



## WHAT'S SATIATING SPORTS FANS NEEDS DURING THE PANDEMIC?

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The sports world has been heavily impacted by the pandemic, much to the frustration of Canadian sports fans. Stay at home guidelines and social distancing forced suspension of leagues and competitions and fans have had to look for alternate home-based activities.

The Media Technology Monitor thus set out to examine exactly how Canadians are getting their sports fix.

It found that nearly half of Canadians who are usually sports viewers are still finding ways to consume sports content. However, a majority of sports fans – 53% – have simply not made any effort to look for sports content during the pandemic. Nearly two-thirds of women who follow sports said that they have stopped watching any related content. The majority of older sports fans have also refrained from watching sports content.

For those who do still engage, what does that alternative sports content look like? For 30% of sports followers, it means watching old or classic games – something networks like TSN and Sportsnet have aired in droves both on linear and digital.

A fifth say they are watching at least clips or segments from classic games, while a sixth are watching sports documentaries.

The lack of the availability of live sports is reflected in the drop in subscriptions for sports streaming services like TSN Direct, Rogers Sportsnet NOW, and TVA Sports Direct. Subscriptions declined by 57% since last fall, and in spring 2020, only half of subscribers report watching the service at the present time.

Although e-sports have been frequently cited as an alternative to live sports, it continues to be a very niche activity. Even as some sports leagues have hosted "official" e-sports matches and tournaments under their league banner – like the NHL's Player Gaming Challenge sponsored by Honda, featuring players like Zach Hyman, Evander Kane and the Tkachuk brothers – only one in 10 fans are watching. There is some over-indexing for this activity, however, in younger sports fans and those in affluent households.

Nearly a quarter of online Canadians still say they either watch, listen to, or read about sports daily. Another 13% say they consume sports content multiple times a week.