



# SPORTS FANS AND THE SECOND SCREEN

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## THE **RUNDOWN**

Sports fans have always shouted at the screen and leapt off the couch with the roar of the crowd. Today, watching live sports is an even more active experience because our devices are always within reach. But what triggers us to reach for them? To find out, we visited soccer and football fans in Denver and Chicago, sat in their living rooms, watched games with them and asked lots of questions. By unpacking second-screen behaviors, we uncovered how brands can deliver more engaging marketing during the big game.

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## Mobile is changing how we watch sports

Tim is watching a game on TV. We're 30 minutes into the first half, and it's been a snoozer. Instead of changing the channel, he grabs his phone from a folding table that he calls his command center, one that boasts an impressive array of tech—laptop, cellphone, remote, mini-speakers—and a cold beer.

Reportedly, [77% of us now watch TV with a laptop, phone or tablet nearby](#). Collective moments such as big televised sporting events are prime second screen territory, and our research shows that events such as [the Oscars](#) attract a similar level of engagement. Put simply, if there's something big happening on the first screen, there's probably something big happening on the second screen, too.

The recent surge in smartphone penetration has opened the door to this dramatic shift in behavior. For example, when we look at [search data from the 2010 World Cup final](#), we can see that about 18% of searches for games, players and teams occurred on mobile devices. In the 2014 UEFA Champions League match, an impressive 63% of those searches were on mobile—an early indicator of what we'll see during this year's World Cup, which will surely be one of the most mobile-powered global events to date.

What's clear is that fans are not only searching more on mobile, but they're also searching during the game: a new pattern of behavior that barely existed four years ago, when most of the search activity happened immediately after the final whistle. This change creates more moments for marketers to reach fans on the mobile web, right when they're most engaged.

In every living room that we visited, people talked about using their devices to connect with other fans. Some wanted to feel the adrenaline rush of big moments in real-time. Others were focused on being the first to broadcast cool content and have their voice heard. And for some fans, connecting meant finding a common language and building social connections out in the world, away from their televisions.

## Anthony and Mario: Sharing the rush

Anthony and Mario are buddies from West Chicago. Both love sports, and they watch games together on Mario's couch, smartphones in hand. During lulls in the action, they message with family and friends—an extra layer of entertainment that Anthony thinks could feel even more connected.

"I message them all the time, but I'd like to see my family's' reactions during a game, right after we score," he said.

"I want to see the faces of the *other* team, right when we score!" Mario shot back.

Anthony pointed out a drawback of being in constant contact with a big social group, "I want a social network that's just for sports. I can't curse about the game on Facebook because my Mom is there."

For Anthony and Mario, second-screening is about immediate social connection and validation—feeling the adrenaline of the crowd in real time and speaking their mind, even if it means cursing. Anthony told us, "Of course I want my team to win, but it's really just about having a good time with my friends."

## **Carlos and Rita: Social broadcasting**

Carlos and Rita are also into sports and are avid social networkers. For them, the second screen is less about the roar of the crowd, and more about being the first to share something cool that their peers appreciate. They are the kind of fans who love to share bite-sized visual content to show their allegiance. They're quick with comments or memes that show they're clever, and they don't mind stoking a little competitive energy.

Carlos told us, "If my friends from rival teams are bragging about a game online, I want to be able to immediately bring up stats about their team from last year to throw in their faces."

Stats, quips, and "did-you-see-that?" moments shared in real time are the fuel that drives the sports-obsessed web. Fans are hungry for cool content to broadcast quickly to their networks, but getting to that content can be a chore. "I want to be able to create my own highlight reel and share it with my friends," said Carlos. Rita added: "It sucks that you have to wait a day to see video clips, pictures and memes. I just want to grab them straight from the TV."

## **Tim and Jamie: Searching for a common language**

Tim, with the impressive command center, and his fiancée Jamie are avid NFL and Kansas Jayhawks fans. They never miss a game. For them, the second screen is a way to search for facts, stats and trivia to fuel both game-time and water cooler discussions *after* the game.

“Sports stats are like a common language for guys,” Tim told us. “Finding stats and debating with your friends over sports stuff is like practice for business. It’s about making logical arguments.” Jamie, who had deep insider knowledge about everything from NFL injuries to betting odds, agreed: “My whole team at work is guys, and I can actually talk to our VP because I know what’s going on in the NFL.”

By listening to Tim and Jamie, we understood that their command-center devices are a way to connect socially with friends and co-workers. Trash talk and sports debates build social connections. Whether you’re making a case at a conference or talking smack at a sports bar with your friends, the second screen is where you do your homework.

## **Engaging fans in real time:**

### **SHARING THE RUSH**

**What fans want:** to feel the roar of the crowd in real time

- Give fans at home ways to participate in the energy and rituals of the stadium.
- Make fan-to-fan communication more dynamic and visual.

### **SOCIAL BROADCASTING**

**What fans want:** to push entertaining and inspirational content out to their network

- Make cool, credible content easy to access. Make interactions quick, and sharing seamless.
- Plan ahead. Identify possible scenarios and create content to tweak on the fly and quickly deliver when the time comes. You may not use it all, but the prep work will make you nimble in the moment, for maximum impact.

### **SEARCHING FOR A COMMON LANGUAGE**

**What fans want:** to be armed with information for social situations

- Make it easy to find and collect snackable facts, stats and trivia.
- Partner with creators and influencers to surface relevant info in engaging ways.



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