

ESPN Media Zone

ESPN's January 2 BCS Games: Viewership Rises over 2011

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Two BCS Games: Highest Overnights on Cable in a Year outside NFL; Digital Use Soars

In its second year televising the entire BCS, ESPN's two January 2 Bowl Championship Series telecasts – the Rose Bowl Game Presented by VIZIO and the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl – combined for a four percent audience increase over 2011. The two games averaged a 9.4 overnight rating, according to Nielsen, vs. a 9.0 for the two contests last year, played on January 1.

The Rose Bowl Game Presented by VIZIO, in which Oregon outscored Wisconsin 45-38, earned a 9.9, the highest on cable television outside of ESPN's NFL games since the 2011 Bowl Championship Series title game, the most-watched telecast in cable television history. The Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, a 41-38 overtime victory by Oklahoma State over Stanford, garnered a 9.0 rating, an increase of 34 percent over the 6.7 a year ago. The telecast won the night for ESPN as television's most-watched network – broadcast or cable.

In the markets of participating teams, the Rose Bowl Game Presented by VIZIO earned the highest rating for an ESPN bowl game on record (back to 2000) in Milwaukee (34.8) and the second-highest ever in Portland, Ore. (29.7). The Tostitos Fiesta Bowl drew the highest ESPN bowl rating on record in both Oklahoma City (36.7) and San Francisco (13.9).

Live viewership for both bowl games on ESPN3 online enjoyed huge increases. The Rose Bowl Game Presented by VIZIO had 347,000 unique viewers (up 46 percent vs. 2011) totaling 27.1 million minutes (up 80 percent), with an average minute audience of 126,000. The Tostitos Fiesta Bowl saw 291,000 unique viewers (up 88 percent) and 25 million minutes (up 181 percent) with an average minute audience of 113,000.

In addition, the college football section on ESPN.com logged 17.3 million page views (up 15 percent) and 26.8 million total minutes (up 16 percent) from the equivalent day last year.

Additionally, college football content on the ESPN mobile Web saw 10 million page views and 27.6 million total minutes yesterday, up 11 percent and 24 percent, respectively.

ESPN & the BCS

ESPN's second year of exclusive coverage of the five BCS matchups will continue tonight with the Allstate Sugar Bowl (Tuesday, Jan. 3), Discover Orange Bowl (Wednesday, Jan. 4) and Allstate BCS National Championship Game (Monday, Jan. 9). Overall, ESPN, ESPN Radio and ESPN3 will present all five BCS Bowl games with ESPN Deportes and ESPN 3D also televising Allstate BCS National Championship Game.

In addition, ESPN is providing extensive on-site studio programming and reports across multiple shows and platforms, dedicated web pages for each bowl, re-airs of classic BCS games, international telecasts of all five games, encore presentations of the National Championship and more. ESPN's year-round commitment to college football includes more than 400 games, culminating with 33 bowls.