



# Men's vs. Women's World Cup Readership Report

August 2023

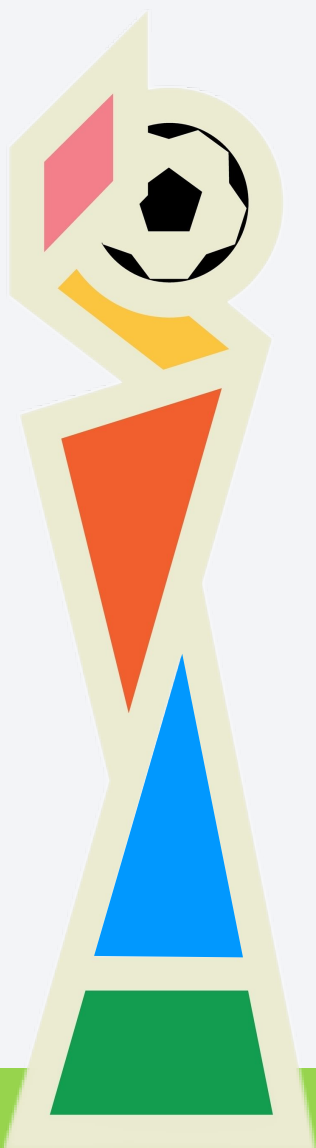
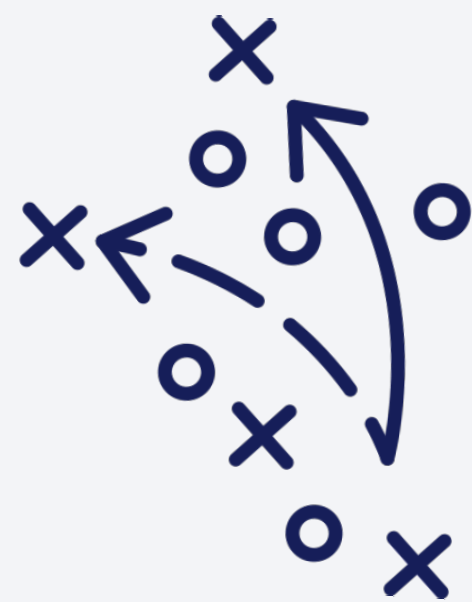
# Overview

The World Cup is one of those events that unite people globally. Anticipation builds every 4 years as many can't wait to travel from all across the world to watch the games or cheer on their favorite teams.

We wanted to understand readership trends in the U.S. surrounding The World Cup.

Memo analyzed over 3,000 articles for the Men's World Cup (November 18, 2022 - December 22, 2022) and Women's World Cup (July 20, 2023 - August 22, 2023) across major U.S. national publications to identify readership trends.

For a deeper dive into the Women's World Cup, we also analyzed over 3,000 articles across sports & athletics publications.

