

# Broadcasters and rights holders eye the growing soccer fanbase in the US

## Affluent and passionate fans are ready to pay to watch their favourite sport

**Los Angeles, 14th August 2023:** The latest research from Ampere Analysis highlights the growing popularity of soccer in America, with nearly 20% of US sports fans now claiming it is their favourite sport. Today, soccer is the fourth most popular American sport, a figure that has grown rapidly from the last quarter of 2021. The US boasts a high proportion of avid female soccer fans (37%), compared to 31% among the big five Western European markets. Taken together, these findings bode well for the success of the FIFA Women's World Cup, now entering the semifinals, and Major League Soccer (MLS), with Lionel Messi having recently joined Inter Miami. With US soccer fans scoring high for affluence and propensity to pay for SVoD services, Ampere's new report discusses how broadcasters will monetise the sport.

### The broadcast opportunity

- US soccer fans are 43% more likely than average sports fans to have a household income of more than \$100,000, making this affluent audience a key target for broadcasters and rights holders
- Crucially, the fanbase is passionate and willing to pay to indulge in their love of the beautiful game. Almost three-quarters (73%) of US-based fans of the Premier League and UEFA Champions League say they will pay to watch the competitions
- Networks in the US have honed in on this. In 2022, soccer broadcasting rights in the US were worth over \$1.3bn – three times more than in 2015 (see chart)
- Currently, interest in soccer competitions is dominated by global and European events. American fans most enjoy the FIFA World Cup (33%), the English Premier League (31%), and the UEFA Champions League (30%), with only 20% claiming to follow the MLS
- Of course, the MLS will be hoping to boost this rising interest. Alongside the global Apple TV deal signed in 2022, the League has welcomed Lionel Messi to Inter Miami, making the competition more appealing to those who prefer to watch top-tier players.



Soccer event broadcast rights values, US (\$M)



Source: Ampere Sports – Media Rights  
\* Includes UEFA Champions League, La Liga, Ligue 1, Serie A, and Bundesliga

### The digital opportunity

- Creating the right digital strategy will be vital to meet the viewing needs of American soccer fans
- US soccer fans pay for more SVoD services than average and prefer to watch sports on streaming instead of broadcast TV
- Awkward kick-off times for the top European leagues mean they view comparatively less live sport than other US fan groups. As a result, they have high engagement rates with highlights and player content on social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube where they already have strong consumption rates
- According to Ampere’s findings, nearly half of US soccer fans say they only want to watch the sport via an online streaming platform. More than half (54%) say they are most likely to view on a second home at home rather than the main TV set
- These trends together provide the potential for soccer networks to offer creative broadcasting

### Tackling the pirate challenge

With American soccer fans enjoying several competitions across multiple sports, content costs can quickly mount up. US soccer fans often cite price as their motivation for pirating sports channels. For soccer specifically, Ampere believes there is an opportunity to offer multi-league bundles to combat piracy.

**Sam Nursall, Research Analyst at Ampere** says: “Understanding the consumption habits of US soccer fans is crucial for the broadcasters who want to curate and build appealing content around this behaviour. There’s a really strong opportunity here to combine the best of traditional broadcast with the capabilities of streaming services and social media to meet the appetite of these passionate fans. Ampere also believes that the challenges of piracy to avoid paying fees can be addressed through multi-league bundles to bring soccer fans all the content they can consume.”

## Ends

### Notes to Editors:

Ampere Sports - Consumer comprises an annual wave of consumer surveys across 12 markets interviewing 15,000 sports fans a year.

Ampere Sports – Media Rights covers more than 5,000 individual TV rights deals across 18 markets around the world, detailing information on the event, duration of the contract, buyer, buyer type, and value of the deal.

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### About Ampere Analysis

Founded in January 2015, Ampere Analysis is a new breed of media analyst firm. The company’s experienced team of sector-leading industry analysts specialises in sport, games, pay and multiscreen TV and next-generation content distribution. Our founders have more than 60 years combined experience of providing data, forecasts and consulting to the major film studios, telecoms and pay TV operators, technology companies, TV channel groups and investment banks.

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