

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Heating Up: Sports Viewership Sizzling this Summer

It's a summer of soccer, that's for sure. If it feels like more people are watching this season, you're not wrong. The **Video Advertising Bureau** found that even though monthly time spent with ad-supported TV at the household level is 4% lower during the summer months, sports fans are heavily attentive and skew millennial and male. In its 2019 Summer Forecast report, the VAB dove into how people stay connected to ad-supported video across devices and in cinemas throughout the summer months. Only 5% of people 18 and older don't watch ad-supported TV during the season, and even with the growth in streaming, linear TV represents almost 80% of total P18+ video consumption during the summer. But back to sports. Summer primetime TV co-viewing levels are also in line with non-summer months, sticking between 40-41% co-viewing (the annual monthly average is 42%). This holds up in sports, where the trend extends to out-of-home viewership. OOH linear sports TV viewers skew millennial (53%), and lean male (62%). **Tunity Analytics** can back that up. The matchup between the USWNT and England on Tuesday on **Fox** averaged 8.54mln OHH viewers, making it the No. 1 televised soccer match year-to-date and the tenth highest sporting event year-to-date among OOH viewers, according to Tunity's analysis based on usage of its free app. The audience was 57% A25-54 and 68% male. The VAB found that people aren't too picky about where they watch OOH, with 40% watching in a restaurant, bar or somewhere else. Overall, 74% of viewers watch sports in locations other than restaurants and bars. Even though it's summer and people like to be outside, the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup has been record-breaking for both Fox and **Telemundo**. The Round of 16 matches averaged 363K viewers across Telemundo, **Universo**, **NBCSN**, and the associated apps, a 73% increase over the 2015 Women's World Cup. On Fox, more than 7mln people tuned in to the 3pm semifinal, making it the most-watched soccer match on English-language TV since the 2018 FIFA World Cup Final. The average minute audience of 361K made it the most-streamed FIFA Women's World Cup Match ever. But it's not just the women dominating in the ratings. Telemundo Deportes' telecast of the Copa America quarterfinals pulled in 1.1mln total viewers last Friday. And over on **Univision**, the CONACAF Gold Cup telecast of Mexico-Haiti brought in 3.6mln total viewers 2+, making it the most watched men's soccer match of 2019 and the most-watched match on Univision nets since the 2017 Mexico-US





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2019

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MSO OF THE YEAR



- Lifetime Achievement Award
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- Lifetime Achievement Award
Anne Cowan, CTAM (retired)
- Consumer Growth Driver
Dana Strong, Comcast Cable
- Creative Thinking
Charter Communications
- Evolution Award
RCN/Grande/Wave Executive Team
- Customer Service Award
Sparklight (Cable ONE)

INDEPENDENT OPERATOR RECOGNITION

INDEPENDENT OPERATOR OF THE YEAR



- Lifetime Achievement Award
Frank Hughes, NCTC (retired)
- Technology Executive of the Year
Ed McKay, Shentel
- Financial Executive of the Year
Vicki Villacrez, TDS Telecom
- Marketing Executive of the Year
Sandy Hendrick, HTC
- Versatility Award
April Eades, Bristol Tennessee Essential Services
- Customer Service Award
WOW! Internet Cable & Phone
- Community Service
HBC
- Employee Connections
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World Cup Qualifier. But for those folks that really don't care about watching people kick a ball up and down a field, there's been plenty of content for them too this summer. "Discovery has always thought of the summer months as a great opportunity to showcase our high-profile programming and this summer is no different," Jon Steinlauf, chief US ad sales officer for Discovery told CFX. "In fact, we are all-in with big events such as Shark Week and 'Serengeti' on Discovery Channel, 'David Makes Man' on OWN, 'A Very Brady Renovation' on HGTV and 'Flay vs. Symon' on Food Network." The sheer amount of programming available (Hallmark's "Summer Nights" features, anyone?) also bodes well for ad sales. The VAB found that the average ad-supported TV monthly reach in households remained steady during the summer months, hovering between 94 and 95% (the annual monthly average is 95%). Even on popular summer holidays, daily reach is comparable to an average day within the same month. That bodes well for all those July 4 specials and marathons planned for this long holiday weekend.

Univision Exploring Potential Sale: Univision Communications confirmed late Wednesday that its board is exploring a possible sale and other strategic options, following a report from the WSJ. "As the last major independent broadcast media company in the US, a market where scale and strength matter, Univision has the fundamentals for continued growth on its own or with a partner—and after careful consideration, the board and management team have concluded the time is right to explore strategic options," read a statement. Over the past year, the company has divested non-core assets such as Gizmodo Media Group and inked distribution deals, including a renewal with DISH following a lengthy blackout. "The current environment favors scale and cross-platform offerings, and we believe those major media companies that fail to recognize and capitalize on this unique opportunity in Spanish-language media will be left behind," CEO Vince Sadusky said in a statement. Univision has been owned by private equity firms for more than a decade. The company hired Morgan Stanley, Moelis & Co and investment bank LionTree to explore strategic options. Univision has been struggling with debt since the \$13.7bln leveraged buyout in 2006, and finished 2018 with \$7.4bln in debt. In 2017, the company turned down an offer from John Malone that reportedly valued it between \$13.5bln and \$15bln.

