

Amazon's Thursday Night Football gamble is paying off. What does that mean for sports streaming?

Article

Amazon's \$1 billion-a-year Thursday Night Football bet appears to be paying off, drawing [record Prime sign-ups](#) and reinforcing advertisers' confidence in Amazon's streaming tech.

Once a pillar of pay TV, live sports have become the next big thing in streaming.

- This year there will be 160.2 million live sports viewers in the US, 84.0 million of whom will be digital.
- According to our [analyst Paul Verna](#), “growth in sports viewership is coming from adoption of digital platforms as opposed to traditional pay TV.”

Marching up the field: Streaming is the future of sports, and football is no exception.

- Verizon [announced](#) last week that the NFL’s mobile streaming service would be offered on Verizon’s subscription management platform.
- Apple wants in on the action. The 2023 Super Bowl halftime show, featuring Rihanna, will fall under Apple’s umbrella in an estimated \$50 million deal. Apple could also be eyeballing Sunday Ticket rights. The NFL’s price tag on that deal is reportedly [\\$2.5 billion](#).

Two-point conversion: Exclusive NFL rights also offer potential for extending game revenues via alternate broadcasts, which give viewers a more personalized feel.

- Amazon’s broadcasts feature alternative streams, including one with commentary from YouTube stunt giant [Dude Perfect](#).
- CBS made similar moves last year with NFL Slimetime on Nickelodeon. The broadcast provides an entry point to NFL games for younger viewers and proved to be enough of a success that Nick [brought it back](#) this year.

Home-field advantage: Exclusive streaming rights mean changes for advertisers.

- Amazon opted not to include beer and alcohol advertisements on Thursday Night Football. NFL games are some of the [biggest](#) expenditures for beer brands. Dry Thursdays could change that.

Final score: Once an asset of pay TV, sports—and NFL games in particular—are now an attraction for streamers. Exclusive rights to choice events have always come with major payoffs in advertising, and the advent of streaming means payoff in the form of new subscribers. But costs are high and the landscape’s still shifting, so each deal is a gamble.

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