

Fanáticos

Nielsen's playbook on Hispanic audiences, sports and media engagement



 **Nielsen**
2024 Diverse Intelligence Series



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Introduction

Hispanics aren't just watching the game, they're changing it.

Responsible for 71% of U.S. population growth between 2022-2023¹ and with more than \$3 trillion in purchasing power², Latinos have tremendous influence on the U.S. economy and culture. From Latino food and music to business leaders and sports stars, our community is a key part of U.S. society. Now, Hispanic audiences are rewriting the playbook on how the U.S. engages with sports and sports media.

Consider the U.S.'s recent surge of interest in international soccer, driven largely by Hispanic audiences and fans. The Copa América and the 2024 UEFA Champions League Final, both held July 14th of this year, drew some of the highest viewership numbers in history. But the growing appetite for soccer didn't stop there. It was immediately followed by a record-breaking 9 million viewers of the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team Gold Medal winning game.

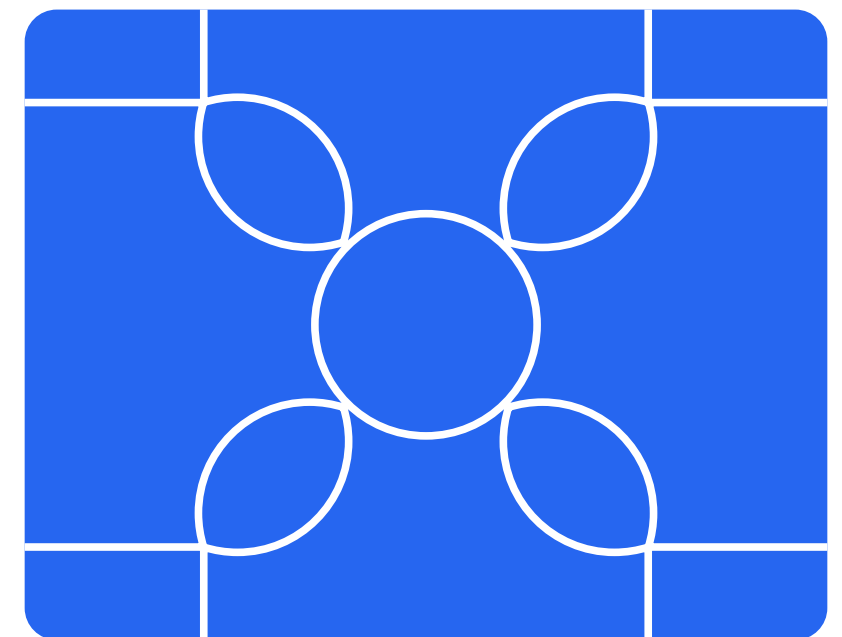
These events, long established in global sports, have recently gained unprecedented traction in the U.S. thanks, in part, to the enthusiasm of a growing Hispanic fan base. The growing appeal of international sports within the U.S. brings fresh excitement and opportunities for fan and brand engagement.

This report provides brands with deeper insights into how Hispanic fans engage with sports media and are shaping the future of U.S. sports culture. As Hispanic fans drive new trends in sports viewership, brands, leagues and media rights holders have a unique opportunity to connect with a passionate, growing and influential audience



Stacie de Armas

Nielsen SVP Diverse Insights,
Intelligence and Innovation



¹U.S. Census Bureau
²Latino Donor Collaborative



Sizable segment

65M

Latinos in the U.S.

19%

of the total population

(U.S. Census Bureau)



Spending powerhouse

\$3.4T

Purchasing power

(Latino Donor Collaborative 2023)

Hispanic community:
**A growing influence
in the U.S.**

Young

31 yrs old

Median age

(U.S. Census Bureau)



