

Exciting Stanley Cup Playoffs Paying Dividends for NHL

Written by Matthew Coller
Tuesday, 18 May 2010 20:05



While many NHL franchises have struggled to make money, seeing poor attendance and major losses, the intensity and quality of the NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs has given an enormous boost to the league's popularity and pocketbook.

Business not as usual:

New league partners Gieco, Starwood Hotels, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, LG Electronics and Hershey's Canada have added up to a 20 percent raise in corporate sponsorship of the NHL. Additionally, ad spending on NHL media increased by 37 percent and NHL.com ad revenue is up 50 percent over the last year, according to a league press release.

Web accomplishments also include 32 percent more unique visitors, 25 percent more NHL Game Center Live subscriptions and a 12 percent increase in sales at Shop.NHL.com. NHL Mobile also reached 1.6 million. The NHL's use of video on NHL.com is also paying off, seeing a 153 percent boost from last year.

TV Highlight reel:

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-Between NBC and Versus, the Stanley Cup Playoffs have averaged 742,000 viewers, the most since 2000 and a 24 percent increase from last year.

-The average 1.04 million viewers for Versus' coverage of the Conference Semifinal surpassed all other playoff series' dating back to 1994.

-TSN set a record for the most watched NHL game ever that did not involve a Canadian team. The 2.1 million audience wasn't a shock considering TSN's average audience was up 61 percent from last year, from 681,000 to 1.1 million viewers. The game also brought in an 11.7 rating on Comcast Philadelphia, making it the most watched Flyers game on the network.

-Game 1 of the Blackhawks-Sharks series earned an 11.2 local rating in Chicago, beating the Cubs, White Sox and NBA Playoffs Boston-Orlando series.

-Game 2 of the Detroit Red Wings-San Jose Sharks series averaged 1.77 million viewers, making it Versus' most-watched Conference Semifinal game in network history and the most-watched second-round game since 2000.

Matthew Collier is a staff member of the Business of Sports Network, and is a freelance writer. He can be [followed on Twitter](#)

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