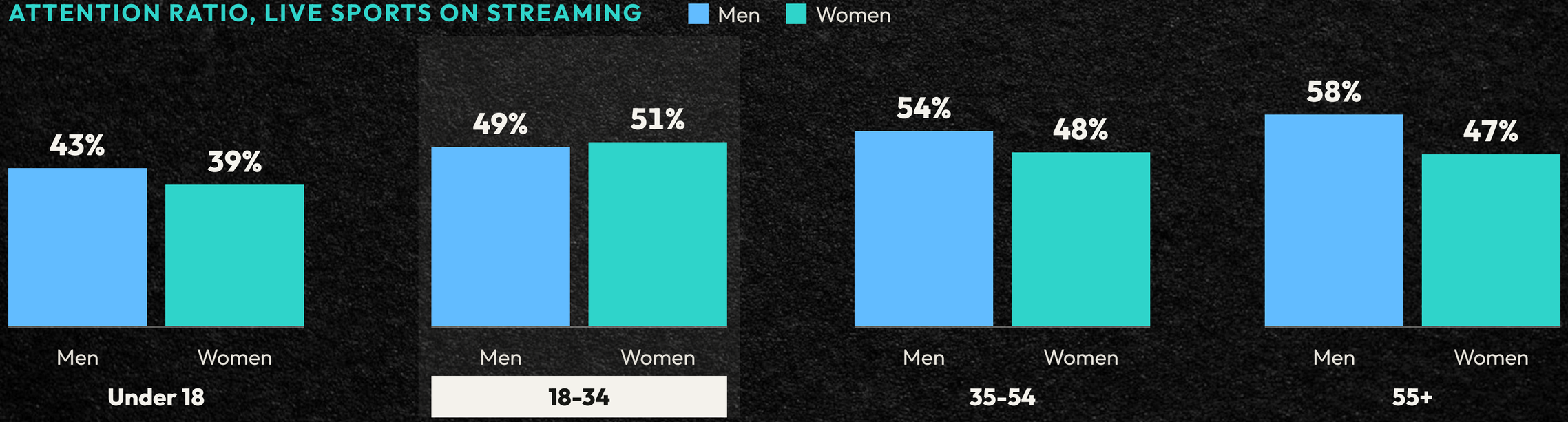


 Source: TVision Panel | Sep 1, 2025 to Aug 31, 2026 | P2+ | Program time only

WHO PAYS THE MOST ATTENTION TO LIVE SPORTS ON STREAMING

On streaming, attention to live sports plays out differently for men and women. For men, it climbs with every age band. Men 55+ are the most attentive viewers in the data, at 58%. For women, attention peaks at 18-34 (51%). It's the only age group where women out-attend the men their age. Teens pay the least attention of any group, but they're rarely watching alone.

ATTENTION RATIO, LIVE SPORTS ON STREAMING



Source: TVision Panel | Sep 1, 2025 to Aug 31, 2026 | P2+ | Program time only | Live sports on streaming. Attention Ratio: the average share of time viewers were attentive out of their time spent in the room during the program. Household counts by age and gender not yet available.

PART 2

BIG LEAGUES, BIG NAMES

When the biggest crowds don’t bring the most attention



09 →
Game length and ad attention



10 →
When football ends



11 →
Big names, not always the room

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BIG CROWDS, LONG GAMES DON'T ALWAYS DELIVER HIGH ATTENTION



On Sundays everyone might have the game on, but they aren't always paying attention. Attention is influenced by many different things. That's why big ratings and attention don't often correlate.

When it comes to live sports, many different factors play into whether the audience pays attention. The match-up, the score, the length of the game, a big play, the broadcasters, the number of commercial breaks. All of it and more can factor into the opportunity for advertisers to reach an attentive audience.