Multilingual

68%

Speak some Spanish

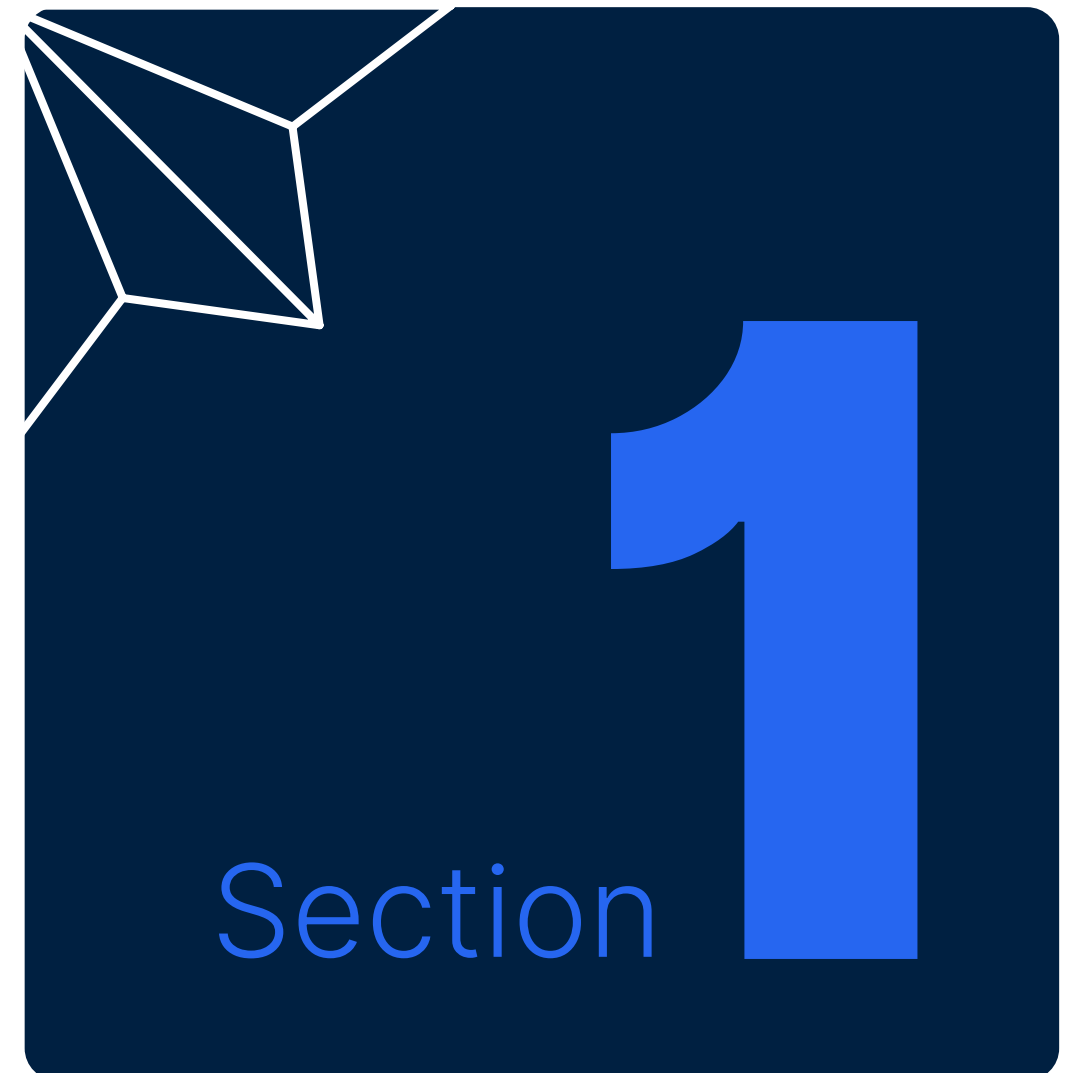
32%

Speak only English

(U.S. Census Bureau)



Hispanic audiences' media consumption



Hispanic media time is evolving

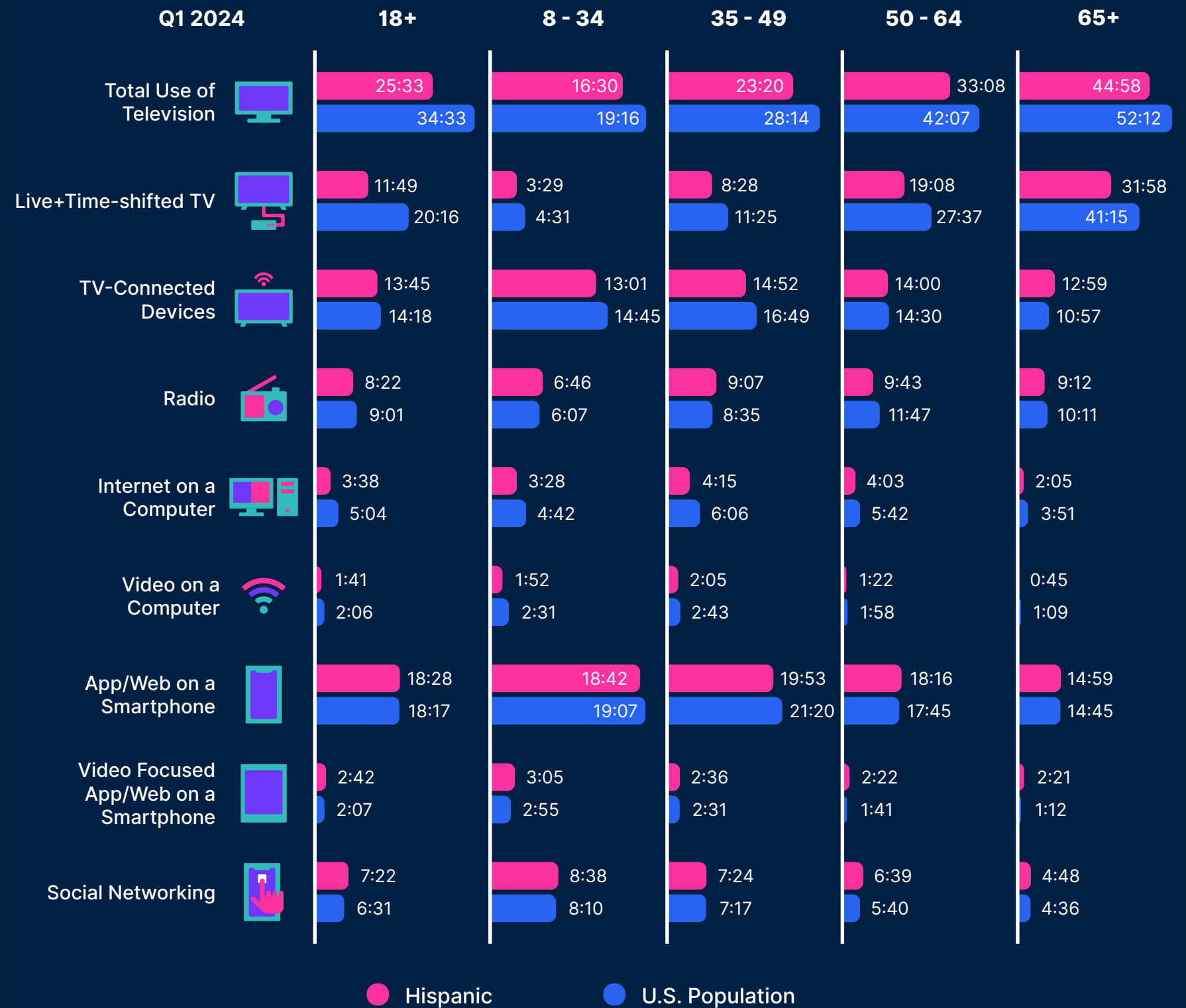
Within the media industry, publishers, brands and agencies alike must understand who's capturing their attention, and where. This is particularly true with sports content, as the growing Hispanic audience begins making up a larger segment of the fanbase for sports leagues like the NFL, NHL, NBA and WNBA.

While Hispanic audiences spend less time with traditional media than the general U.S. population, this trend reflects the youthful and active nature of this demographic. With a median age that skews 13 years younger than non-Hispanic white audiences, U.S. Hispanics are more likely to engage with media through connected devices and social platforms. Hispanic audiences spend an average of 25 hours a week with TV, with much of that time devoted to CTV devices (13:45) demonstrating a preference for flexible on-demand viewing experiences. This group also remains engaged with live and time-shifted content (11:49).

The U.S. Hispanic population is also particularly engaged with social networking sites on smartphones, where they spend nearly one hour more each week than the general population. Hispanic audiences are highly active in the digital space, presenting opportunities for brands to connect where Hispanics are most engaged.

Figure 1.1

Weekly time spent with media, Hours: Minutes



Source: Nielsen Audience Measurement Data, Q1 2024

Digital trendsetters





Streaming is the clear leader for where Hispanic audiences' eyes are going, capturing nearly 50% of all viewership and reflecting a strong preference for flexible, on-demand programming. However, broadcast television remains a significant player, particularly among Spanish-language dominant Hispanics, where it captures 28.4% of viewership—nearly 8 points higher than the total U.S. This indicates a sustained demand for culturally relevant programming often provided by Spanish-language broadcast networks.

