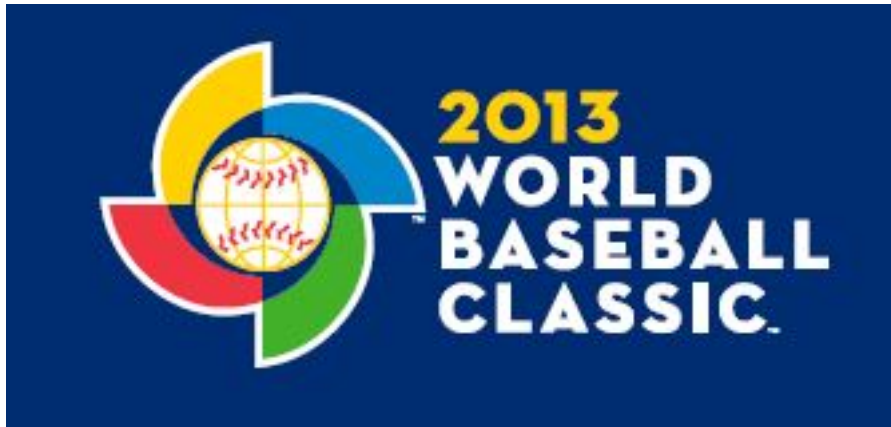


Written by Maury Brown

Tuesday, 12 March 2013 11:20



Every few years, the debate arises over the popularity of the World Baseball Classic. “It’s a marketing tool to grow the game globally”... “Fans outside of the U.S.A. are more passionate and that’s because in the U.S., we simply want Major League Baseball’s regular season to start so we can catch all the stars of the game”...

And while MLB Network has a large subscriber base, a large swatch of the US still doesn’t have access to it to watch. So it’s somewhat surprising that the league-owned network got a decent ratings win this past weekend.

Team USA’s win over Canada on Sunday in the Pool D elimination game of the 2013 World Baseball Classic was the most-watched non-Postseason game ever on MLB Network, averaging **760,000 viewers, up 26%** from the previous high, a New York Yankees vs. Boston Red Sox game on October 2, 2012. The USA vs. Canada game peaked with

1.25 million viewers

during the final innings, from 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. ET, which included the USA’s four-run rally in the ninth inning.

The strength of 15 World Baseball Classic game telecasts helped MLB Network to its **most-watched weekend ever**

, drawing an average of

252,000 viewers

* from Friday, March 8 through Sunday, March 10.

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MLB Network's two other 2013 World Baseball Classic game telecasts featuring Team USA are among the top five most-watched non-Postseason game telecasts in the network's history. Friday's Mexico vs. USA matchup averaged **673,000 viewers**, the network's second-most viewed non-Postseason game telecast, while Saturday's USA vs. Italy game drew an average of **576,000 viewers**. The Dominican Republic's defeat of Puerto Rico on Sunday averaged **513,000 viewers**, the most-viewed non-USA game telecast of the 2013 World Baseball Classic.

So, it will be interesting to see what the ratings do if Team USA makes it to the finals. After all, they've done no better than fourth (that was 2006). America loves a winner. If they do pull it off, it could be a game changer for not only the WBC, but MLB Network.

** All figures per Nielsen; weekend viewership includes Friday-Saturday from 6a-6a and Sunday from 6a-3a*



Maury Brown is the Founder and President of the [Business of Sports Network](#), which includes The Biz of Baseball, The Biz of Football, The Biz of Basketball and The Biz of Hockey. He [writes for Baseball Prospectus](#)

and is a [contributor to Forbes](#)

He is available as a freelance writer

[Brown's full bio is here.](#)

He looks forward to your comments via email and can be [contacted through the Business of Sports Network \(select his name in the dropdown provided\)](#)

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