AD-TIME ATTENTION % ON STREAMING

LEAGUE	GAME LENGTH	ATTENTION %
WNBA	1:45	57%
MLB	2:44	53%
MLS	1:45	51%
NBA	2:16	50%
NFL	3:11	48%
NHL	2:38	43%

Source: TVision Panel | Sep 1, 2025 to Aug 31, 2026 | P2+ | Ad time only

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WHEN FOOTBALL ENDS, NFL FANS FOLLOW THE BIGGEST MOMENT IN SPORTS

THE #1 SPORT FOR NFL VIEWERS EACH MONTH, MARCH TO AUGUST 2026

Where do avid NFL fans find their offseason sports fix? We looked at active viewing time across the rest of the year to see which sports filled the void.



MARCH

College Basketball

46%

of sports viewing time



APRIL

NBA

32%

of sports viewing time



MAY

NBA

39%

of sports viewing time



JUNE

FIFA World Cup

45%

of sports viewing time



JULY

FIFA World Cup

47%

of sports viewing time



AUGUST

MLB

42%

of sports viewing time

MLB stays in the mix all summer: 16% in June and 26% in July, even with the World Cup on.

Source: TVision Panel | Mar 1 - Aug 31, 2026 | NFL Viewers (3+ NFL game days) | P2+ | Program time only | Linear & CTV combined

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BIG NAMES GET THE BUDGET.

NOT ALWAYS THE ROOM.

Ad dollars follow the crowd. At the 2026 World Cup, the crowd followed the U.S., whose two group matches drew the biggest audiences of the group stage.

The attention didn't follow. Those two matches ranked 19th and 24th of 55. The top spots went to South Africa v South Korea and Colombia v DR Congo.

So when the budget goes to the big names, do the ads measure up?



MOST-WATCHED

U.S. v Paraguay	**19th** in attention, of 55
U.S. v Australia	**24th** in attention, of 55

MOST ATTENTIVE

South Africa v South Korea	**1st** in attention, of 55
Colombia v DR Congo	**2nd** in attention, of 55

Source: TVision Panel | 2026 FIFA World Cup group stage, 55 matches, Jun 11 to Jun 27, 2026 | FOX and FS1