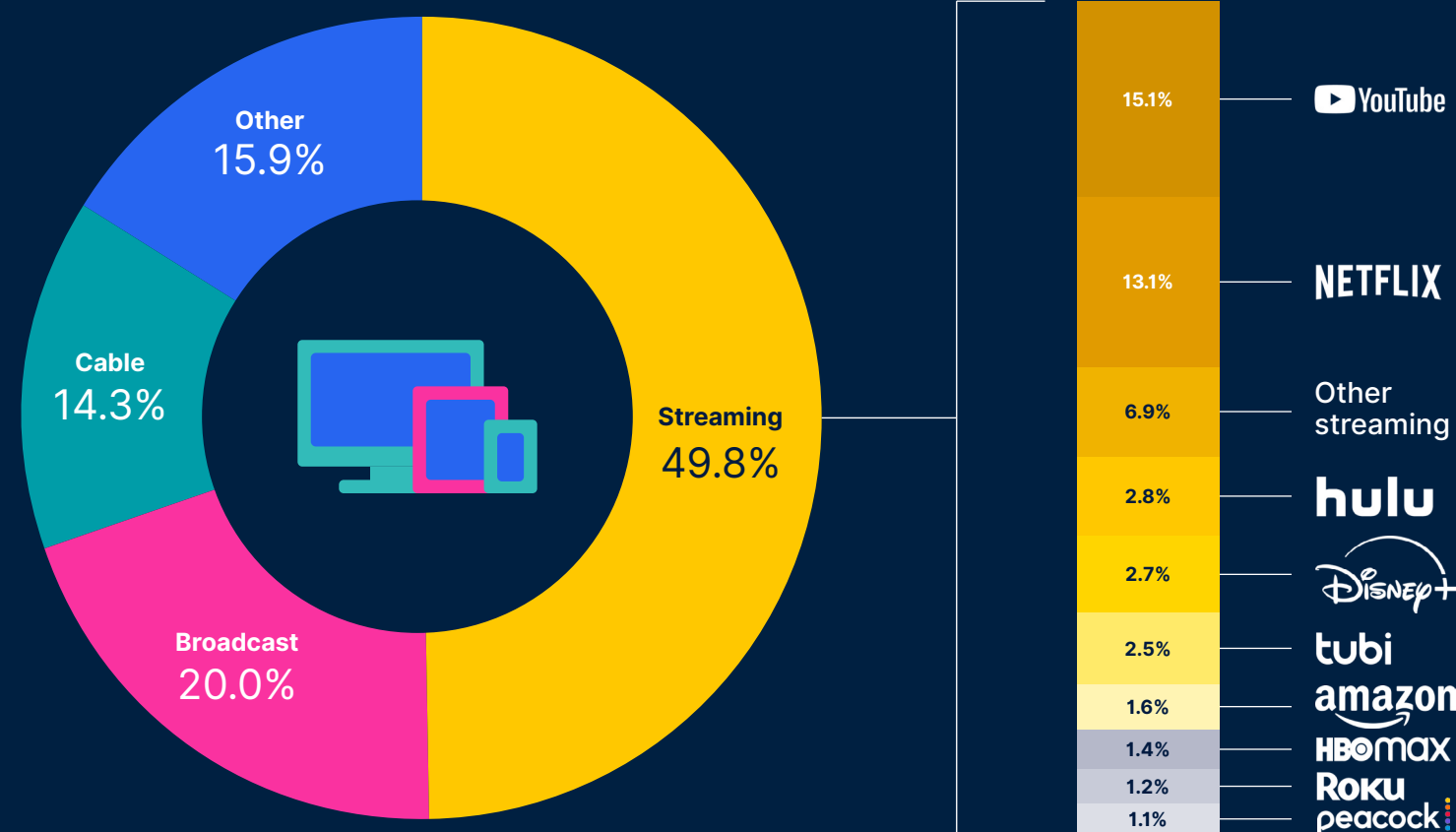
While cable viewership is considerably lower among Hispanic audiences compared to the general U.S. population, platforms like YouTube stand out among Spanish-language dominant viewers, where usage is as high as 17.2%. This suggests a strong appetite for content available within the platform that resonates culturally and linguistically.

The “Other” category is particularly significant for English-language dominant Hispanics, who spend nearly 19% of their time outside of broadcast, streaming or cable. This category includes unmeasured video on demand (VOD), niche platforms, audio streaming, gaming, and other device (DVD playback) use. This engagement with “Other” media highlights that English-language dominant Hispanics have a diverse and fragmented media diet, seeking out personalized, interactive content beyond traditional TV.

Figure 1.2

How Hispanic audiences in the U.S. watch TV across platforms

Viewing Source	Total Hispanic	Total U.S.	Hispanic - English Dom	Hispanic - Spanish Dom
 Streaming	49.8%	40.3%	52.0%	47.2%
 Broadcast	20.0%	20.5%	12.4%	28.4%
 Cable	14.3%	27.2%	16.8%	11.4%
 Other	15.9%	12.0%	18.8%	13.0%



Note: Streaming does not include MVPD/vMVPD.
Source: Nielsen Audience Measurement data, June 2024

Hispanics boost soccer popularity in the U.S.

Of the 2023-2024 season's biggest sports events, two were particularly important for Hispanic audiences. According to Nielsen audience measurement data, The Copa América Final attracted over 12 million viewers across Univision and Fox—becoming the most watched Copa Final in U.S. history—and 53% of viewers in the U.S. were Hispanic. The 2024 UEFA Champions League final also set records with 9.5 million U.S. viewers, and a whopping 40% of those U.S. viewers were Hispanic.

The Copa tournament has seen its appeal broaden significantly. Over the past three tournaments, the percentage of Hispanic viewers has shifted from 73% to 53%. This doesn't mean that fewer Hispanics are watching, but rather that Copa has gained traction among non-Hispanic viewers and is a testament to the increasing influence and universal appeal of soccer, driven by the enthusiasm of Hispanic fans.