Ratings: Saturday's (June 29th) UFC Fight Night averaged 1.1mln viewers across ESPN and ESPN Deportes, helping ESPN become the most-viewed cable network in prime among 18-34s and all key male demos (M18-34, M18-49, and M25-54). The ESPN telecast delivered 1.09mln viewers and now ranks as the third most-viewed UFC Fight Night on cable since mid-February 2017.

C-Band Counter: The C-Band Alliance continues to argue that its plan for freeing up midband spectrum is the only

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option that makes sense for the FCC. A new plan by **Charter**, **ACA Connects** and the **Competitive Carriers Association** would take a great deal of time, CBA contends. “The Charter/ACA/CCA proposal suggests it could clear spectrum in cities within 18 months based upon building out fiber networks. However, this approach ignores that in order to create contiguous cleared spectrum—a requirement for 5G deployment—other non-cable satellite services must also be relocated,” CBA said. “This is not possible without installing filters and launching new satellites to protect existing service and support the end state. This step alone would take 18 to 36 months. And, until all antennas in a city are transitioned to fiber or to the upper portion of the band, the spectrum is not cleared.”

Happy Trails: Multi and B&C’s content managing director **Mark Robichaux** has joined global strategic advisory firm **Brunswick Group** as head of internal communications, reporting to CEO **Neal Wolin**. A former *WSJ* reporter, Robichaux wrote the book “Cable Cowboy – John Malone and the Rise of the Modern Cable Business.” -- After 36 years in cable and 24 at **CommScope**, most recently as vp, US MSO sales, **Jim Hughes** has marked himself as retired. Hughes was inducted into the **SCTE-ISBE** Hall of Fame last year during Cable-Tec Expo.

Editor’s Note: The next issue of **Cablefax Daily** will arrive Monday because of Independence Day.

Cablefax Dashboard

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Up Ahead

- July 16:** WICT Carolinas **Red Circle Awards**, Charlotte
- July 18-21:** **Comic Con**; San Diego
- July 23-28:** CTAM Portion of the **Television Critics Association Press Tour**, L.A.
- July 24-26:** NAMIC **Leadership Seminar**; Chicago
- July 28-31:** **The Independent Show**; Chicago
- Aug 4:** **CableLabs/NCTA Smaller Market Conference**; Keystone, CO

Research

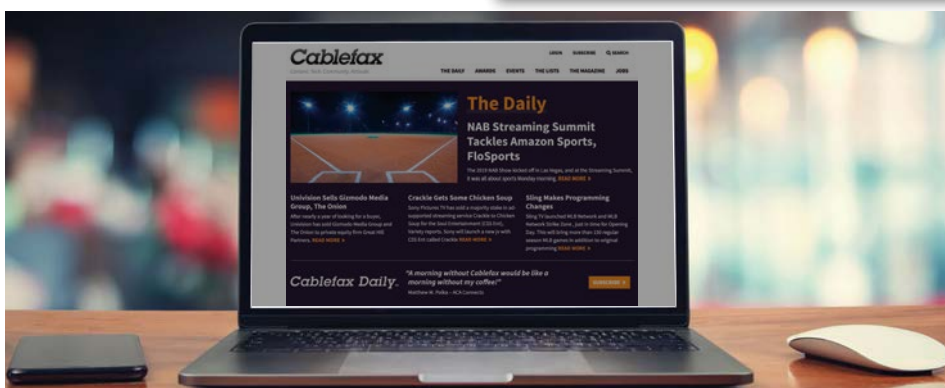
- 23% of current subscribers say they’d definitely or probably drop Netflix if ads were included for the same fees it charges today.
- Fewer than half (41%) say they’d definitely or probably keep their Netflix subscription if ads were added, with the remainder undecided.
- If Netflix’s current ad-free plan increased by \$3, 53% say they would switch to an ad-based tier at the current fee.

(Source: Hub Entertainment Research’s “Monetization of Video” study)

Quotable

“We are really excited about getting going on this season, year five of the current TV contract. We think we’ve got the best opportunity yet to keep moving that needle forward. First half of the season FOX did a tremendous job. Their numbers were up, so we were happy to see that. We plan to continue that momentum forward.”

– **NBC Sports** NASCAR exec producer **Sam Flood** on the programmer’s exclusive coverage of the second half of the NASCAR season.



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