PART 3

INSIDE THE GAME

Second-by-second attention, from tip-off to the final play



13 →
Bears vs. Vikings: minute by minute



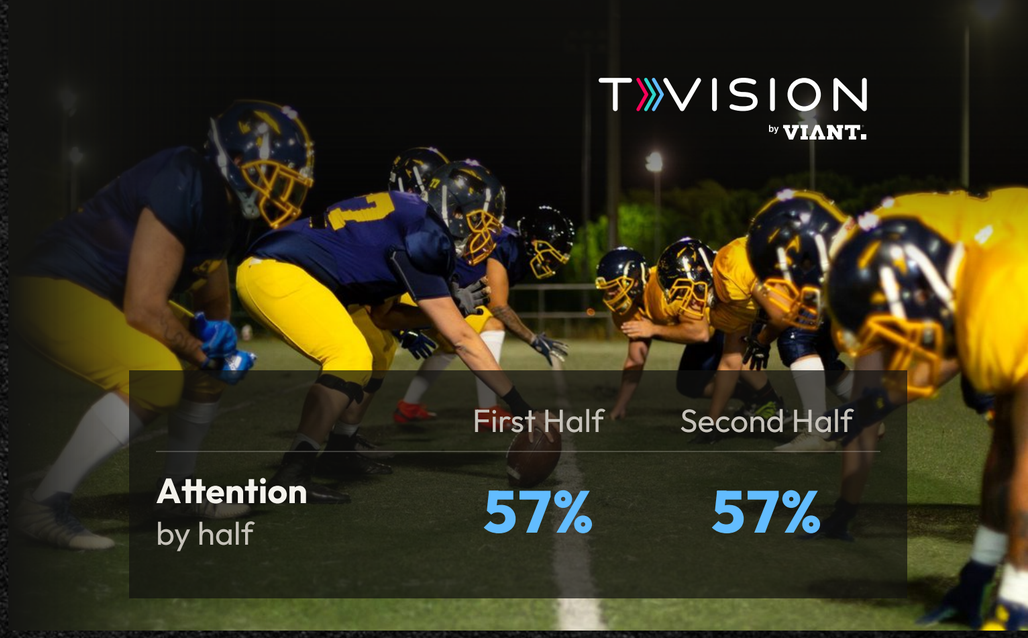
14 →
Knicks vs. Spurs: the comeback

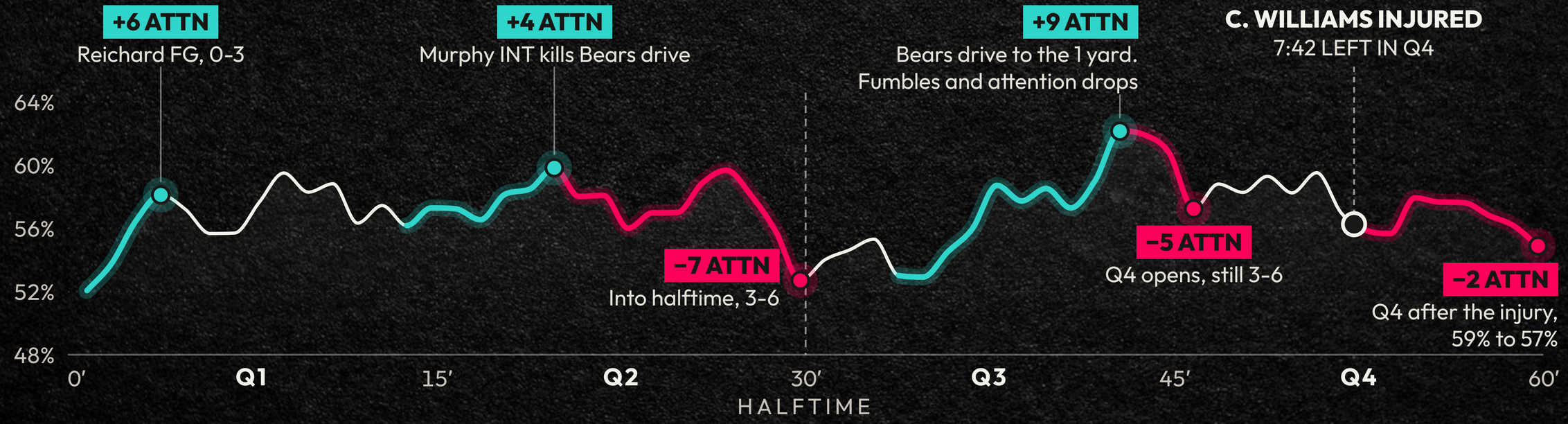


15 →
Super Bowl: when ad attention peaks

ONE DRIVE SPIKED ATTENTION. THE ROOM HELD STEADY ALL GAME.

A game is more than the final score. Attention is followed minute by minute, so you can see exactly where the room leans in, and where it drifts. A field goal or interception pulls viewers back to the screen. A slow stretch into halftime lets them wander. A second half push drives attention only to see a fumble and key injury cause the drop.





