

NBCUniversal Inks \$1 Billion in Ad Sales for Summer Olympics



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Eight months away from the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, NBCUniversal has sold more than \$1 billion in ad sales, NBC Sports Group evp of advertising sales Dan Lovinger said today.

The progress in ad sales, which Lovinger revealed in a call with reporters today, means that NBCUniversal is well on its way to surpass the record \$1.2 billion in national ad sales that the broadcaster sold during the 2016 Summer Games hosted in Rio de Janeiro. About half of the brands that have signed on to advertise during the game so far are first-time Olympic advertisers, and there's been particular interest in advertising during the games for the first time among tech, pharma, retail, quick-service restaurants and financial services brands.

Lovinger had first predicted passing that \$1.2 billion mark in July, but the \$1 billion mark reached eight months out is a

double-digit increase from the pace of sales that NBCUniversal sold the 2016 Summer Olympics, he said.

The broadcaster, which has the rights to the Olympics through 2032, has been extremely bullish on the 2020 games, which will air sandwiched between the Democratic National Convention and the Republican National Convention next summer. The broadcaster is planning a record 7,000 hours of coverage over the course of the games across platforms, more than half of which will focus on women athletes and competitions.

All in all, NBCUniversal expects to attract an estimated 200 million viewers to the programming. It helps that Tokyo games will happen 13 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time, making it possible for many competitions to be aired as live events during U.S. prime time.

"We're very optimistic about the Tokyo Olympics," Lovinger said. "We believe our coverage is going to bring excitement to viewers young and old and that team USA will provide a unifying force for our country unlike anything else. And advertisers are showing that same excitement."

NBCUniversal, which has aggressively sold and marketed the Summer Games, has rolled out a number of offerings and tools intended to make the games more palatable and appealing to advertisers, especially first-time ones. The games were included in the 2019 Upfronts negotiations for the first time, which Lovinger said put the broadcaster ahead of schedule, and NBCUniversal is for the first time selling the games as a unified offering across broadcast, cable, digital and social reach.

The Tokyo games are also the first time advertisers have been able to buy against key audience demos and against a single CPM, which Lovinger said has allowed for broader participation in the games among advertisers with different needs. Advertisers can spend anywhere between \$1 million and \$100

million on advertising during the 2020 Summer Olympics, depending on the size and scale of the advertising commitment, Lovinger said.

NBCUniversal is also rolling out a marketing sponsorship opportunity for advertisers to sponsor competitions featuring high-profile women athletes. The Association of National Advertisers' #SeeHer initiative, which NBCUniversal got in on during the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, will come back in 2020 as See Her Shine, and it will give advertisers an opportunity to align themselves with the stories of women athletes on Team USA competing for Olympic records, Lovinger said.

The games are also the second games in which NBCUniversal will guarantee audiences to advertisers using the broadcaster's Total Audience Delivery metric, or TAD. That measurement, which measures audiences across linear out-of-home, digital and streaming was used during the 2018 Winter Olympics, to mixed results after the ratings for the game fell below the "high-teens" household ratings that former NBC Sports ad sales chief Seth Winter had guaranteed advertisers.

The broadcaster was mum on whether and how Peacock, NBCUniversal's direct-to-consumer streaming service, would be factored into the 2020 Summer Olympics for marketing and promotion or for Olympics content consumption. The company is holding an investor day for the DTC offering on Jan. 16, where more details about Peacock and how it will be nestled into the broadcasters' broader portfolio are expected to be announced.

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