

CableTV.com's Live Sports Playbook Reveals the Real Cost of Watching Live Sports in 2026

US fans pay \$66 a month to watch live sports, but 38% still face local blackout restrictions.

SALT LAKE CITY, UT, UNITED STATES, August 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- American sports fans now spend an average of \$65.92 per month to watch live sports across cable, satellite, and live TV streaming platforms, according to CableTV.com's newly released [Live Sports Playbook: What US Fans Pay to Watch in 2026](#) report.

Despite making this investment, fans are still dealing with a highly fragmented, frustrating experience to find where to watch major live sporting events. Live sports fans pay for an average of 2.4 live TV or streaming services to follow their favorite teams, with nearly three in four fans relying on at least two different subscriptions.



What sports fans pay in 2026 to watch live sports

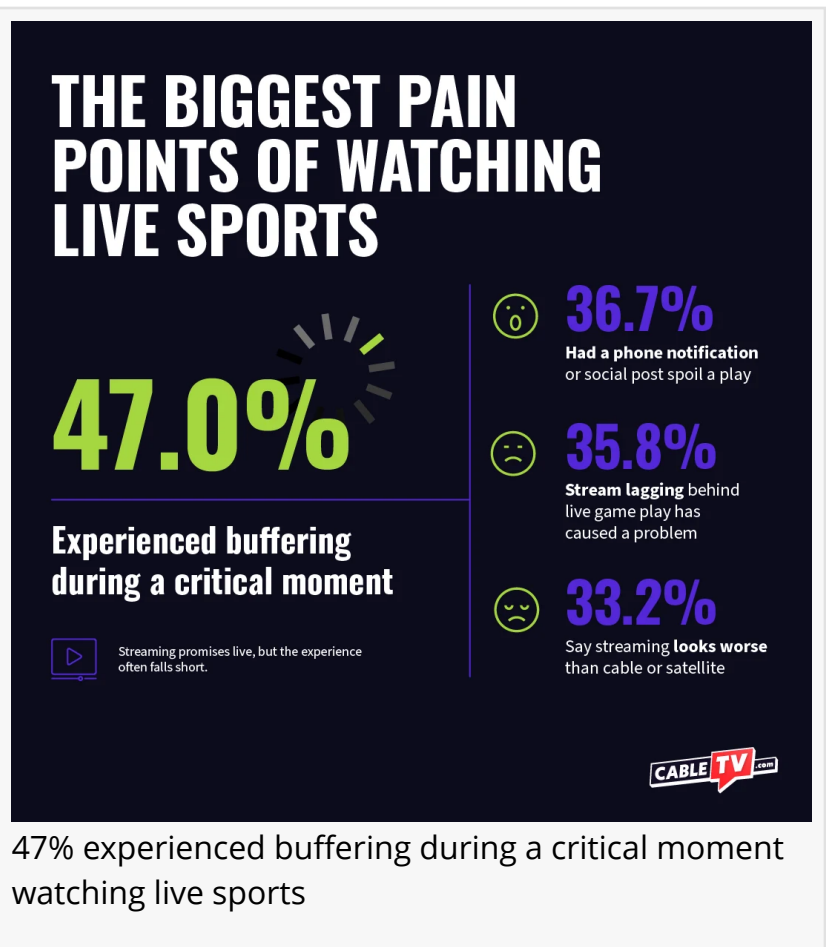
Read the full report: <https://www.cabletv.com/news/cost-of-watching-live-sports-2026>

"Being a sports fan in 2026 can feel like a part-time job as coverage splinters across traditional TV and exclusive streaming apps," said Mike Strayer, Managing Editor at CableTV.com. "Fans are paying premium prices but are still missing out due to blackouts, stream lag, and confusing broadcasting rights. The loyalty remains with the teams, but when it comes to TV providers, fans are ready to jump ship for a better deal or a more reliable feed."

Here are the key findings from this year's study:

- Fans average \$66 a month on TV services for sports, but say \$57 is the most they'd pay for live sports coverage alone.

- Two-thirds of fans (67%) would switch providers to save just \$20 a month, and 58% only pay for certain services during specific sports seasons.
- In the past year, 38% of fans say a blackout prevented them from watching a local team, and 26% can't watch their in-market team at all with their current setup.
- Only 22% of sports fans are extremely confident their main TV setup will carry any given game they want to watch. Access to favorite teams ranks as their top priority, far ahead of multiview or other special features.
- Nearly half (47%) of fans experienced buffering during a critical moment, and 51% say they'll tolerate no more than 10 seconds of delay from the live action.
- Nearly one-third of sports fans (33%) still own and use an over-the-air antenna to complement their paid subscriptions with local broadcast games.



Methodology: CableTV.com surveyed 1,000 U.S. adults who said they watch live sports on TV or online. The survey was conducted via Pollfish on August 6, 2026, and results were post-stratified to reflect the broader U.S. population on key demographics. Responses were self-reported. Monthly spending and willingness-to-pay figures were collected in price ranges, so reported dollar amounts are estimates based on values assigned to those ranges rather than respondents' individual bills.

About CableTV.com: CableTV.com is an online resource powered by a team of die-hard fans and tech experts dedicated to helping viewers navigate the ever-changing entertainment landscape. We scrutinize TV and internet services down to the last pixel to deliver clear, honest reviews and expert guides that help you save time, slash your bills, and find exactly what you want to watch.

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