Source: TVision Panel · P2+ · Vikings at Bears, Sep 20, 2026

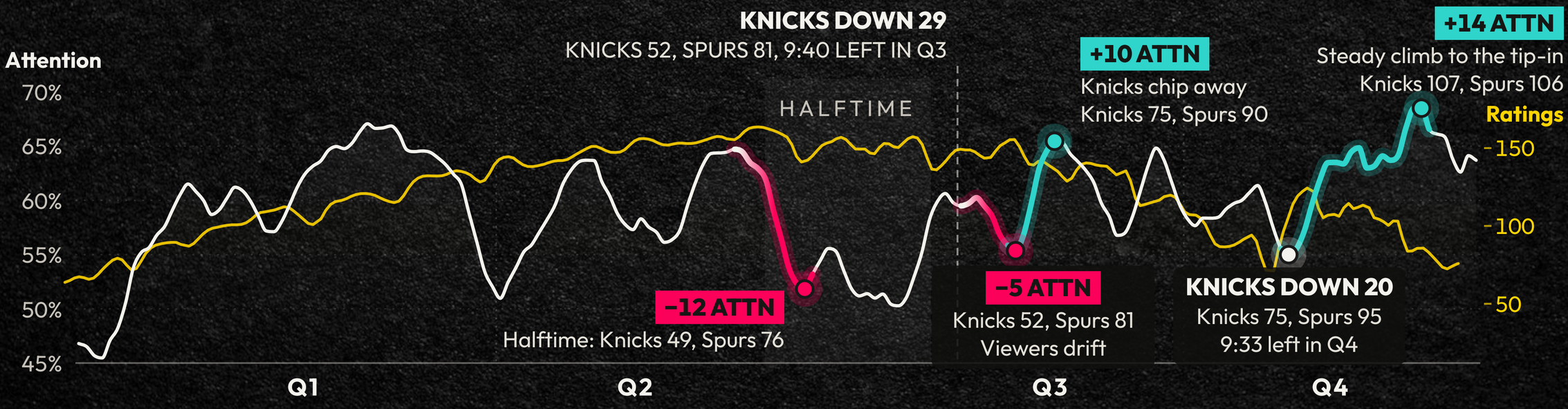
PART 3 · INSIDE THE GAME

THE KNICKS BEAT THE SPURS

107-106.

Down 29 in the 3rd QRT, The Knicks looked done and room started to drift. Then the big comeback began and attention started to pick up steam all the way through the final whistle. Meanwhile, ratings faded in the game giving the clearest case for attention over reach. Fewer people engaged and watching together always beats an empty room.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Attention by Quarter	61%	61%	61%	62%
Co-Viewing avg. viewers per TV	2.19	2.24	2.40	2.54



Source: TVision Panel · P2+ · Live, program time · NBA Finals Game 4, Spurs at Knicks, Jun 10, 2026

THE GAME WITHIN THE GAME:

AD ATTENTION



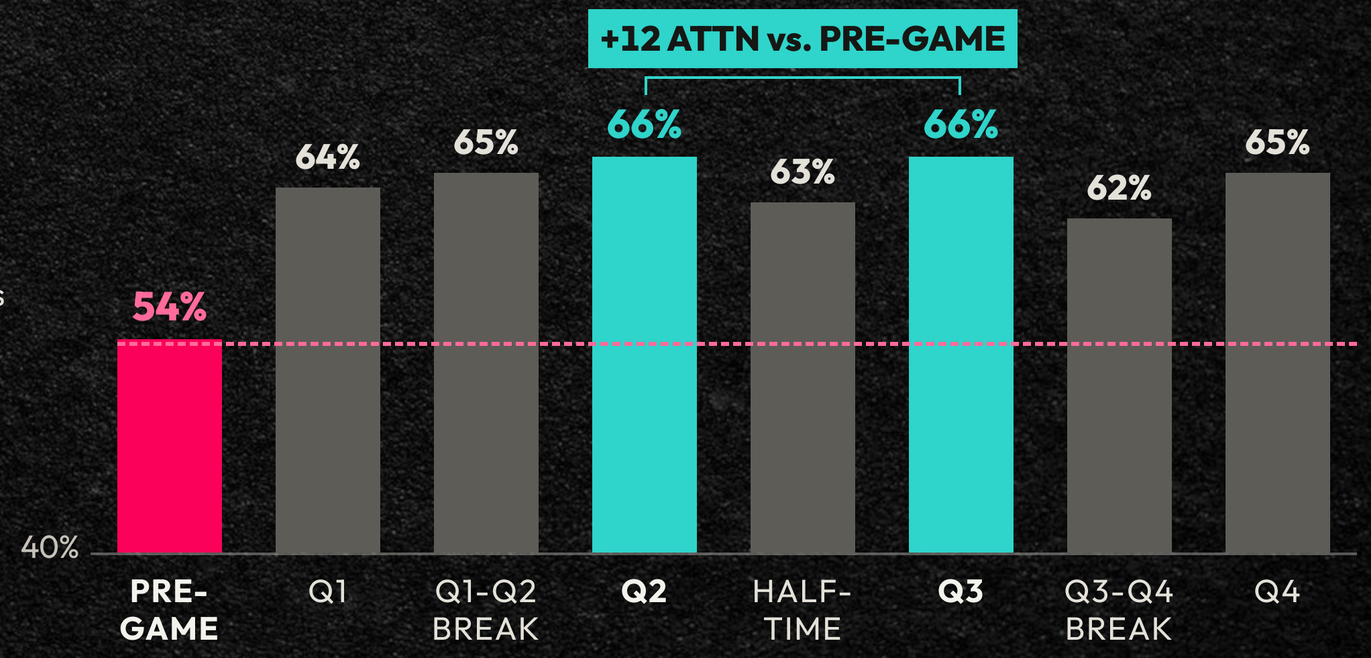
TVision is uniquely capable of reporting second-by-second ad attention for live sports. That means we can identify patterns of attention within games.

