"Nearly all consumers in the US are fans of watching at least one sport, and the majority of sports fans enjoy watching football, basketball and/or baseball. Sporting events offer marketers a plethora of opportunities to reach a broad population of consumers with advertising, sponsorships and athlete endorsements."

- Kristen Boesel, Senior Lifestyles and Leisure Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- Almost all US adults are sports fans
- Young adults represent the future of fandom
- Overall interest in the NFL and MLB could already be weakening

The full scope of the sports market is difficult to define, but revenue brought in by US professional sports leagues alone has doubled in the past decade to $37.7 billion annually. The National Football League is the most lucrative of these organizations, drawing the most viewers and inspiring the most passion in fans. Major League Baseball and the National Basketball Association hold their own in terms of viewership and elicit more engagement from fans than the NFL. Data also shows that Gen Z adults are drawn to basketball more than baseball or football, indicating that there will be more opportunity for basketball as a professional sport moving forward.
Marketing to Sports Fans - US - November 2019

Overview

What you need to know

Definitions

Executive Summary

Market overview

Top takeaways

Takeaway #1: Almost all US adults are sports fans

Figure 1: Self-reported fandom, by sport, September 2019

Figure 2: Sports fandom, by gender, September 2019

Opportunities

Takeaway #2: Young adults represent the future of fandom

Figure 3: Sports fandom, by age, September 2019

Opportunities

Takeaway #3: Overall interest in the NFL and MLB could already be weakening

Figure 4: Past 12-month interest in professional sports leagues, 2011-2019

Figure 5: Barriers to fandom, by sport, September 2019

Opportunities

What it means/what’s next

The Market – What You Need to Know

Americans love sports

Sports-related revenue comes from a variety of sources

The NFL is a powerhouse

The fantasy sports market is basically the fantasy football market

Scope of US Fandom

Most Americans are fans of the Big Three

Figure 6: Self-reported fandom, by sport, September 2019

Football is America’s most popular sport – especially the NFL

Figure 7: Past 12-month interest by type of sport, 2019

Fans equally interested in NCAA basketball and the NBA

Figure 8: Past 12-month interest in college sports, 2011-2019

Interest in summer Olympics spikes every four years

Figure 9: Past 12-month interest in the summer Olympics, 2010-2019

Case study: Reebok’s 1992 Dan and Dave campaign

Professional Sports Leagues

Professional sports leagues generate almost $40 billion in revenue

Figure 10: Total revenue for US major professional sports leagues and teams, 2009-2018

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Four primary leagues
Figure 11: Key numbers for US pro sports leagues, 2018
Figure 12: Team values within pro sports leagues, by league, 2018

Very different seasons
Tradition gave the MLB a long season; team income keeps it long
The NFL: Sports’ biggest moneymaker

Fantasy Sports
Fantasy fuels income for multiple industries
One in 10 men in the US play fantasy football
Figure 13: Past 12-month fantasy sports participation, June 2019
Figure 14: Past 12-month fantasy football participation, by gender, age and Hispanic origin, June 2019

Chances for fantasy sports to grow with Emerging Generation

Key Trends – What You Need to Know
Female athletes: winning accolades and gaining recognition
Many consumers lack the patience for baseball
The NFL must remain relevant to stay on top

What’s Working
ESPN, CBS and Yahoo! Sports are top destinations for sports news
Figure 15: Online behavior data: past seven-day visitation to select sports-related websites*, on any web-enabled device, among total adult population, Fall 2018-Spring 2019

Digital advertising spend on sports sites can be seasonal too
Figure 16: Total direct spend for top advertisers on ESPN.com, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019
Figure 17: eBay digital creative, desktop display, 2019

YouTube and social media offer opportunities to connect with fans
Fans look for older footage on YouTube

Spotlight: Retired, but still relevant
Figure 18: 30 Years of Comfort with Michael Jordan, March 2019
Figure 19: CX – Football Superstition :30, August 2019

Social media accounts offer fans a personal connection to favorite teams and players
Spotlight: Julian Edelman on YouTube
Figure 20: Julian Edelman’s State of the YouTube Address with Julian Edelman, September 2019

Foodservice chains benefit from Fantasy Football
Simone Biles breaks records; generates excitement for Tokyo 2020

