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## MediaPost's **TVWATCH**

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NFL Grabs Good Viewership, New Advertisers and A Soapy Dennis Rodman.

A media critique by [Wayne Friedman](#)

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**THOUGH THE NFL HAD A** good season with no wardrobe malfunction, bathtub advertisers are closing in.

The NFL will end the season strong. Its best TV partner is CBS, which gained 2 percent in ratings over a year ago airing the American Football Conference games. CBS' 15.0 million average viewers is just barely under Fox's National Football Conference package which posted 15.4 million viewers -- the closest the two conferences have ever been in viewers. Typically, the NFC has been the stronger of the two leagues in terms of teams and ratings.

Overall, Fox slipped 1 percent vs. a year ago. That's not bad considering Fox's NFC games included some of the weakest teams in the league -- some making the playoffs with not even a winning record.

By contrast, [CBS' AFC teams](#), headlined by the Pittsburgh Steelers, New England Patriots, and New York Yankees, possessed some of the strongest teams of the league in years.

ESPN slipped 1 percent and ABC's "Monday Night Football" was set back 3 percent. Still, NFL games have been the third highest rated program this season - right after CBS' "CSI" and ABC's "Desperate Housewives." You wonder the NFL was able to raise its TV broadcast rights fees.

This seems to be carrying over to the Super Bowl. The game will be aired by Fox on Feb. 6, which is in line with deals for an average \$2.4 million per 30-second spot, up about \$100,000 from a year ago when CBS aired the game.

