



Decline in NFL Popularity Expected to Cost TV Networks \$500-Million this Season

Protests against the National Anthem by NFL players have contributed to the organization's loss of one-million viewers compared to 2016. According to OKTC's Clay Travis, the four networks that carry the NFL (CBS, ESPN, Fox, and NBC) are on pace to lose \$500-million this season compared to last year due to the ratings slide. The top reason for the loss is "cord-cutting" which is cancelling subscriptions to multi-channel television services on cable. -GEG

Amid the growing cord-cutting trend and continued backlash from the divisive national anthem protests, the NFL has lost around 1 million viewers since 2016 and the ratings have declined by over 15% since 2015. So how much is the loss in viewership costing the league and its television partners?

[Outkick the Coverage](#) crunched the numbers, and they aren't pretty. According to OKTC's Clay Travis, the four networks that carry the NFL – CBS, ESPN, Fox and NBC – are on pace to lose \$500 million this season compared to last year due to the ratings slide.

As [The Daily Wire](#) reported last week, the NFL lost around 1 million viewers from 2016 alone, down from 15.9 million viewers on average to 14.9 million, an over 6% decline. From the 2015 to the 2016 season, the NFL's viewership dropped a

dramatic 9% during the regular season and 6% during the playoffs from the previous year.

In an analysis published in late October, [Forbes](#) described the rather grim trend the NFL is facing on the ratings front. "The league is now down about three million viewers per game from 2013 and 2014," Forbes reports. "When the specific teams appearing, the scope of the telecast and the week of the season are taken into account, the decline is even more dramatic: more than four million viewers, or in excess of 20%."

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