



When it comes to defining that which is "typically American," I think we're going to have to add "sports" to the old expression, "As American as Mom and apple pie." We are a country full of sports fanatics. (While I might not exactly fall into that category, I am the mother of an extraordinary 17-year-old athlete and lover of all things sports. So, I have to admit, that I need to step up and try to keep up!) Nielsen numbers bear this out. Sports programs are among the top watched in African-American households as well as those of the general population, with the Super Bowl consistently ranking as the most-watched program across the board. In fact, Super Bowl XLVII drew 108 million viewers nationally. African – Americans made up a whopping 12.5 million of those viewers. (Personally, I enjoy the parties and the commercials, the game? Not so much.)

With football and basketball season in full swing, Nielsen has identified and measured a phenomenal, growing niche industry, Fantasy Sports. Now, for those of you who, like me, were not familiar with this popular trend – Fantasy Leagues are places where you can use the web, smartphones and/or tablets, act as sports general managers, to draft professional athletes from your favorite pro teams to make up the roster how you see it in your own personal league. Fantasy points are awarded to the players, based on their performance in the actual games being played. You and your friends can compete or bet against each other while watching the real game. While you can organize a fantasy team in any sport, football is the most popular, with more than 10 million Americans using fantasy football apps on their smartphones.

So, who's playing all of these Fantasy Sports? African-Americans are the second largest group who engage in this cultural phenomenon and make up 12 percent of fantasy sports players. And, there's no shocker here, but 67 percent of fantasy players are male, which accounts for most of those who participate in fantasy sports. The average fantasy player is between the ages of 25-34. But, hold on fellas! What was a surprise to me, though, is that so many women are getting in on the action. Our insights show that 32 percent of adult fantasy sports players online

Fantasy sports scores with mobile and online users

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are female. That's every man's dream, right? A woman who loves her sports.

And of course, advertisers are hip to this trend as well. In 2012, \$13.3 billion was spent on sporting event programming all in an effort to capture the eyes and win the hearts of fantasy sports players.

Fantasy sports players are:

- 12 percent more likely to have children
- More likely to earn \$50,000 – \$75,000 a year
- 84 percent more likely than the average U.S. adult to buy movie tickets online
- 67 percent more likely to purchase credit cards online
- 66 percent more likely to purchase insurance online
- 60 percent more likely to purchase home electronics online
- 58 percent more likely to purchase event tickets online

So, how is all of this fantasy playing going on? According to research, more than 87 million Americans visited sports websites from April-June this year. In addition, 36 million smartphone owners use sports apps. Fantasy football apps are by far the most popular of the fantasy sports apps, with more than 10 million Americans using them and that number is up 15 percent from last year. The two most popular football apps used are Yahoo! and ESPN, with about 5 million users each during a one month period in 2013. That period also showed that fantasy players spend an average of two hours and 14 minutes per person using these apps. And, the average person opened these apps 27 times. That's some serious dedication.

Here's a look at the top five sports websites among fantasy sports players from April – June this year based on the number of site visitors:

- Yahoo! Sports 1.3 million
- ESPN Digital Network 1 million
- FOXSports.com on MSN 957,000
- MLB.com 614,000
- Big Lead Sports by FSV Network 609,000

So with all these insights on fantasy sports, it shows that Americans are die hard sports fans. I mean truly die hard. But, even though it's "fantasy" remember you are still flexing your consumer muscles. You have the power to choose, so make those picks wisely and strategically. That's one bit of advice that I can offer. Good luck with your teams!

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