

Report: 33% of Cable Subscribers May Cancel If NFL Season Is Postponed

by William Parker | Apr 8, 2020 | News



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One negative consequence of the current pandemic is the complete shutdown of all live sports. As a result, ratings for sports channels are down across the board. **ESPN**, the **most expensive channel on cable**, hasn't posted official numbers yet, but there's no doubt ratings have taken a huge hit. The network is even rushing the release of the much-anticipated **Michael Jordan documentary**, presumably to pump up numbers.

NBC's **Golf Channel** has seen unique viewership fall by 39%, down from 5.23 million the week of March 9th to 3.19 million the following week. To put that into perspective, the same week in 2019 saw a unique viewership of 5.25 million. Meanwhile, **FS1** is getting creative and combating the ratings decline with virtual racing. Sports fans are so starved for live content, that the initial iRacing broadcast scored **record eSports ratings**.

It's no wonder that **President Trump is hoping** that live sports can resume by the end of the summer.

And with cable subscribers already leaving at unprecedented rates as cord cutting grows in popularity, we here at KilltheCableBill.com are wondering if the current pandemic will be the final nail in the coffin for Big Cable. After all, we know that live sports is the major driver behind people subscribing to cable. We also know cord cutters care most about **content and cost** – and most other content can be found much cheaper through on-demand services like Netflix and Hulu. But when it comes to sports, viewers want to watch as the events happen.

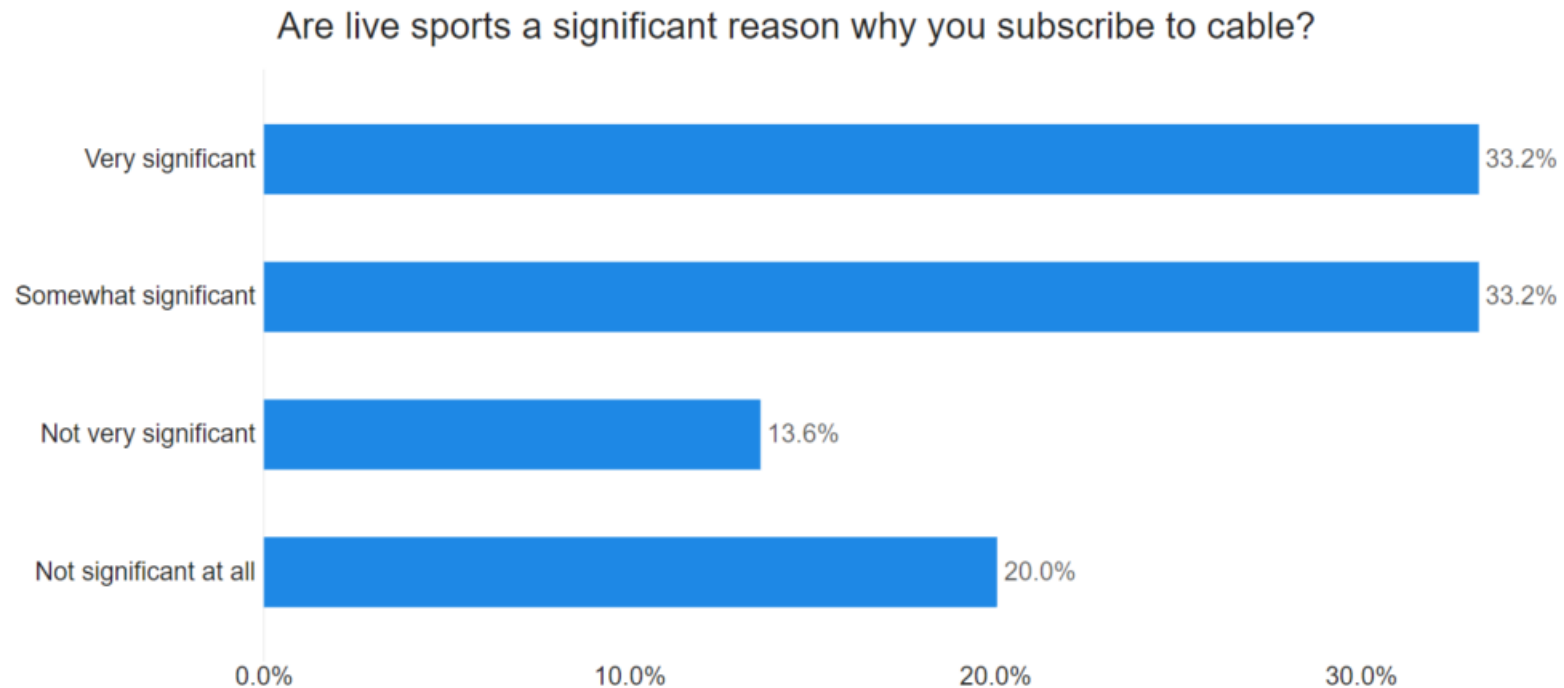
However, it's safe to say, the real damage likely won't be felt until NFL season rolls around. Sure **the NFL Draft** is coming up, but we know that NFL games dominate all other sporting events in terms of viewership. In fact, in 2018, 80% of the top-viewed sporting events were NFL games. So what happens if the NFL season gets postponed?