For advertisers in longer sporting events with larger audiences, knowing when ad attention peaks within the game matters. We looked at the 2026 Super Bowl and found ad attention was highest in the second and third quarters, when viewers are committed and the game is still very much up in the air.

Breaks at halftime and between the last two quarters, as well as pregame, offer less opportunity to reach attentive audiences.

SUPER BOWL AD-TIME ATTENTION %, BY GAME PART

- - - Pre-game, the lowest (54%)



Source: TVision Panel | Super Bowl LX, 2026 | Ad time only

PART 4

NEW AD WINDOWS

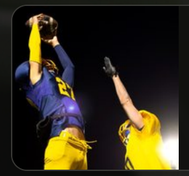
Hydration breaks, Spanish-language TV and in-program billboards



16 →
Hydration breaks: a new ad window



17 →
Telemundo vs. FOX, by break



18 →
In-program billboards

HYDRATION BREAKS WERE FOR PLAYERS.

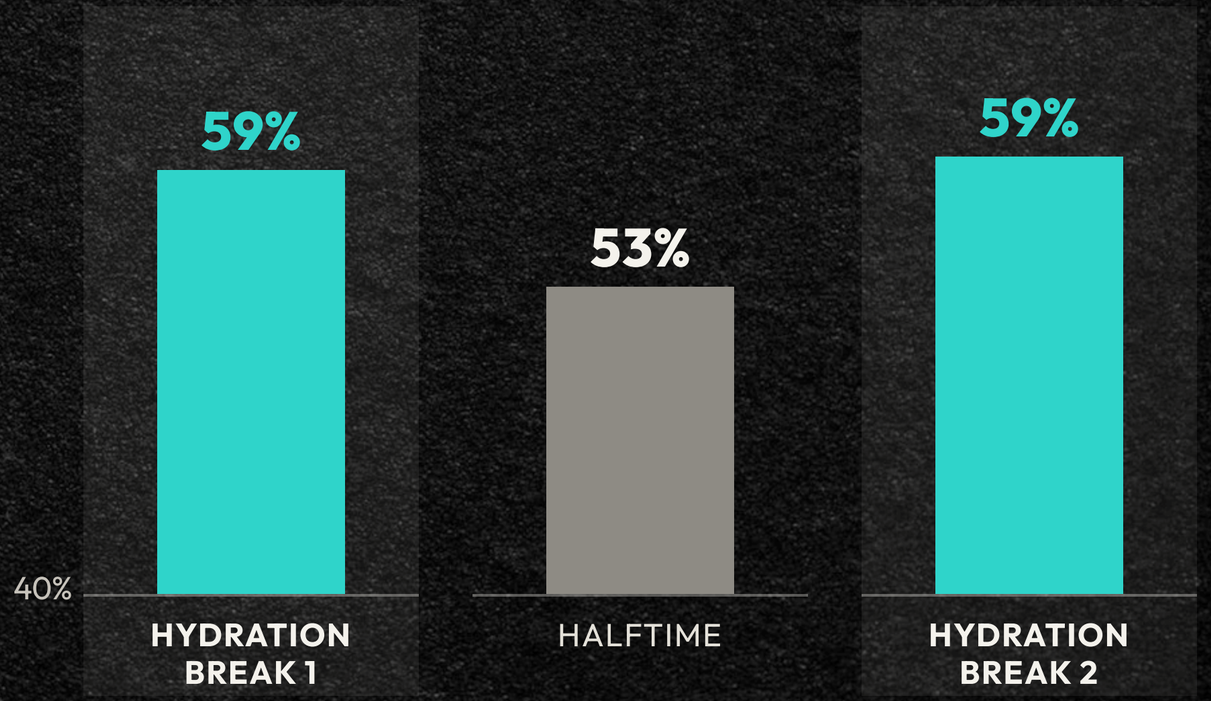
ADVERTISERS WON TOO.

