

# The NFL flexes its streaming power, but its game plan has lots of caveats

Article

**The news:** The **National Football League** is launching its own streaming service called **NFL+**, but its many deals with other streamers make it a complicated sell.

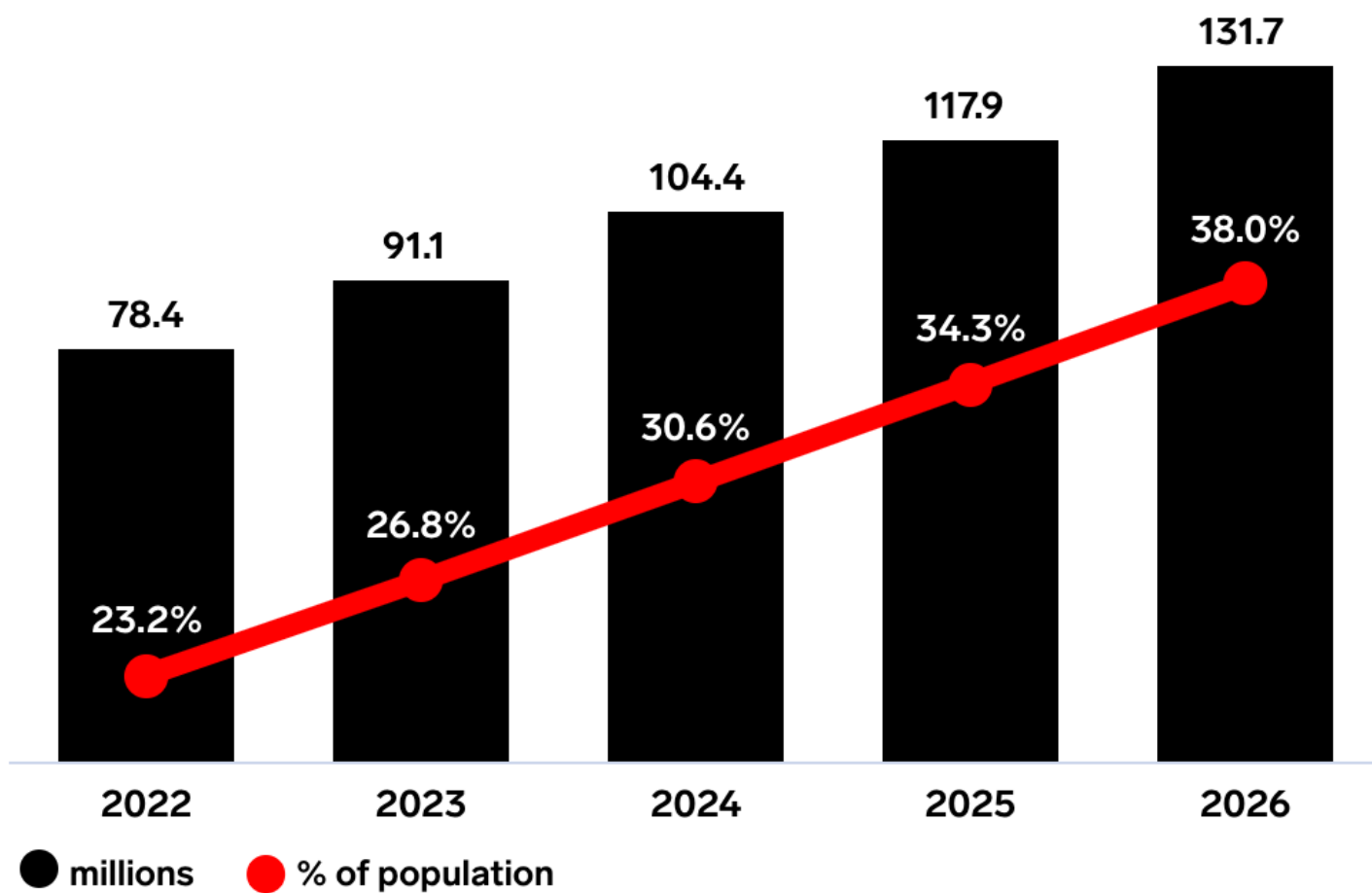
- Customers can choose between a **\$4.99 monthly** (or \$39.99 yearly) subscription or a **\$9.99 a month** (\$79.99/year) premium tier with ad-free replays of matches across devices.

**Creating a wedge:** NFL+ is launching in a very crowded streaming market, but its large audience and cheap price could give it an edge.

- NFL broadcasts are some of the most popular in TV, and a focal point for ad spending even as the industry starts to move money away from linear TV. NFL viewership rose 10% last year, and major events like the **Super Bowl** continue to be a **reliable mecca** for ad spending.
- US digital live sports viewers **will increase 23.2% this year to 78.4 million and reach 131.7 million by 2026**, putting digital sports viewing almost on par with standard live sports viewership.
- A streaming service will give the NFL a chance to capitalize on consumers' and advertisers' rapidly growing interest in live, digital sports. NFL+ will be more affordable than established streamers that have been hiking prices.

## Digital Live Sports Viewers

US, 2022-2026



Source: eMarketer, February 2022

eMarketer | InsiderIntelligence.com

**But there's a catch:** Because of the NFL's many streaming rights deals, the perks of NFL+ aren't too clear. So what exactly do NFL+ subscribers get, you ask? Let's take a deep breath:

- Viewers will be able to watch **all out-of-market preseason games** (matches between teams that are outside your area) and access the NFL's ad-free library of documentaries and specials.
- The subscription also includes access to regular season and post-season games—but **only those that air in their market**. That means out-of-market games aren't included, though it

seems live game audio may be available.

- But wait—there's another but. Those regular and post-season games will **only be viewable on phones and tablets**, which means NFL+ subscribers can't watch on their TVs, laptops, or other devices.
- To top it off, **NFL+ won't include any exclusive live broadcasts**, at least not at first. Paying NFL+ subscribers will still have to tune in to live TV, **Amazon's Thursday Night Football**, and whoever the NFL chooses as its new **Sunday Ticket** partner (a service that included all out-of-market Sunday matches for **\$300 a year**) to watch certain live broadcasts or watch on a non-mobile device.

For those counting, for the **cheapest possible full access to all NFL broadcasts**, viewers have to pay **at least \$519 per year** for Sunday Ticket, a year of Amazon Prime, and a year of NFL+—and that's not including whatever they pay for cable. Suddenly, that \$4.99 pricing doesn't look so cheap.

**The big takeaway:** Even though its viewership will be heavily fractured by its unique terms and existing streaming deals, NFL+ will attract advertiser attention thanks to the league's proven track record on TV and the growing digital sports audience.

- Its mobile focus may seem unusual, but it could also open the door to NFL ventures in the lucrative sports betting industry, which is [primarily making waves on mobile devices](#).