With that in mind, we partnered with Mindnet Analytics to survey current cable subscribers to find out how they feel about the current absence of live sports, and how they'll react should the current ban remain in place into the fall, forcing the NFL season to be postponed. After surveying current subscribers, we found that **33% of cable subscribers say they may be likely to cancel their cable contracts if the 2019-2020 NFL season is postponed**. Below, you'll find more detailed information on the survey findings.

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44% of cable subscribers say the current lack of live sports could impact whether they keep their cable subscription.

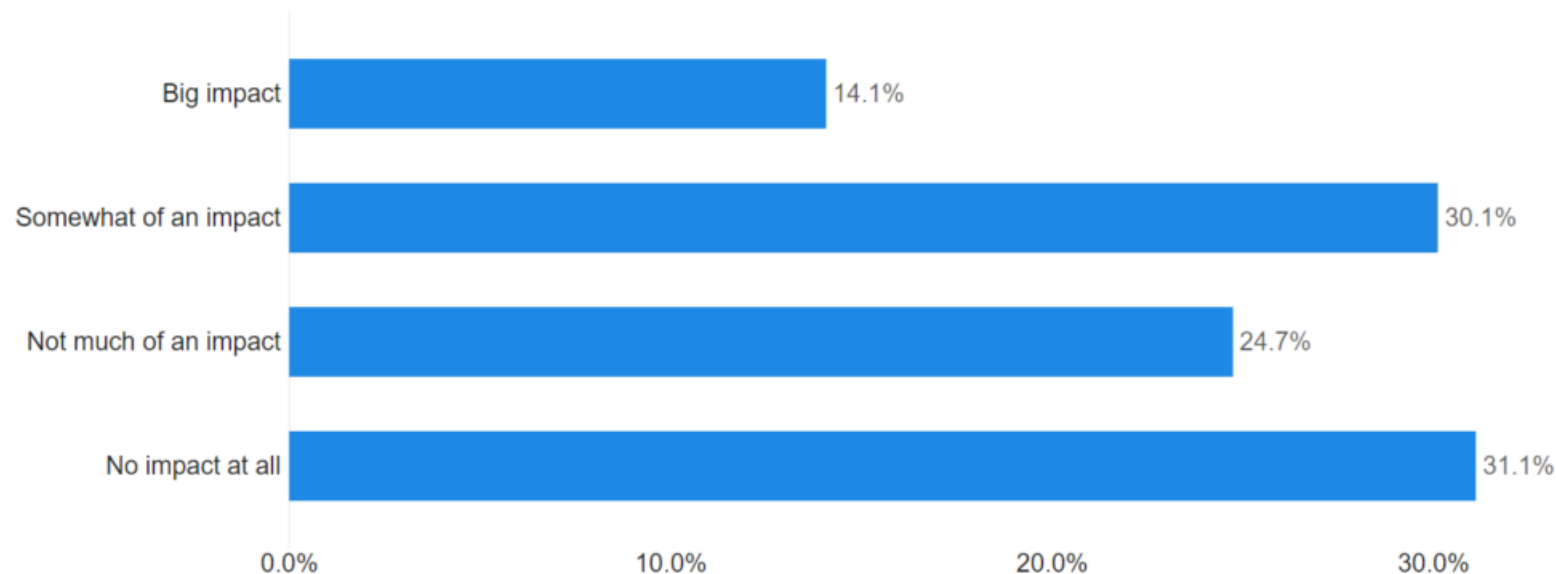
14% of respondents said lack of live sports could have a "big impact" on whether they keep cable.