FIFA brought hydration breaks to the World Cup for the first time, giving players a pause from the summer heat. FOX turned every one of them into an ad break giving brands a new opportunity to engage with viewers.

It paid off. Ads in the two hydration breaks each drew 59% Attention, well ahead of halftime. The second break, deep in the second half, held attention as well as the first.



AD-TIME ATTENTION % ON FOX, BY BREAK



Source: TVision Panel | Jun 11 to Jul 19, 2026 | Live viewing only | P2+ | Ad time only

TELEMUNDO KEPT PACE WITH FOX.

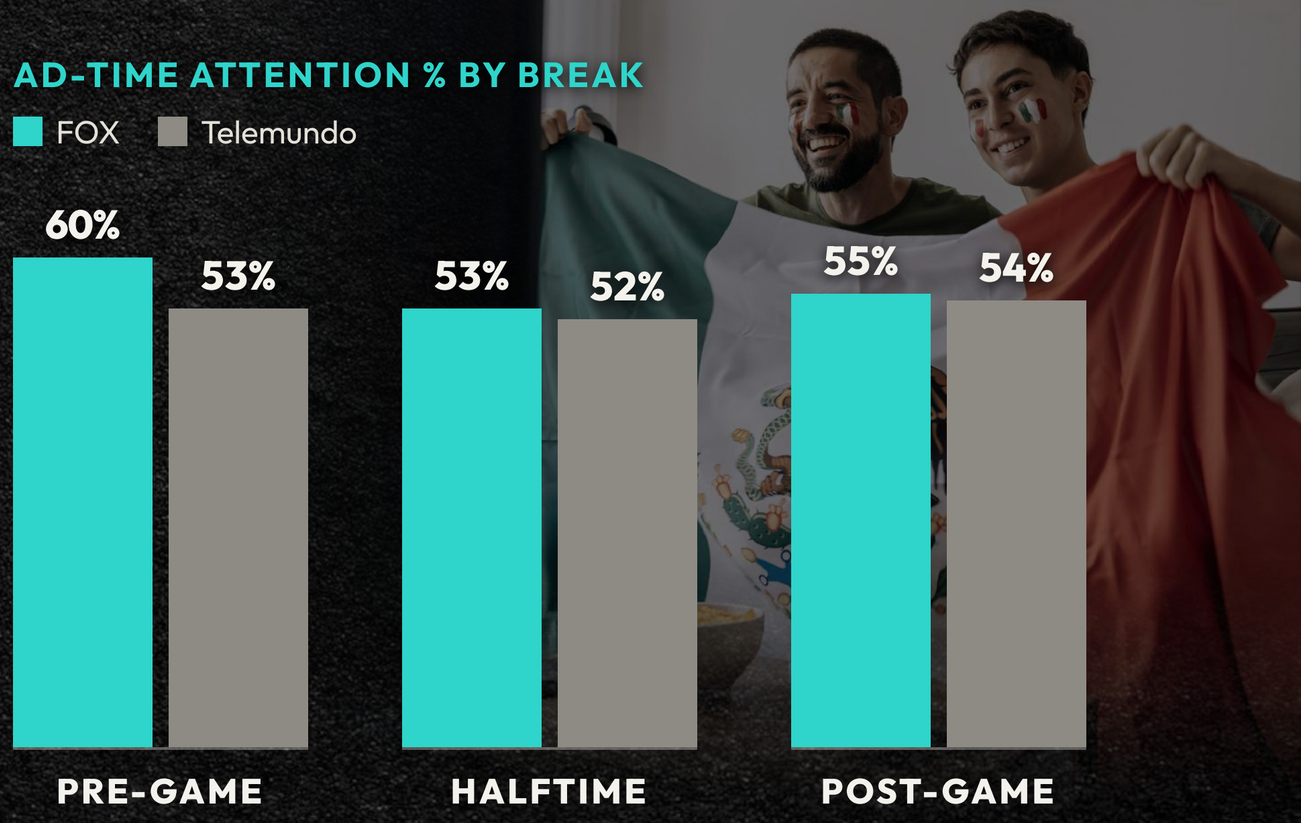
EXCEPT BEFORE KICKOFF.