What’s Struggling
Sports fandom in America is not yet 100%
Those who aren’t sports fans skew older and female
Non-fans do not offer a desirable target
Figure 21: Demographic infographic, sports fans vs non-fans, September 2019

The Big Three each face nuanced barriers to fandom
Football’s confusing rules present a barrier to non-fans
Shorter games and seasons could win more baseball fans
MLB struggles to shorten games
Basketball
  Figure 22: Correspondence analysis – Principal map – Barriers to fandom, September 2019
  Figure 23: Barriers to fandom, by sport, September 2019
The NFL weathers controversy
The Colin Kaepernick saga continues
Luck walks away

What to Watch
Potential trouble on the horizon for the NBA
NBA will face ethical challenges to keep its China market
Growing concerns about NBA players’ sleep deprivation
Legalized gambling will be a game changer
Bet on the NFL
Fantasy sports occupy a gambling gray area
Athletes grow vocal about fair treatment
US Women’s National Soccer team files lawsuit; demands equality
Olympians get the chance to cash in
California pioneers pay for student athletes

The Consumer – What You Need to Know
Youthful adults feel more connected to basketball
Football inspires passion in fans
Baseball and basketball fans put in more effort
Gifting occasions offer opportunities for team merchandise
Potential to grow US interest in soccer
Football viewing inspires fans to buy
Baseball draws fans in person
Tailgating happens most often for football

Characteristics of Sports Fans
Most are fans of the Big Three, but not all Big Three fans are the same
  Figure 24: Demographic infographic, Big Three fans vs Other fans, September 2019
Generational differences in fandom
Basketball draws more young fans than football
Baseball has greater appeal for older generations
  Figure 25: Sports fandom, by age, September 2019
Racial profile of fans varies across sports
  Figure 26: Sports fandom, by race and Hispanic origin, September 2019
Olympics-related sponsorships offer opportunities to reach female fans

Fans’ Passion and Engagement

True fandom requires commitment; inspires unity
Football fans claim to be the most passionate about their sport

Male fans more likely to feel passionate about sports

Basketball and baseball fans engage beyond just watching games

Case study: The Chicago Cubs’ new YouTube strategy

Branded Merchandise

True fans are open to gifting, but may balk at buying
Gifting could offer opportunities
Football fans buy more team apparel than basketball fans
Baseball fans buy more team-related hats than fans of other sports

Case study: Barclays NFL Extra Points Credit Card

Viewing Frequency

Almost half of all football fans seldom miss a game

Soccer fans are more interested in national teams than MLS

Watching at Home

Most fans watch sports coverage live on TV at home
Spotlight: Sunday night is laundry night?

Fans watch The Big Three in similar ways

Football works best for viewing parties

Even non-party viewing triggers purchases

Going to the Game

Attending live games isn’t a cheap prospect for fans
Baseball draws the most fans to live games
Case study: Red Sox make effort to keep fans engaged
Tailgating is most common among football fans
Figure 41: Attending live games, by sport, September 2019
Case study: RTIC Coolers
Figure 42: RTIC Coolers digital creative, desktop display, 2018

Appendix – Data Sources and Abbreviations
Data sources
Desk research
Consumer survey data
Behavioral data
Consumer qualitative research
Abbreviations and terms
Abbreviations
Terms
Generation definitions

Appendix – The Consumer
Figure 43: Online behavior data: past seven-day visitation to sports-related websites on any web-enabled device, among total adult population, Fall 2018-Spring 2019
Figure 44: Football fan engagement, by gender, September 2019
Figure 45: Football fans’ merchandise purchases, September 2019
Figure 46: Football fans’ food and beverage purchases, September 2019
Figure 47: Basketball fan engagement, by gender, September 2019
Figure 48: Basketball fans’ merchandise purchases, September 2019
Figure 49: Basketball fans’ food and beverage purchases, September 2019
Figure 50: Baseball fan engagement, by gender, September 2019
Figure 51: Baseball viewing habits, by gender, September 2019
Figure 52: Baseball fans’ merchandise purchases, September 2019
Figure 53: Baseball fans’ food and beverage purchases, September 2019

Correspondence Analysis
Methodology
Outputs
Figure 54: Correspondence analysis – Symmetrical map – Barriers to fandom, September 2019
Figure 55: Correspondence analysis – Principal map – Barriers to fandom, September 2019
Figure 56: Barriers to fandom, September 2019