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Does the lack of live sports right now have an impact on whether you keep your cable subscription?



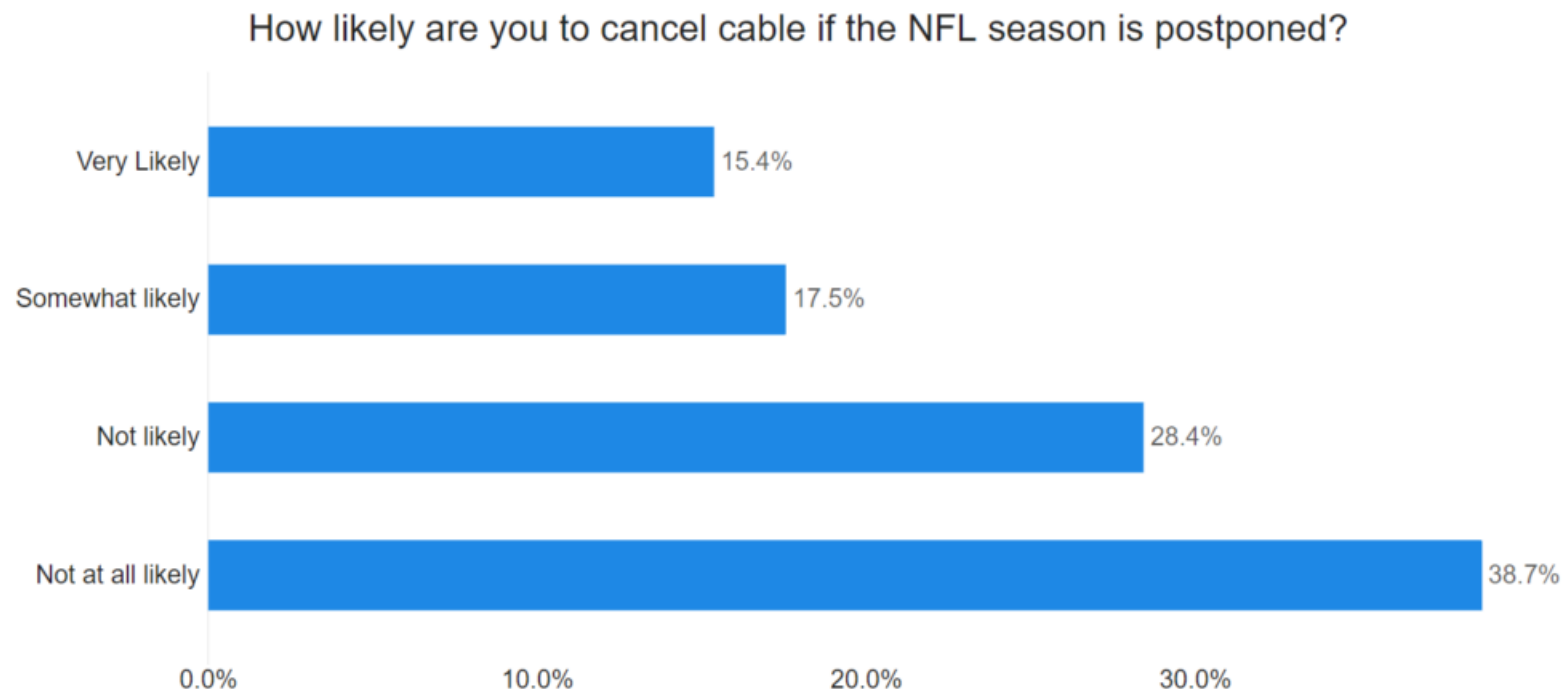
33% of cable subscribers could cancel cable if the 2019-2020 NFL season is postponed.

