

Headline: Younger Sports Fans Want More Control of Viewing: Amplifi's Mike Law

Sports fans will find a way to watch their favorite players and teams, giving advertisers a way to participate in programming among a wider variety of devices. Amid the fragmentation of the media market, audience-based targeting is central to reaching those fans, especially younger consumers.

"Whatever you're a fan of today, you can find that sport. Younger audiences like that -- because they want to control the experience," Mike Law, president of Amplifi USA, the media buying agency owned by Dentsu, said in this video discussion on Beet.TV. "It's still one of the few places where you can create such excitement and buzz."

Speaking to James Rothwell, vice president of global agency, brand and industry relations at Comcast Advertising, Law said younger viewers are looking for sports content that's easier to consume in shorter segments throughout the day.

"It puts a lot of emphasis on highlights. These audiences are not used to watching a three- or four-hour game at once," Law said. "They're going to consume 10 games within that window" by watching highlights and analysis. With the expansion of legalized sports betting, that analysis adds value to the viewing experience, too.

Audience-Based Targeting Is Key

Audience-based targeting is crucial in reaching fans as they consume sports content among different devices and media platforms, including social media and video on demand.

"It's the ability to follow that audience, to talk about audiences versus broad demographics," Law said. "There's only upside to it from an advertiser standpoint. It's the addressability, it's getting that passionate fan where they want to be."

Amid the limitations on fan attendance, sports leagues, broadcasters and marketers adapted their strategies to engage viewers. They experimented with everything from new kinds of signage that was visible on-camera to video mosaic walls that showed fans cheering for their favorite teams while livestreaming games at home.

Law said he expects a return of fans in stands to make the viewing experience more exciting, especially for college basketball games that feed off the energy of the surrounding crowds.

"College basketball just isn't the same without fans," he said.

Bidding for Sports Programming Heats Up

Broadcasters traditionally have made live sports programming a central part of their schedules, but they may face growing competition from digital platforms that bid for streaming rights.

Video-on-demand services have become more popular as households connect their TVs directly to the internet, and they need fresh programming to help differentiate their brands.

"This next round of negotiations is going to be interesting and really expensive," Law said. "The digital players have a lot of cash that they can bring to the table."

He cited the example of Amazon, which for the past four years has livestreamed "Thursday Night Football" alongside Fox and the NFL Network. Amazon has showcased its technological prowess, letting viewers see on-demand replays and data about players, and pick from a menu of multiple announcer feeds.

Amid the higher prices for broadcasting rights, advertisers will demand that media owners provide sponsorship opportunities that aren't limited to a 30-second spot in a sports broadcast, Law said.

"What I'm not excited for is the price tag. That price tag is going to be high, and ultimately, that's passed along to consumers, passed along to advertisers," Law said. "We're going to have to think about how we're going to offset that and be more creative, and get the equal value."

You are watching "Live Sports 2021: What's Next on TV," a Beet.TV + VAB leadership video series presented by Effectv, a Comcast company. For more videos, [please visit this page](#).