Total U.S. audiences for sporting events traditionally rooted in Hispanic culture are growing: Liga MX Clausura Finals are up

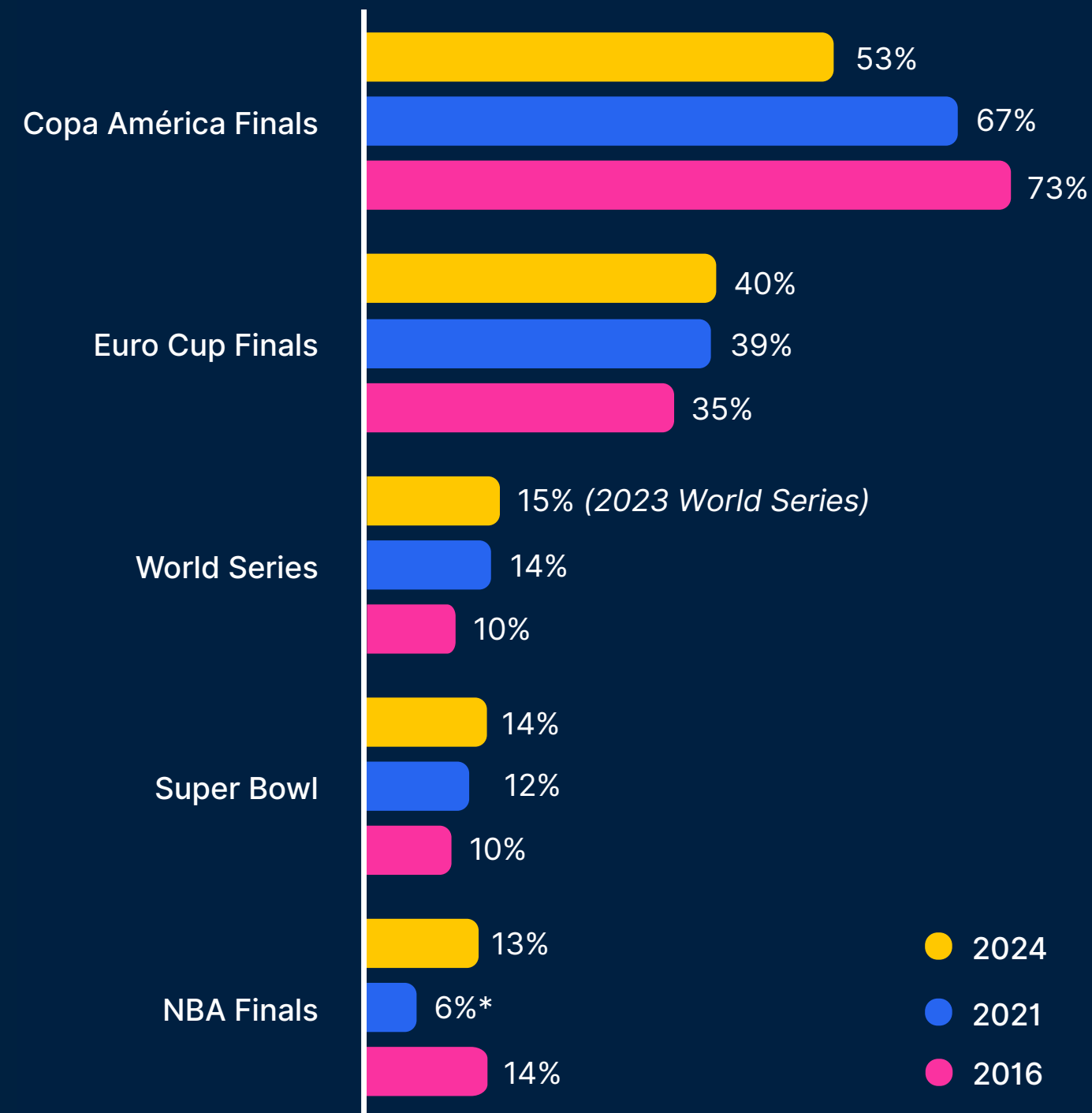
74%

from 2016 to 2023 and 9% up between 2021 and 2023.

Figure 1.3

Hispanic audience viewership share across major sporting events

% of U.S. viewers who are Hispanic



*Shortened season and delayed start caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
Source: Nielsen Audience Measurement Data, 2023-2024

U.S. sports gain traction with Hispanic audiences

Of course, The Copa América and UEFA Champions League Finals aren't the only major sporting events this community cares about. In figure 1.4, we see viewership growth across a wide variety of sports and leagues.

Hispanic viewership of the NCAA Women's Basketball Championship has seen staggering growth over the past few years. While this reflects a broader trend of increasing interest (and viewership) in [women's sports](#) across the general U.S. population, it's interesting to see Hispanic interest is also increasing.

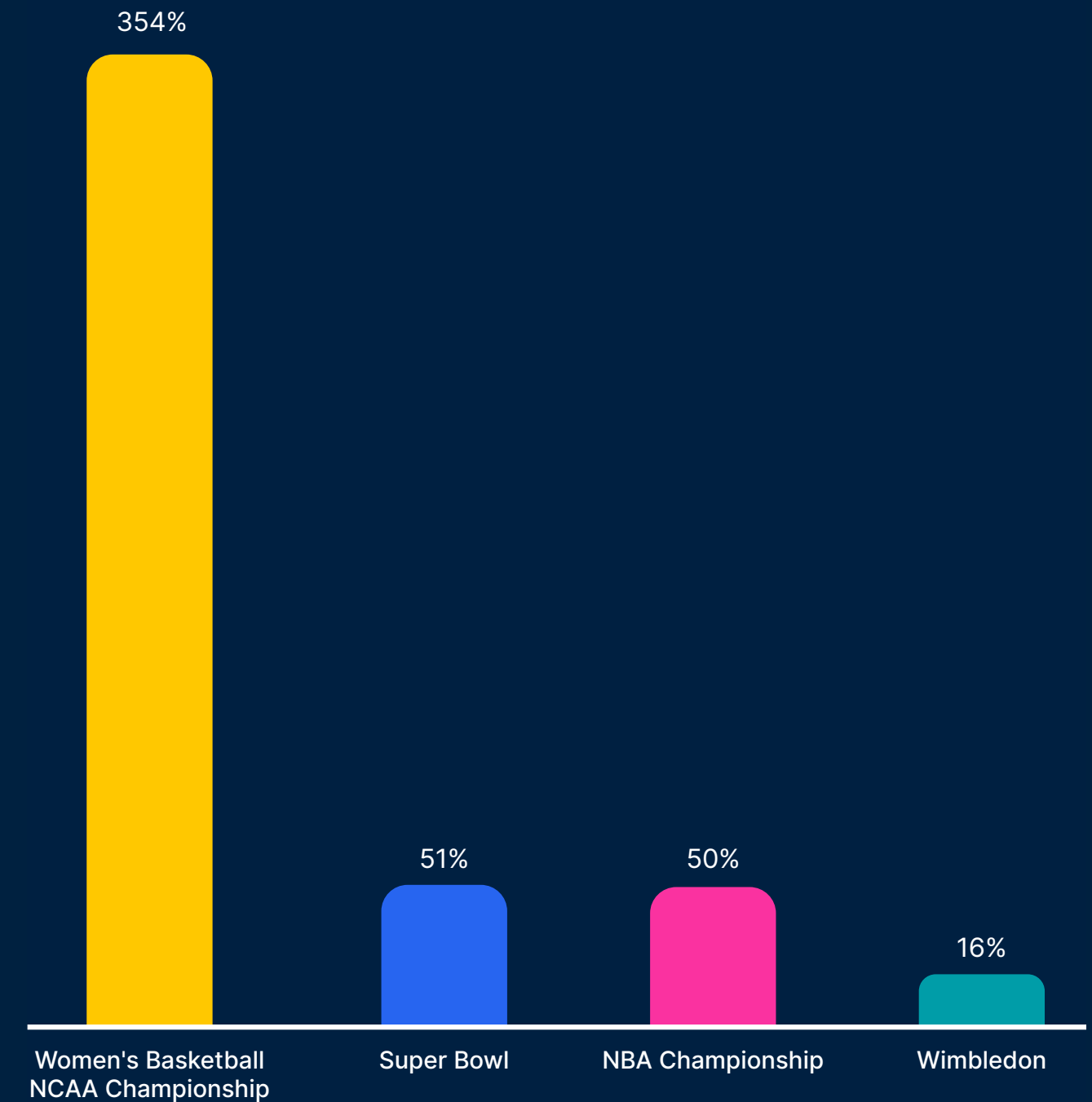
Between 2021 and 2024, Hispanic viewership of the NCAA Women's Championship skyrocketed by 354%. Overall, from 2016 to 2024, Hispanic viewership increased by an astounding 1,003%, reaching over 1 million Hispanic viewers in 2024. This dramatic rise highlights the growing enthusiasm within the Hispanic community for U.S. women's college basketball, showcasing the expanding influence and engagement of Hispanic audiences in sports that are deeply rooted in U.S. sports culture and women's sports.

