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2010 Winter Olympics Viewership. Who Watched?

Over the past few weeks I have been writing about who has actually been watching the Olympics and how viewership has been influenced. Here are some interesting post-Olympics viewership statistics provided by the Nielsen Company.



According to The Nielsen Company, the TV audience for the Winter Olympics is predominantly female, unlike the male-favored Super Bowl. Through February 21, an estimated 56% of Olympic viewers are female, while 44% are male. Super Bowl viewership earlier this month was almost the exact opposite, with its audience composed of 54% males and 46% females.

Olympics ratings are clearly highest among older viewers, finds the study. Ratings among teenagers are 57% lower than the national average for this year's primetime Olympics broadcasts.

Ratings among the 18-49 group are 20% lower than the national average

Ratings among those 55 and older are 82% higher

Some additional ratings include ethnicity, geography, and equipment:

Ratings among Hispanic and African-American viewers are each 74% below the national average

Asian ratings are 15% below the national average

Ratings in the West Central region of the United States area are 24% higher than the national average

Viewership in the Southwest is 28% lower than the national average

55% of Olympic viewers are in HD-capable/receivable homes. Viewing in these homes is 14% higher than the national average

41% of Olympic viewers are in DVR homes and have ratings 12% higher than the national average

To lend context to these demographic insights, Nielsen compared U.S. viewership trends from the Olympics to trends from the Super Bowl played earlier this month.

Ratings among female Olympics viewers are 9% higher than the national average, says the report, while ratings among male Olympics viewers are 9% lower. In contrast, female ratings were 11% lower than the Super Bowl's national average, while male ratings were 11% higher.

Much like the Olympics, ratings for the Super Bowl were highest among older viewers. Ratings among teenagers for the Super Bowl were 20% lower than the national average (compared to the 57% lower ratings for the Olympics). Ratings for the Super Bowl improve in older demographics, where the ratings are 6% higher than the national average in the 18-49 age group and 15% higher among those 55 and up.

The comparison also found that a larger percentage of Super Bowl viewers were African-American, Hispanic, or Asian (23% compared to 11% for the Olympics). Ratings within the African-American and Hispanic markets were also higher in the Super Bowl when compared to the national average for each event. Ratings for African-American viewers were 18% lower than the national average for the Super Bowl while Hispanic ratings for the game were 49% lower. Asian ratings for both events were almost identical (16% below average for the Super Bowl vs. 15% below average for the Olympics).

Broken down by individual event, freestyle skiing, which includes men's and women's moguls competition, was the most popular Olympic sport among US TV weekend viewers through February 15, according to a minute-by-minute analysis of viewing conducted by Nielsen.

As reported by MarketingCharts, during NBC's primetime broadcast coverage, an average of 26.9 million viewers watched the freestyle events in the first weekend of Olympic competition:

Downhill skiing was the second most popular sport, with an average of 26.7 million viewers watching coverage of the event

Luge coverage earned an average of 26.2 million viewers

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