Soccer doesn't stop for commercials. Outside of the new hydration breaks, advertisers get three windows: pregame, halftime and postgame.

At halftime, Telemundo kept pace with FOX: 52% Attention vs 53%. Postgame was just as close, 54% vs 55%.

The gap opened before kickoff. In the pregame window, Telemundo drew 53% Attention to FOX's 60%.

For brands reaching Spanish-speaking soccer fans, Telemundo delivered attention right alongside FOX.



Source: TVision Panel | Jun 11 to Jul 19, 2026 | Live viewing only | P2+ | Ad time only | FOX and Telemundo.

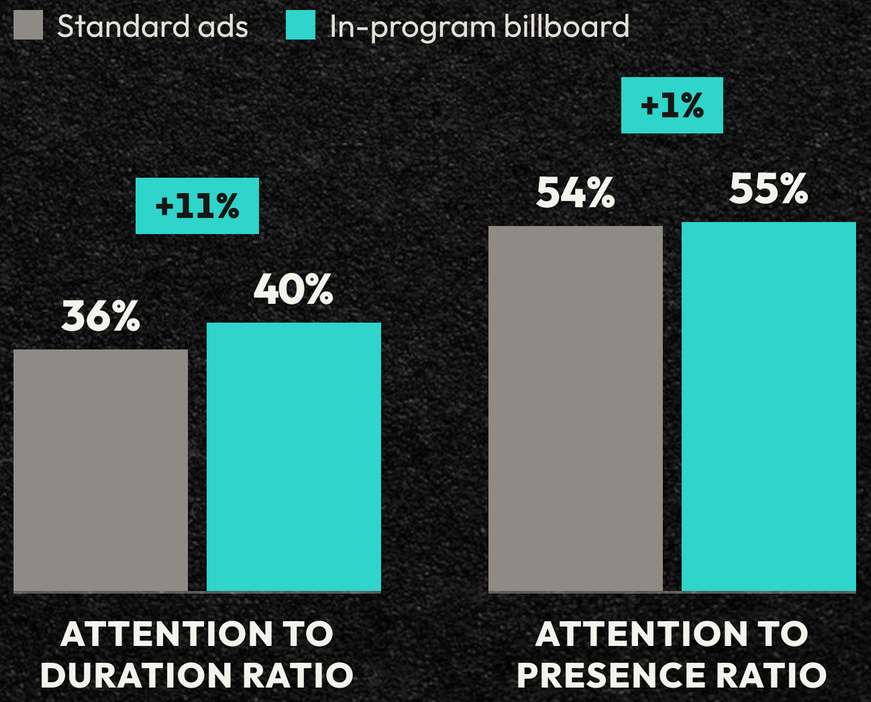
IN-PROGRAM BILLBOARDS KEPT EYES ON SCREEN 11% LONGER

Case study: a Leading Financial Brand during Day 1 of the NFL Draft on ESPN

Sponsorship has always been hard to measure. Billboards, logos and branded segments live inside the programming, not in the ad break.

TVision measures attention to what's on screen, in the break and in the program. During Day 1 of the NFL Draft, a Leading Financial Brand ran standard spots in the breaks and an in-program billboard during the coverage.

The billboard held viewers' eyes for 11% longer than the brand's standard ads. For viewers in the room, attention was on par.