On ESPN's list of top 25 players to watch in the NCAA Women's Tournament are two outstanding Latinas: **Hannah Hidalgo** (Notre Dame) and **Kamilla Cardoso** (South Carolina and now on WNBA's Chicago Sky).



Figure 1.4

Growth of Hispanic viewership of major sporting events 2021-2024



Source: Nielsen Audience Measurement Data, 2021-2024

Hispanic influence on U.S. sports viewership

As Hispanic culture permeates mainstream U.S. sports, events like Copa América have transcended cultural boundaries and are becoming a bigger part of the broader U.S. sports landscape. As the U.S. Hispanic population grows, the community will continue to boost the fan bases of all sports. This cultural exchange enriches the sports landscape as Hispanic fans bring their passion to games like football, baseball and basketball.



What sports will dominate the media industry over the next two years?

“

Women's sports and sports that translate globally. Soccer has had tremendous growth in the U.S. Now, we're all starting to think about cricket. So when you think about women's sports in their entirety and sports that translate globally as the world becomes more interconnected, integrated, interchangeable, those will be what continue to grow most quickly.

Dana McGraw

SVP of Data & Measurement Science - Disney

”

Opportunity to engage fans

With the rising popularity of time-shifted viewing, live sports are valuable chances to connect with viewers in the moment. With women's sports and sports that are popular internationally growing in popularity, these games can present opportunities for investment that may be less competitive than major sports leagues and earn you good will from eager fans.

Changing the way we 'fan'



Section 2

A white geometric graphic element consisting of a square with a circle inside it, partially overlapping the square's corner. It is set against a dark blue background.

The influence of players and fans

For sports lovers, fandom runs much deeper than the final score. Within minority groups, sports can also provide a natural way to get immersed in the local culture, strengthen communities and fuel better media representation for both the athletes who play and fans who support.

In the first section of this report we noted the appeal of Spanish-language programming for Hispanic audiences. We also revealed that Hispanic audiences spend more time with social media than the general population. Both insights were fully capitalized in the NFL's 2023 campaign with Diana Flores, Captain and Quarterback of the Mexican Flag Football team. Flores became a trailblazer not just for Flag Football, but for the broader Hispanic community. Her prominent role in the NFL's "[Run With It](#)" campaign was the first time the league has used Super Bowl time to spotlight flag football. This was a pivotal moment in sports marketing. The campaign resonated deeply with Hispanic audiences as [portions of the campaign](#) were delivered in Spanish and designed for its Spanish-speaking fans. This campaign was a statement about the power of representation.

By placing a Latina athlete at the forefront, the NFL acknowledged the importance of diversity and set a standard for how brands can authentically connect with Hispanic audiences. And Hispanic sports fans are helping lead the way for other minority groups by raising expectations for how brands and platforms can and should serve their unique needs.



Diana Flores

Photo Credit: Grasiela Gonzaga

Opportunity to engage fans













Influencer marketing is quickly growing in popularity. Consider partnering with Hispanic athletes, who can tap into their networks to help promote your brand. Thoughtful partnerships that consider players' cultural background can demonstrate your support of their sport, as well as the larger community.

Sports stars on the field and online

Diana Flores is just one of many Hispanic athletes whose influence extends beyond the field. These sports stars are leveraging their platforms to drive real impact, both in their sport and in the broader cultural conversation. So who are some of the standout Hispanic sports stars on social media? We crunched the numbers to see whose influence was growing and how much media value their platforms create. This list is in no way exhaustive but helps reveal the deep bench of Hispanic stars who can drive real impact in their respective spaces.

Figure 2.1

Influential Hispanic and Latino athletes on Instagram

Athlete Name	Country	Sport	Handle	Followers	Followers Growth	Engagement Rate	Average media value per post (Brand or organic)
Canelo Alvarez	 Mexico	Boxer	@canelo	18,238,857	+9.3%	3.5%	\$121,899
Devin Booker	 Puerto Rico	Basketball	@dbook	5,605,003	+0.7%	3.8%	\$39,881
Diana Flores	 Mexico	Flag Football	@dianafres33	190,319	+1.9%	4.0%	\$1,404
Diana Taurasi	 U.S.	Basketball	@dianataurasi	350,583	+12.7%	4.5%	\$2,917
Isiah Pacheco	 Puerto Rico	Football	@lil_poppy856	646,334	+26.0%	3.1%	\$3,889
Juan Celaya	 Mexico	Diving	@meme_celaya	74,699	+194.8%	16.7%	\$2,225
Lionel Messi	 Argentina	Soccer	@leomessi	505,017,064	+1.2%	1.1%	\$1,135,242
María Sánchez	 Mexico	Soccer	@mariagsanchez17	202,096	+4.4%	4.0%	\$1,517
Nate Diaz	 Mexico	MMA	@natediaz209	7,004,650	+2.6%	1.9%	\$25,300
Osmar Olvera	 Mexico	Diving	@osmardiver05	203,620	+199.3%	12.7%	\$4,141
Rebeca Andrade	 Brazil	Gymnastics	@rebecarandrade	10,445,557	+284.2%	4.5%	\$86,378
Thiago Almada	 Argentina	Soccer	@thiago_almada23	1,708,142	+10.1%	5.0%	\$16,118

