



3 Stunning Numbers That Prove Canadian Baseball Fans No Longer Hate Rogers Communications Inc.

Description

If you build it, they will come. However, in this case what has been built is a powerhouse baseball team in Toronto instead of a baseball diamond in a Midwestern cornfield. That said, the response to **Rogers Communications Inc.'s** ([TSX:RCI.B](#))([NYSE:RCI](#)) big investment to take the Toronto Blue Jays from mediocre to meaningful has resulted in an unprecedented response from baseball fans.

No longer are they complaining about cheap Rogers milking cash from the fan base to appease shareholders. Instead, they are responding in droves to the company's approval of two major trades that now has the club poised to play in the post season for the first time in more than two decades.

Here are three stunning numbers that prove Canadian baseball fans no longer hate the team's owner.

465,000 more fans in the ball park

Prior to its mid-season makeover, in which Rogers approved the additional payroll needed to add two star players to the roster, the club was drawing an average of 28,700 fans per home game. That was a solid, middle of the pack number.

However, after the two trades were made, the club's attendance spiked and the Rogers-owned Rogers Centre is now drawing capacity crowds of over 45,000 for each home game. The *Financial Post* has estimated that if these sell-outs continue, the team will draw 465,000 more fans to the ball park this year than would have attended otherwise.

1.27 million viewers

Since making the roster altering trades, viewership at the Rogers-owned Sportsnet TV network has averaged 1.27 million viewers for each game. Like attendance in the ball park, that's almost double the season average audience of 727,000 viewers per game, which was already the highest average in Blue Jays's broadcast history and 24% above last year's total.

Even more impressive is the fact that 2.03 million fans tuned into a recent game verses the rival New

York Yankees. The average viewership of that game set a new record for Rogers Sportsnet as the most watched program of all time, beating the NHL season opener last year, which averaged 2.01 million viewers.

9% of Canadians tuned in to watch

Before the aforementioned Yankee game ended, viewership on Sportsnet peaked to 3.14 million for the last at-bat. To put that into perspective, 9% of all Canadians tuned into the game right before it ended. These fans witnessed an epic game-ending at-bat from one of the team's new star players, though he unfortunately struck out and the Jays lost that game.

Still, this was a mere regular season game and, while important, was not a devastating setback. Instead, it has ignited a fire underneath the casual fan and is turning more of them on to the promise of this team. As a result, Rogers Sportsnet is poised to shatter these viewership records later in the season when the games matter even more.

One number to watch is the possibility that the Jays's fever could really sweep the country and viewership for a meaningful game in September could top that of the 15 million Canadians, or half the country, that tuned in to CBC to watch the men's hockey team win gold in the Sochi Olympics in 2014.

Takeaway

Rogers gave the Blue Jays the green light to make the moves the club needed to take them to the next level. As a result, baseball fans around the country have been turning out in droves to watch the team as they now have a reason to cheer. Needless to say, it is doing wonders not just for Rogers's bottom line, but for its brand image in Canada as baseball fans no longer have a reason to hate the company. Instead, they love the baseball team it built.

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