Source: TVision Panel | P2+ | Apr 23, 2026 | NFL Draft Day 1 on ESPN

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TOP 20 LIVE SPORTS

ON STREAMING IN 2026

Streaming's biggest live sports moments in 2026 didn't live on one app. Amazon Prime Video owned the top of the list, with the NFL at #1, the NBA at #2 and five spots overall. Peacock matched Prime with five, Netflix added four, and six platforms made the top 20. Football, basketball, baseball, wrestling, racing, soccer and fight sports all placed at least twice. The lesson? No single app owns live sports. Fans follow the game wherever it lands.

ABOUT THE TVISION POWER SCORE

The TVision Power Score is the industry's only ranking of streaming originals that factors in both attention and app reach to identify the shows and movies that are best engaging viewers. The Power Score leverages data from TVision's industry-leading, second-by-second passive viewer panel to parse viewer engagement across hundreds of apps and thousands of programs. The TVision Power Score factors in four key metrics: the amount of time viewers spend paying attention to the program, the amount of program time available for the season, the program's reach, as well as the application's reach. This combination of metrics best identifies the quality programming that draws in audiences.

Source: TVision Power Score | Live sports on streaming, Jan 1, 2026 to date | Ranked by Power Score

■ Amazon Prime Video ■ Peacock ■ Netflix

1	NFL	Amazon Prime Video
2	NBA	Amazon Prime Video
3	WWE	ESPN+
4	NASCAR	Amazon Prime Video
5	Skyscraper Live	Netflix
6	Raw	Netflix
7	UFC	Paramount+
8	WNBA	Amazon Prime Video
9	College Football	ESPN+
10	NFL	Netflix
11	MLB	Peacock
12	Olympic Gold Zone	Peacock
13	The Masters on Prime	Amazon Prime Video
14	F1 Racing	Apple TV
15	MLB	Netflix
16	NBA	Peacock
17	College Football	Peacock
18	Zuffa Boxing	Paramount+
19	Premier League Soccer	Peacock
20	MLS	Apple TV

DEFINING OUR METRICS

TVision measures second-by-second presence and attention for programming and ads on both linear and streaming TV environments. Every time a person walks into the room, our technology detects who they are and whether or not they're looking at the TV and what their eyes are looking at. We do all this without personally identifying individual users, and without transmitting any images or videos. TVision's data is collected from an opt-in panel of 5,000 homes across the United States and weighted to US Census. Data in this report is from September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026 unless otherwise indicated.



METRIC	MEASURED IN	DEFINITION
Attention %	Ad time	The share of ad impressions where a viewer was attentive for at least 2 seconds.
Attention to Presence Ratio (Attention Ratio)	Program time	The average share of time viewers were attentive out of their time in the room during the program.
	Ad time	The percentage of time a viewer paid attention to the ad while in the room.
Attention to Duration Ratio	Ad time	The percentage of time a viewer paid attention over the length of the ad.
Co-Viewing %	Program time	The share of program impressions where a viewer watched with another active viewer for at least 5 minutes.
VPVH (Viewers per Viewing Household)	Program time	The average number of viewers per household watching any given second of the program.

Source: TVision Metric Definitions. Ad-time and program-time metrics use different thresholds, so ad and program numbers are not directly comparable.

ABOUT TVISION by VIANT.

THE LEADER IN TV ENGAGEMENT METRICS

TVision's single-source panel measures what was once unmeasurable: how people really watch TV. Using cutting-edge Computer Vision technology, TVision is able to measure person-level, second-by-second engagement for both Linear and CTV environments, providing critical metrics such as Attention, Presence, and Co-Viewing. Marketers and media sellers representing some of the largest brands, networks, and platforms in the world access TVision's TV performance metrics through a combination of its SaaS platform offerings and bespoke reporting.

VISIT US AT WWW.TVISIONINSIGHTS.COM



TVISION HELPS BRANDS
AND NETWORKS SEE

THE COMPLETE VIEW OF TV ATTENTION.

Not modeled. Measured.

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