15% of respondents said they are very likely to cancel if NFL gets postponed.

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The longer sporting events are canceled, the more likely subscribers will cancel their cable.

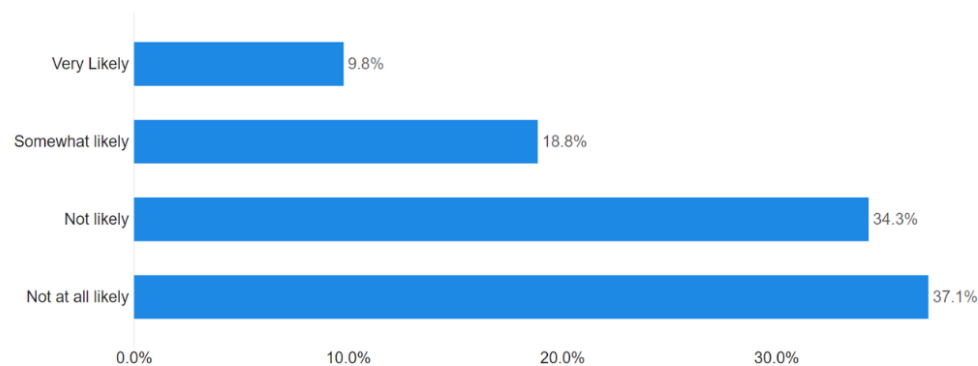
10% of people said they were very likely to cancel cable if no major live sports events are televised by May 1st, but nearly 13% said they were very likely to cancel if that extends to June 1st.

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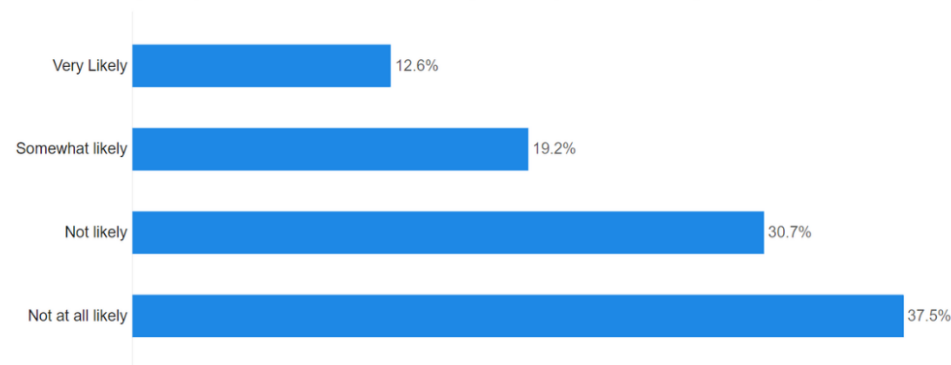
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How likely are you to cancel cable if there are no major live sports (NBA, MLB, NHL, etc.) being televised by May 1st?



How likely are you to cancel cable if no major live sports are being televised by June 1st?



Methodology

KilltheCableBill.com partnered with Mindnet Analytics to survey 1,003 current cable TV subscribers via Amazon Mechanical Turk. Our goal was to understand how the suspension of live sporting events due to the current pandemic is affecting subscribers views towards their cable subscriptions.

We asked a range of questions focusing on how important live sports are to current cable subscribers, including reason for initially subscribing, short-term importance, and the role of the upcoming NFL season.

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William Parker covers cord cutting for KTCB. He's an avid cord cutter, uses Netflix and Disney+ incessantly, and loves to tell everyone about it. Contact him at bill@killthecablebill.com.

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