

How TV's 2020 Election Night Coverage Will Look Different From 2016

After years of buildup, Election Day 2020 is almost here. TVNewser senior editor A.J. Katz has spent the last week talking to the executives in charge of election night programming at almost all of the big networks about their plans.

Here are highlights from those conversations (you can find the full interviews at TVNewser), including how coverage will look different from 2016's, and what they'll do if the presidential election isn't called Tuesday night—and perhaps not for days or weeks after:

Fox News Channel (Alan Komissaroff, svp of news and politics)

How 2020's election night coverage will be different:

"Election night is our Super Bowl, so we try to outdo ourselves every cycle. This year we have some really stunning graphics, including on-set augmented reality race boards and a hyper-realistic 3D model of the White House made by the same company that designed Fortnite. But in the end, we want to display all the returns in a clear and concise way for the viewer. We also have some of the elements our viewers are used to, including Bret Baier, Martha MacCallum, Chris Wallace and all of our top analysts. Bill Hemmer at the Billboard, and Shannon Bream doing voter analysis. This year we also have Harris Faulkner talking to a group of voters from around the country."

If the presidential race isn't called Tuesday night:

"We are a 24-hour news channel, so we are always prepared to continue following the story. It's what we do. Our election night coverage doesn't have an end time. We are prepared to cover the election for as long as it takes—and even a little longer than that."

MSNBC (senior executive producer Pat Burkey)

How 2020's election night coverage will be different:

"You can expect more of what our viewers have come to love about our special coverage this election cycle: Brian Williams and Rachel Maddow, along with Nicolle Wallace and Joy Reid, will be in-studio anchoring throughout the night. We've expanded our studio to safely accommodate everyone at 30 Rock on election night—obviously, a lot more spread out than in 2016. Our MVP, Steve Kornacki, will be at the board, drilling down on the numbers as they come in. Yes, Kornacki Cam is back. So when Kornacki learns something, we'll all know."

"Speaking of the numbers, we've tried to enhance how we share our vote count this year. We've added a number to the screen that shows the expected vote count in each state so viewers will have a better idea of how much vote is still outstanding. We hope it's a little more transparent."

If the presidential race isn't called Tuesday night:

"While we can't predict what will happen or when, we are prepared for both election night and after. We are staffing up and will continue to cover the latest developments in the most aggressive way possible. For example, we've bolstered our team of experts in election law led by Ari Melber, including experts in vote counting and those who can help us figure out the most complicated and unpredictable of storylines and how they might unfold state by state. They're all on call and ready to help us explain scenarios we're not even imagining."

yet.”

ABC (Marc Burstein, senior executive producer of ABC News special events)

How 2020’s election night coverage will be different:

“Viewers will see the same smart, fair and incisive coverage by a brilliant team. But, of course, there will also be much more of a focus on the number of votes already cast, either by mail or in person, prior to Nov. 3.”

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