

BIBBY'S BLOG

Research,

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Rants



Musings of a Multi-Focused Mind

BIBBY BLOG - "The Super Bowl, Women & the Half-Time Show" Jan. 31, 2014

The Super Bowl has obviously evolved into an extraordinary social event on both sides of the border. The Canadian media join in with the American media in sending out the word that "it's time to party."

All that marketing commotion has had impressive results: the last four Super Bowls have been the four most watched TV programs in U.S. history. They also have been the most-watched TV shows in Canada – give or take a fairly important 2010 Olympic hockey game in Vancouver. Last year's Super Bowl viewers included 7.3 million Canadians, slightly down from a record high of 8.2 million who caught Super Bowl XLVI the year before in 2012.

The big event even makes temporary football fans out of people in an extremely elusive and valued demographic: women. American figures for last year's game show that almost 45% of the audience was comprised of women, up from the 35% figure for a typical regular season NFL game. In Canada, the 10% of women who normally follow the NFL – up modestly from 4% in 1990 – are perhaps joined by close to another 10% who want to get in on the big event, and – surprise, surprise - particularly catch the half-time show.

So it is that in 2012, the record Canadian viewing audience of 8.2 million for the game was outdistanced by the 10.3 million who caught Madonna's half-time show. Similarly, in the case of Super Bowl XLVII in 2013, 7.3 million Canadians watched the game – but, again, more than 2 million more – undoubtedly led by women – were captivated by Beyoncé's spectacular half-time show (the total, to be precise, was 9.4 million; keep in mind that the extra 2 million helped to inflate the 7.3 million game ratings as a whole). That means that, when the third quarter started, more than 2 million Canadians turned to other things; based on what we know about gender differences when it comes to caring about football, we can fairly safely assume that they were primarily women. That's not to be critical – but just facing up to the facts. The Super Bowl tends to be a time for super football for guys, a time for super socializing for women. But, what the heck, it's one of the unique times when both sexes actually watch a football game – or sort of watch a football game – together.

You think the Broncos and Seahawks will feel pressure to perform for TV ratings this Sunday? That's nothing compared to the pressure that will be felt by Bruno Mars!