

Blah: '06 the lowest rated World Series ever

Written by Maury Brown
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Unsurprisingly, the 2006 World Series was the worst-rated Fall Classic in television history. What is surprising is just **how** bad it was.

By comparison, last season's World Series ratings (the worst, at the time) pulled an 11.1 with a 19 share Nielsen television rating (The national rating is the percentage of U.S. television households tuned to a program, and each point represents 1,114,000 homes. The share is the percentage of households watching a broadcast among those homes with televisions in use at the time). 2006 sees a 9% drop from last year's mark for viewership futility at 10.1 television rating and 17 share.

As [reported by Ronald Blum of the AP](#) :

What made the low rating more remarkable was that this year's Series went five games and was not a sweep. St. Louis' 4-2 victory in Friday night's finale got a 10.3/18 in figures compiled by Nielsen Media Research, just above the record low for a Game 5, a 10.0/17 for the San Francisco Giants' 16-4 rout of the Anaheim Angels in 2002.

Games 1 (8.0), 3 (10.2) and 4 (10.4) also were record lows for their games, and Game 2 (11.6) was above the low of 11.1, set last year.

Still, in an era of declining network ratings because of the spread of cable television, Fox was pleased it won prime time in all five nights among viewers 18-49. In an effort to avoid low-rated Saturday night games, the World Series will start on a Tuesday next year, the first season of baseball's new TV contracts.

The 2006 postseason saw a record for rainouts with 4 total. As [I wrote for Baseball Prospectus during the League Championship Series](#)

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If you've got the blahs watching the 2006 postseason, you're not alone if you use television ratings as a barometer. Yes, maybe you or I would sit transfixed watching the Devil Rays and Pirates in the World Series if they made it, but for the average fan, the ratings numbers indicate where their interests lie. Why is this important to the rest of us? Because it impacts what Fox does, or does not do, with telecasts in the future. For those that say, "Ratings don't matter," in this case, they do, to all of us.