Source: Nielsen InfluenceScope, February - July 2024

The Messi effect

Lionel Messi's move to Inter Miami in 2023 wasn't just a transfer; it was a seismic shift in the world of sports. Messi's debut boosted the viewership of his team and transformed the way people in the U.S. engage with soccer. It highlighted the power of Hispanic athletes to bring new audiences into the fold and redefined mainstream U.S. sports culture.

Messi's arrival in Major League Soccer marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of U.S. sports. Historically, soccer has been seen as a niche sport in the U.S., with its strongest following among Hispanic communities. However, Messi's presence is transcending these boundaries, drawing in a broader audience that includes youth and non-Hispanic viewers to help mainstream the sport.

Compared to previous games, Messi's debut match for Inter Miami led to a

300%

spike in viewership on Apple TV+, where the majority of that season streamed exclusively.

The first game Messi played also drove a

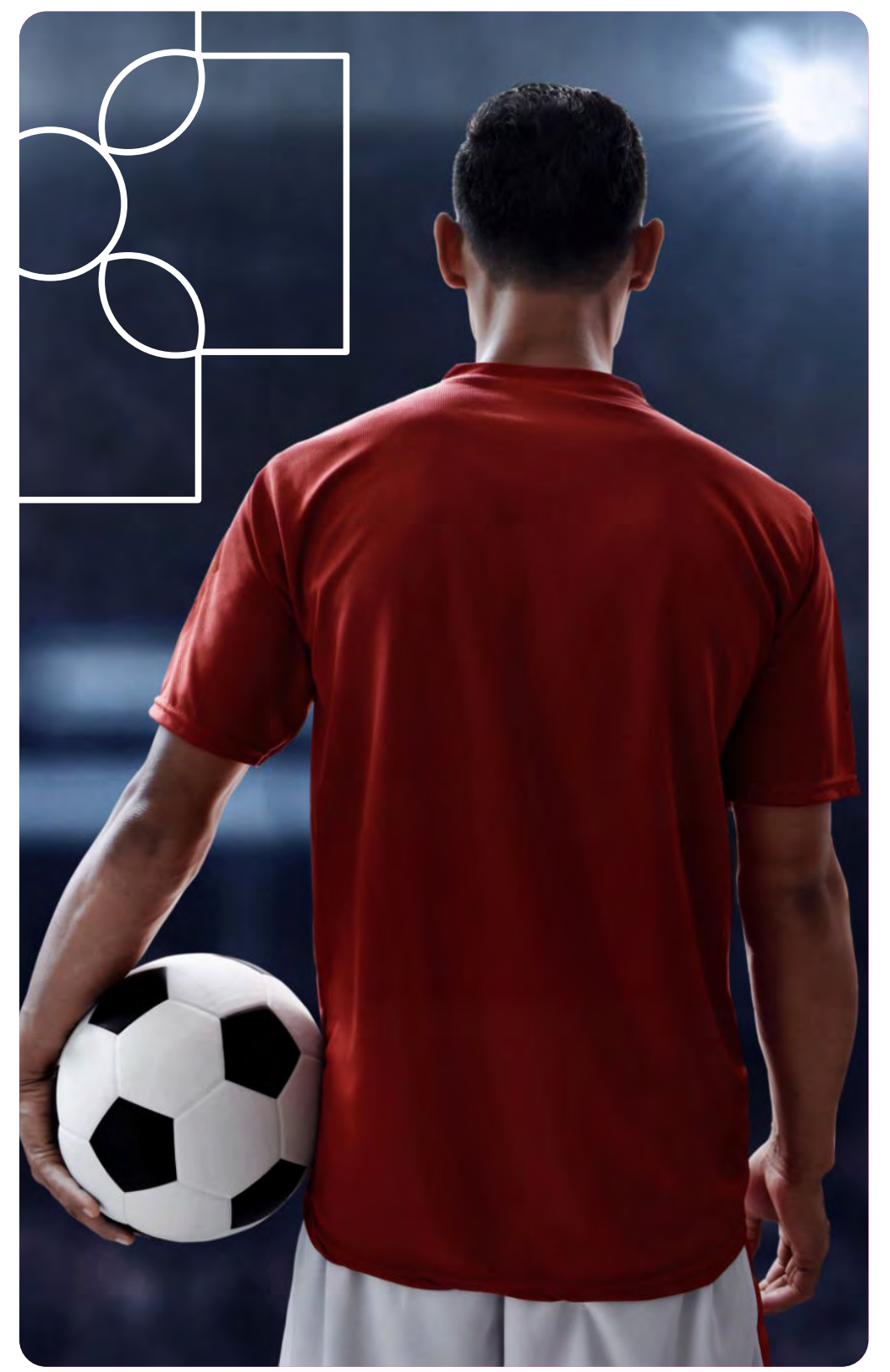
270%

increase in linear TV viewership on Univision and TUDN, showing his broad appeal.

On the day of the Leagues Cup final (8/19/23), where Messi led Inter Miami to victory, Apple TV+ saw a

32%

rise in total minutes watched compared to previous Saturdays with no live soccer.



