

NBC Sees Highest Rated Game 2 for Stanley Cup Finals

Written by Maury Brown

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NBC Sports' coverage of Game 2 of the Stanley Cup Final earned the best overnight rating (4.1 rating and 7 share) for a Game 2 on record (NHL overnight data prior to 1975 is unavailable) and was up 21 percent over last year (3.4, Game 2, Detroit vs. Pittsburgh). The broadcast peaked at a 4.7/8 from 10:30-11 p.m. ET. The Chicago market delivered a 25.1/39, while Philadelphia earned an 18.5/29.

The Stanley Cup Final on NBC again won the night, as it did Saturday for Game 1, finishing No. 1 in primetime (2.4, Adults 18-49).

"These historic viewership numbers are the result of compelling stories and great play on the ice, two markets on fire for their teams, terrific coverage by our North American television partners, and a season's worth of unprecedented fan engagement on multiple platforms across North America," said NHL COO John Collins.

Last night's milestone comes on the heels of healthy ratings for Game 1, which earned the best overnight rating for a Game 1 in 11 years. The 2.8 overnight rating and 6 share was the highest since 1999 (Buffalo vs. Dallas, 3.7 on Fox).

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Canada also scored big during Game 1 of the Final with CBC achieving an average audience of 3.16 million, an 83-percent increase from Game 1 in 2009. NBC's two-game average overnight rating is a 3.5, the best for the first two games of a Stanley Cup Final in 11 years (3.8 on Fox in 1999, Buffalo vs. Dallas) and up 17 percent over last year (3.0).

Top 10 Markets for First Two Games on NBC

1. Chicago – 21.0
2. Philadelphia – 15.9
3. Buffalo – 8.8
4. Pittsburgh – 4.5
5. Indianapolis – 4.0
6. Detroit – 3.8
7. Ft. Myers – 3.5
8. Las Vegas – 3.3
- T9. Orlando – 3.2
- T9. Columbus – 3.2
- T9. St. Louis – 3.2

NON-NHL MARKETS SHOWING HUGE INCREASES

Three non-NHL markets have shown triple digit rating increases for the first two games of the Final led by Seattle, which has seen a remarkable 213 percent rise. Kansas City (+140%) and Memphis (+120) have also earned substantial gains.

DIGITAL STRATEGY PAYS DIVIDENDS

The NHL is engaging and connecting with more fans than ever on its digital platforms and the 2010 Stanley Cup Playoffs has continued that trend. Some highlights:

- For the first three days of the Stanley Cup Final, page views are up 77 percent over last year

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and video starts are up 185 percent

- For the first 48 days of the playoffs, video starts on NHL.com are up 148 percent over last year
- Unique visitors to NHL.com are up 28 percent
- Page views are up 50 percent
- Mobile page views are up 182 percent
- April was the most trafficked month in the history of NHL.com in terms of unique visitors surpassing 17 million
- NHL.com ranked as the number two site in terms of percentage change in unique visitors from March to April according to comScore.

TV MILESTONES IN THE 2010 STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS

- VERSUS' coverage of the first two rounds of 2010 Stanley Cup Playoffs was the mostwatched first two rounds on cable on record with an average of 775,000 viewers for the 54 telecasts (Stanley Cup Playoff cable viewership became available by Nielsen for the 1994 playoffs)
- NBC and VERSUS have combined for the most-watched first two rounds since 1997 (ABC, ESPN, ESPN2)
- Game 1 of the Blackhawks-Sharks series on NBC earned an 11.2 rating in Chicago, beating the Cubs, White Sox and Boston-Orlando broadcasts combined
- On Thursday April 22, the Blackhawks, with 278,000 viewers in Chicago, prevailed over some tough local competition: Bulls (255,000 viewers, playoff game against Cleveland and LeBron James), NFL Draft (138,000) and the Chicago Cubs vs. NY Mets (137,000 viewers)
- The Flyers Game 7 victory over the Bruins was the most watched Flyers game in Comcast SportsNet history with an 11.7 rating and 345,000 households, topping the previous record set two days earlier.
- CBC's coverage of Game 7 between the Montreal Canadiens and Pittsburgh Penguins drew an average audience of 4.24 million viewers, ranking as the sixth largest Stanley Cup Playoff audience in CBC history.
- On French language RDS, the Canadiens-Penguins Game 7 was the most-viewed NHL telecast in the network's history with 2.69 million viewers.
- The game also scored on FSN Pittsburgh averaging a 26.4 HH rating, the highest-rated game ever on the network. At one point 43 percent of all households in the Pittsburgh DMA were tuned into FSN.
- There were three major Boston-area sports events televised on May 7 and Game 4 of the Bruins-Flyers series scored the best numbers, earning an 8.3 local Nielsen rating (328,000 viewers) on Versus in the Boston metered market besting the Yankees-Red Sox matchup on NESN, which earned a 6.3 local rating (223,000 viewers) to finish in second, while Game Three of the Cavaliers-Celtics NBA Eastern Conference Semifinals earned a 4.1 local rating (142,000 viewers) on ESPN.
- TSN's audience of 2.8 million for the Washington-Montreal Game 7 was the highest audience

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ever recorded for an NHL game on TSN and was the most-watched program on Canadian television Wednesday night in all key demographics.

- The Montreal-Washington series ranks as the most-watched playoff series ever on TSN (any round) with an average audience of 1.8 million viewers over seven games.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NHL'S RECORD-BREAKING BUSINESS SUCCESS IN 2009-10

- Corporate sponsorship was up 20 percent
- New League partners this season include Geico, Starwood Hotels, Enterprise Rent-ACar, LG Electronics and Hershey's Canada
- Ad spending on NHL® media increased by 37 percent over last season
- NHL.com ad revenue is up 50 percent over last year
- Revenue from big event platforms, led by the Bridgestone NHL Winter Classic®, are up 22 percent over last season
- Unique visitors to NHL.com surpassed last year's record by 32 percent
- NHL Game Center Live™ subscriptions were up 25 percent
- NHL Network subscribers have increased by 104 percent
- Sales at SHOP.NHL.com were up 12 percent from last year's record
- Viewership for NBC's Game of the Week telecasts were up 13 percent
- Ratings for exclusive telecasts on Versus were up 20 percent
- NHL Mobile™ reached 1.6 million page views, an increase of 233 percent over last season

Source: Nielsen Media Research US and Nielsen Media Research Canada / BBM

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