

# NFL Doubleheaders Don't Tell Whole Story of Fox's Upfront

Despite Derek Jeter using his Bob Sheppard Yankee Stadium batting intro, the company touting its broadcast rights to the 2026 World Cup, and Tom Brady hitting a random audience member with an errant throw from stage, sports were a surprisingly modest portion of the 2025 Fox upfront.

The company spent this year's presentation in New York's Manhattan Center, focusing on the strength and focus of its multi-pronged approach. The program hustled through MLB on Fox commentator Jeter's introduction; Beat Shazam host Jamie Foxx's soft-music issues, and "Love the Teslers" impression of President Donald Trump; and a segment with Fox News Outnumbered host Harris Faulkner, Celebrity Weakest Link host Jane Lynch, and NFL on Fox reporter Rob Gronkowski—whose quip about former coach Bill Belichick's girlfriend not existing when the Fox network launched in 1986 drew mixed reactions from those assembled—to reach the relatively passionate case to buyers made by Jeff Collins, Fox president of advertising sales, marketing, and brand partnerships.

Collins hammered home the 26% growth in viewing time over all Fox properties during the last year amid declines around this industry, and cited EDO data telling buyers it would take 75 seconds of ad time anywhere else to equal the impact of 30 seconds of advertising on Fox. Roughly a quarter of those Fox ads air during programs with audiences of 1 million viewers or greater.

After launching its OneFox converged media platform—an AdRise-powered tool that brings AI-driven media planning, optimization, predictive models, and insights across its portfolio—just before the upfront, Collins assured brands and

buyers in the audience that Fox has tailored its offerings to meet their needs.

The presentation had plenty of sports—including Fox's NFL doubleheaders, Major League Baseball personalities, World Cup audiences, and a big push for its newly acquired rights to the Indianapolis 500—but delving into the success of Tubi, and the potential of Fox News during the year ahead gave Fox a few more legs to stand on.

"Because we've assembled only the best assets, the most essential properties for your media plan, and nothing else," Collins said. "We combined two ends of the media spectrum: Big, broad reach from the largest live audiences on one end, and granular targeting of the elusive cord-cutters and cord-nevers on the other. Together, these make up a complete offering that's foundational to your media plan—everything you need and nothing you don't."

## **Pointing to the scoreboard**

Though pushed nearly an hour into the presentation, Fox News received a nearly 10-minute segment of its own, with reporter Martha MacCallum highlighting the network's performance, the rise of its late-night host Greg Gutfeld, and the work of correspondents Trey Yingst, Bill Melugin, and Jacqui Heinrich.

She introduced anchor Bret Baier on location in Saudi Arabia, who noted that viewership for his show, *Special Report*, increased 60% year over year. While he acknowledged that there was still a gap between *Special Report* and the leading news show, *CBS Evening News*, he said it was closing the gap and credits the company's investments in resources and interviews for the gains.

Fox News' Martha MacCallum made the case to potential advertisers.*Fox*

"Fox leadership has invested in news for decades, enabling us to break news around the world, like on a trip like this," Baier said. "And viewers are coming and they are staying, which is awesome to see."

Tubi CEO Anjali Sud broke out similarly strong metrics for the streamer's presentation, reiterating the 97 million active user figure it released in January and noting Tubi's role in bringing Fox 127.7 million total viewers for Super Bowl 59.

While it brought back The QB and Me stars Noah Beck and Siena Agudong from NewFronts, it also brought in new Studios creators and Brendan Fraser, Josh Gad, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Elizabeth Hurley, and Annie Murphy from Tubi's new animated

series *Breaking Bear*. Sud told the audience that Tubi isn't just making Wattpad novels into movies or making shoppable Super Bowl red carpet shows to experiment: It's reacting to what a younger, spending streaming audience wants.

"For the folks in this room, this audience is no longer emerging," Sud said. "They see advertising as a part of their daily lives, and they make real purchasing decisions based on the ads they watch."

Tubi CEO Anjali Sud noted that younger viewers are setting the ad agenda at the free streamer.*Fox*

## **Still some sports**

While Fox doesn't have the Super Bowl this year, the NFL is still a big part of the advertising game plan. Fox will have

11 doubleheaders throughout the season, including a Saturday double bill on Dec. 20 featuring the defending champion Philadelphia Eagles and Washington Commanders in one game and the Chicago Bears and Green Bay Packers in another.

Its college football slate, meanwhile, featured Texas and Ohio State during opening week and the Ohio State-Michigan game on Thanksgiving weekend.

As for the World Cup, Fox pointed out to advertisers that this is the first year the field of nations has expanded from 32 to 48, providing more opportunity for exposure to roughly 150 million viewers. Fox's slate, meanwhile, includes a July 4 matchup in Philadelphia that's in a stage Team USA could potentially reach during U.S. 250th anniversary celebrations, which Fox is also programming around.

Josef Newgarden wants that trophy a third time, David Letterman would prefer he didn't get it, and Michael Strahan just wants to be liked.*Fox*

Finally, NFL on Fox host Michael Strahan introduced the crowd to Fox Indianapolis 500 coverage—which has seen viewership increase 25% from the circuit's coverage last year—by bringing out late-night legend and Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing team owner David Letterman—who let Strahan throw him around a bit as a throwback to a Late Night appearance and interviewed would-be Indy three-peat champion Josef Newgarden.

Telling the audience, "It's so nice to be out of the house," and, "I haven't worked since Bonanza," Letterman took the temperature of the room and sensed that the crowd—which had been somewhat quiet to that point—would rather be elsewhere. With a 72-degree day and partly cloudy skies outside—and a

week of rain ahead—he sensed their thoughts might be elsewhere.

“Where would you want to be on the nicest day in a decade?” Letterman asked. “Would you rather be anywhere but here, ladies and gentlemen?”

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