Source: Nielsen Streaming Content Ratings custom analyses

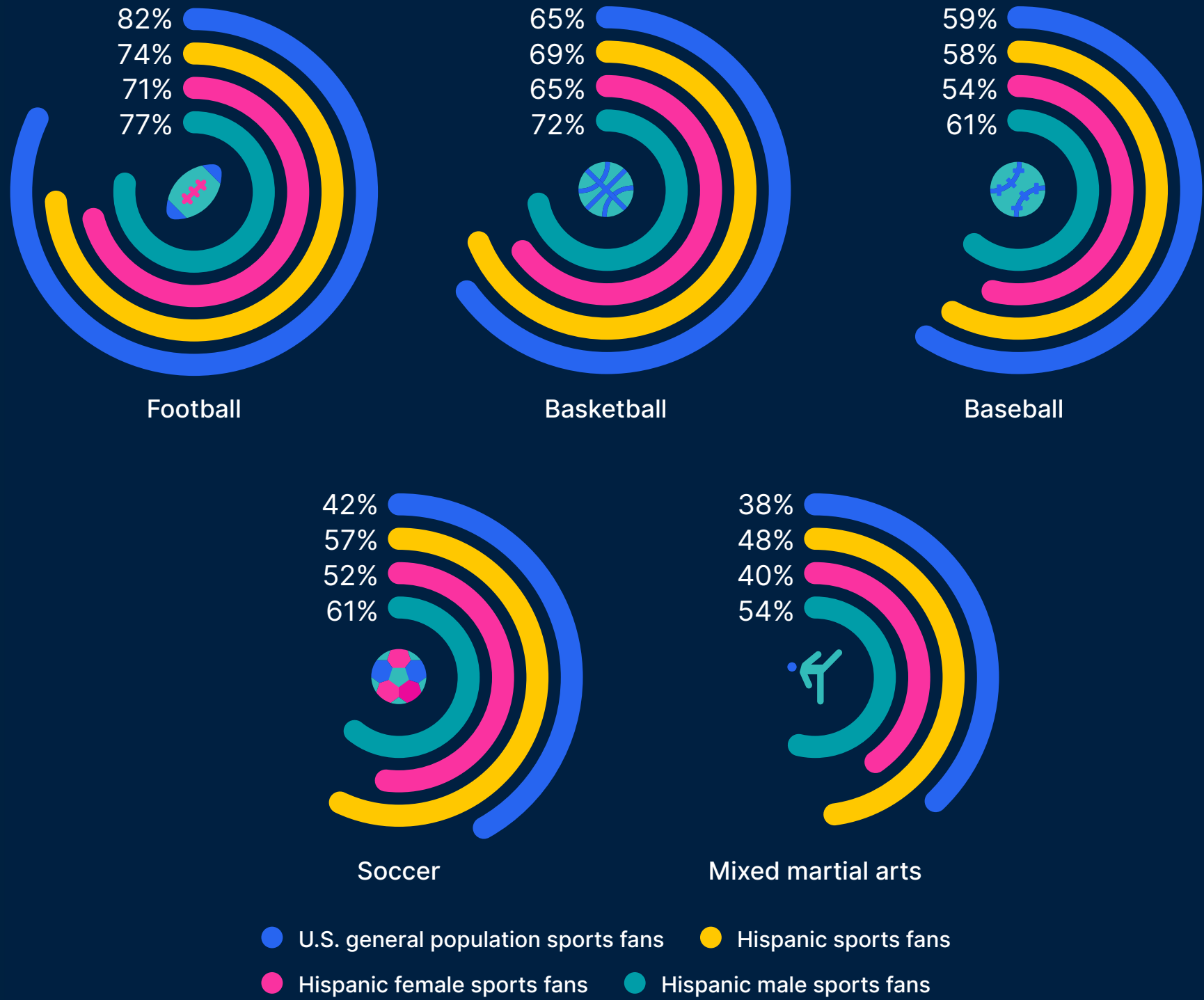
Beyond Hispanic soccer fandom

Our list of influential Hispanic and Latino stars pull from all different sports. While soccer has long and deep ties across the Hispanic community, it's not the only sport this cohort is enthusiastic about. In fact, recent Nielsen Fan Insights data reveals that interest in U.S. football, basketball and baseball all rank higher than soccer among Hispanic respondents in the U.S.

This chart reveals the incredible potential that sports leagues and sponsors well beyond soccer have to engage with this community. And many are actively capitalizing on the moment. Both the NFL and MLB have strategically engaged their Hispanic fans by hosting regular season games in Mexico. And the Kansas City Chiefs just released their first all-Spanish language documentary, "[Viva Chiefs Kingdom](#)," which follows Chief fans throughout Mexico on the club's road to the 2023 Super Bowl championship.

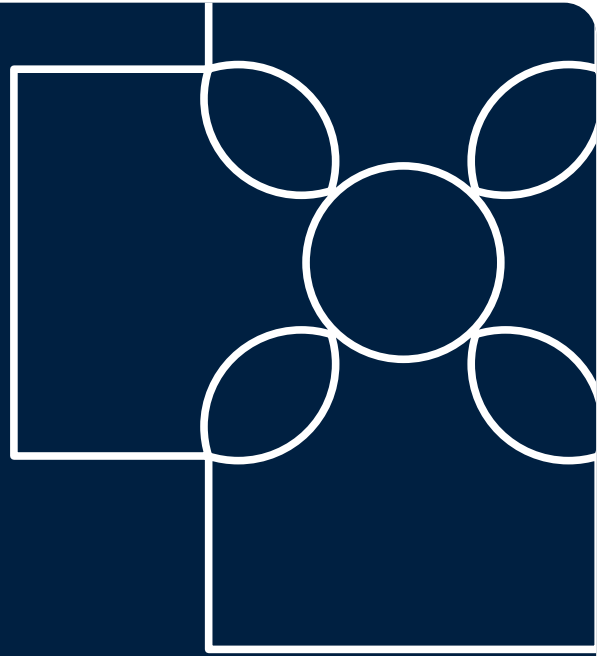
With fandom size and interest growing, now is the exact right time for the leagues and brands to lean into reaching the Hispanic audience. Those who invest in understanding and connecting with Hispanic sports fans will benefit from their loyalty and be part of shaping the future of sports in the U.S.

Figure 2.2
Top five most popular sports by interest



Source: Nielsen Fan Insights (January-June 2024)

The power of brand sponsorships



Hispanic sentiment toward sponsors

We've shared insights into how Hispanic audiences consume media, sports and the leagues and players they're drawn to. Now it's time to understand how this group engages with sports sponsorships.

When speaking broadly and generally, Hispanic sports fans are enthusiastic about the brands who support the sports they care about.

Compared to the general population, Hispanic sports fans are 32% more likely to consider a brand for the first time when they sponsor a sport they follow. They are 29% more likely to agree that they choose a sponsor's product rather than a rival's brand (if price and quality are the same.) Hispanic sports fans are 37% more likely to feel loyal to a brand who sponsors a sport they follow, and they are 39% more likely than the general population to recommend a brand if they sponsor a sport they follow.

Figure 3.1

U.S. Hispanic attitudes toward sponsorships vs. general U.S. population

Latinos are significantly/slightly more likely to...

↑ 39%
 recommend a company if it were to sponsor an event or sport they follow

↑ 37%
 be loyal to a company that sponsors an event or sport they follow

↑ 32%
 consider a company's brand, product(s) or service(s) for the first time when that company sponsors an event or sport they follow

↑ 29%
 choose a sponsor's product rather than rival brands if price and quality were the same

Source: Nielsen Fan Insights (January – June 2024)



Brand enthusiasm and opportunity

Hispanic enthusiasm is high, and so are the brand opportunities. Because the fan experience is so much bigger than what happens during the game, there's more potential than ever to create a constant drumbeat of activity and grow your reach when you tap into content analysis, influencer athletes and user-generated content. And the momentum around Hispanic audiences and the sports they love is incentivizing the entire industry to create more interesting experiences that surround and go beyond the live events.

“

Women's sports is an opportunity within the Hispanic opportunity that isn't fully capitalized on yet. Brands should make an early investment there, because growth in that arena is going to happen, it's just a matter of time.

Roberto Ruiz

EVP of Research - TelevisaUnivision

”



Opportunity to engage fans

Brands looking for new ways to engage with Hispanic audiences should also look closely at women's sports opportunities.

Despite growing enthusiasm for women's sports, games can be hard to find and many marquee events are still housed in small and antiquated venues. Growing and amplifying women's sports stories and focusing your marketing spend toward women's games being played on the biggest stages can add genuine value to the fan experience.



Conclusion

As media has fragmented, sports—especially live sports—are playing a bigger role in media and advertising. Publishers are spending big on media rights deals involving leagues such as the NFL and MLS. It's not really surprising why they're investing—live sports moments like this year's Super Bowl are commanding [record-breaking viewership](#). As Hispanic fans continue to redefine what it means to be a sports fan in the U.S., the message is clear: To stay ahead, leagues, media rights holders and brands must engage authentically with this powerhouse demographic or risk being left behind in the game they're helping to transform.



Opportunities to engage Hispanic fans

Understand Hispanic fans on a deeper level

While Hispanic consumers make up a powerful demographic segment within the U.S., it's a mistake to approach this community as a monolith. There are inherent nuances—from language preferences to finances, age and an array of cultural experiences—that inhibit a one-size-fits-all approach.

Tapping into advanced audience insights and measurement to better understand Hispanic sports fans at a deeper level can ensure that content and marketing strategies build authentic relationships.

Connect through culture and language

Content that is representative of Latino values and perspectives are critical considerations for any creator, distributor or brand thinking about engaging with Hispanic audiences.

While popular, Spanish-language programming isn't the only way to engage fans. Hispanics are highly adaptable when it comes to language; they are open to consuming content in either Spanish or English, provided the content is culturally meaningful and resonant, demonstrating that shared experiences can be more pivotal than language itself.

Engage with community on and off the field

These days, fan experiences stretch well beyond games themselves and create opportunities to build strong brand sentiment by authentically engaging with the Hispanic community.

More than 83% of Hispanic respondents say they would think more favorably of a brand if they felt it was playing a positive role in the community.²

Tapping into Hispanic athletes and the causes they're supporting can be one way brands and leagues can demonstrate their support beyond the field.

² 2023 Hispanic Sentiment Study by We Are All Human and Nielsen, Powered by Toluna

Methodology

Television methodology

Television data is derived from Nielsen's National TV Panel that is based on a sample of over 41,000 homes that are selected based on area probability sampling.

Streaming Content Ratings

Audience measurement data that details how consumers are spending time with programs and episodes viewed through the top streaming platforms.

Streaming Platform Ratings

Audience measurement data that details the amount of time consumers spend streaming and on which platforms.

Nielsen Ad Intel

Ad Intel provides the most complete source of cross-platform advertising intelligence available today. With intuitive software, review-and-compare ad activity across media, company, category or brand, plus historical data. Nielsen monitors gross advertising expenditure in major media at published rate card values.

Nielsen InfluenceScope

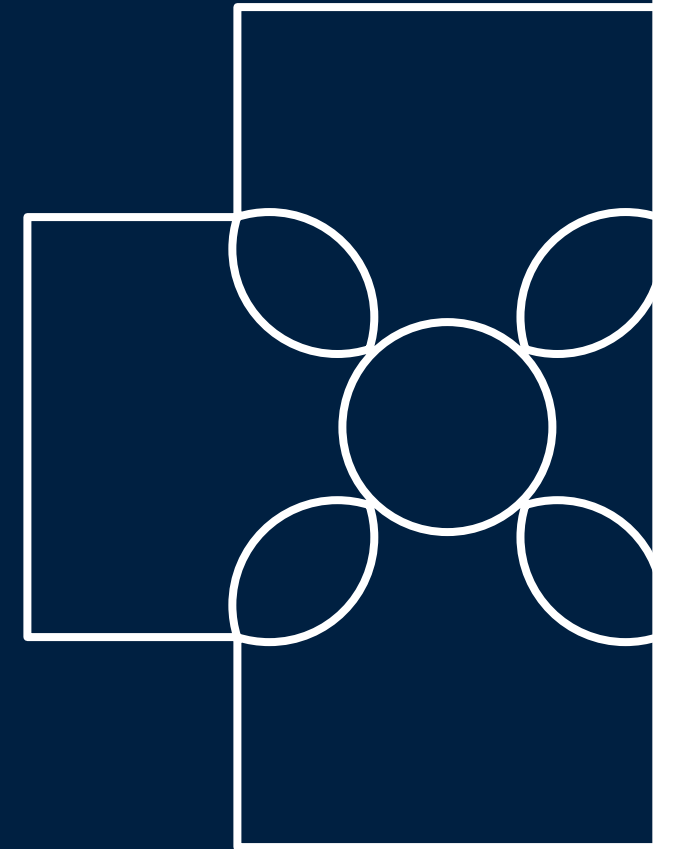
InfluenceScope measures personalities against business KPIs to determine effectiveness and alignment. Data inputs include distribution, reach, engagement, interests and themes, socio-demographic and psychographic fit, media return and effectiveness.

Nielsen Fan Insights

Nielsen Fan Insights (NFI) brings together a unique combination of data sources delivered in a single connected platform. The dashboard provides a comprehensive view into sports fans' interests, media behavior, brand attitudes and purchasing habits.

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About Nielsen

Nielsen shapes the world's media and content as a global leader in audience measurement, data and analytics. Through our understanding of people and their behaviors across all channels and platforms, we empower our clients with independent and actionable intelligence so they can connect and engage with their audiences—now and into the future.

Nielsen operates around the world in more than 55 countries. Learn more at www.nielsen.com and connect with us on social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram).

Audience Is Everything®