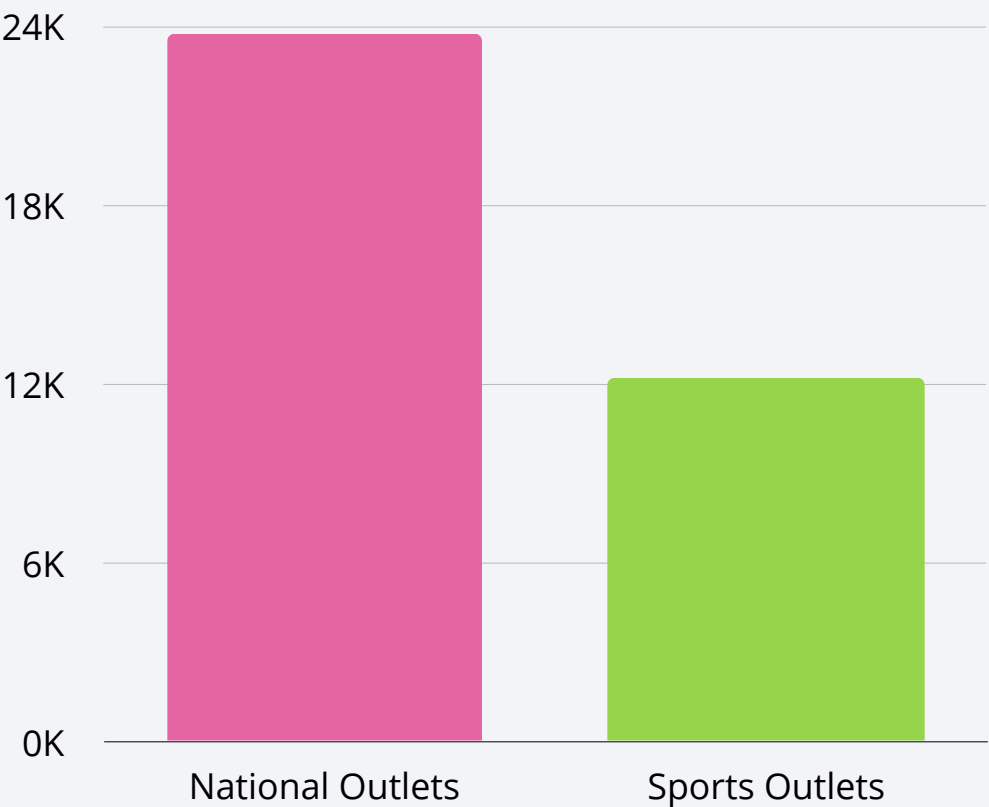


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# WOMEN'S WORLD CUP COVERAGE

Average Readership: Outlet Types

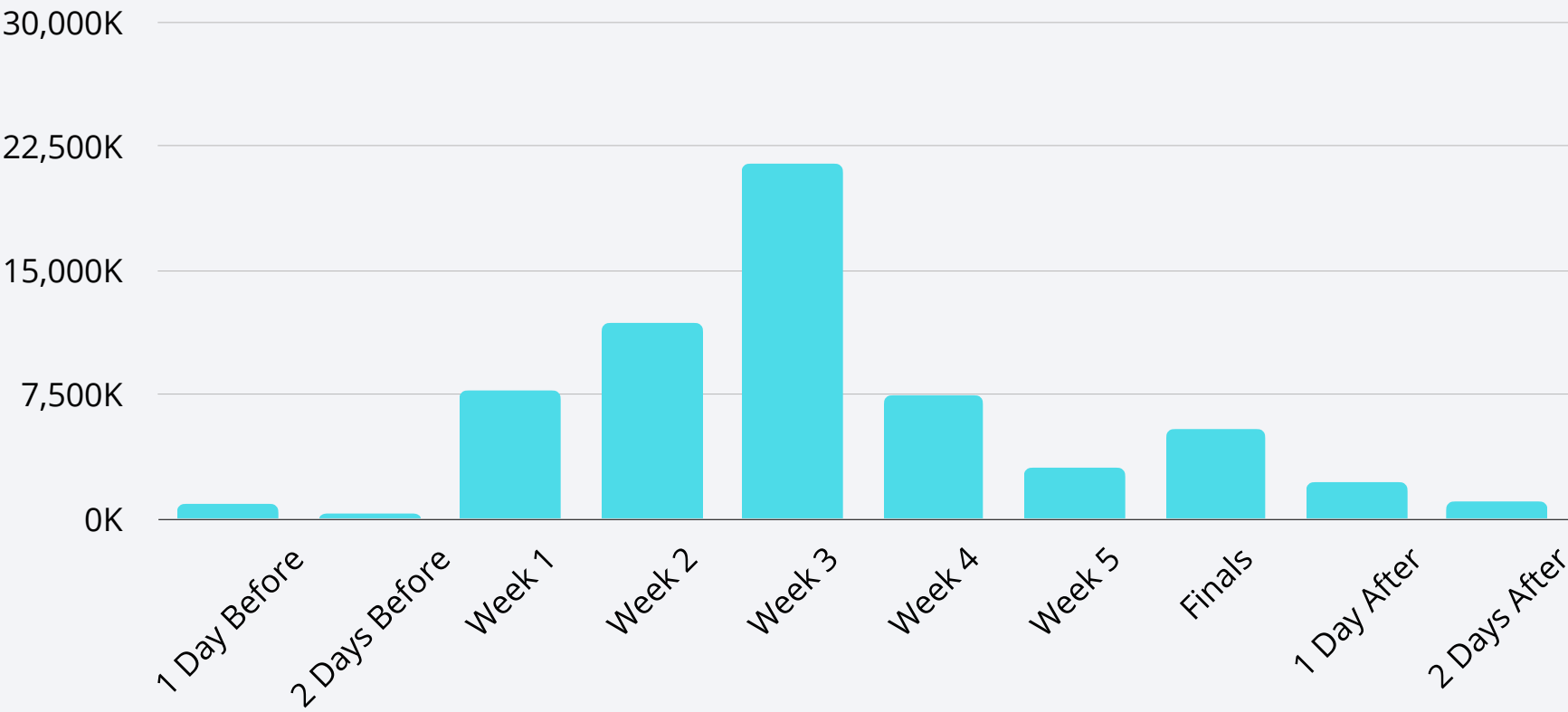


Audiences outside of the “typical sports fan” commonly become more invested in **world stage events** such as The Olympics and The World Cup.

Despite nearly 2x the amount of coverage on sports outlets, Women’s World Cup readership was higher on average across national outlets.

# WOMEN'S WORLD CUP READERSHIP OVER TIME

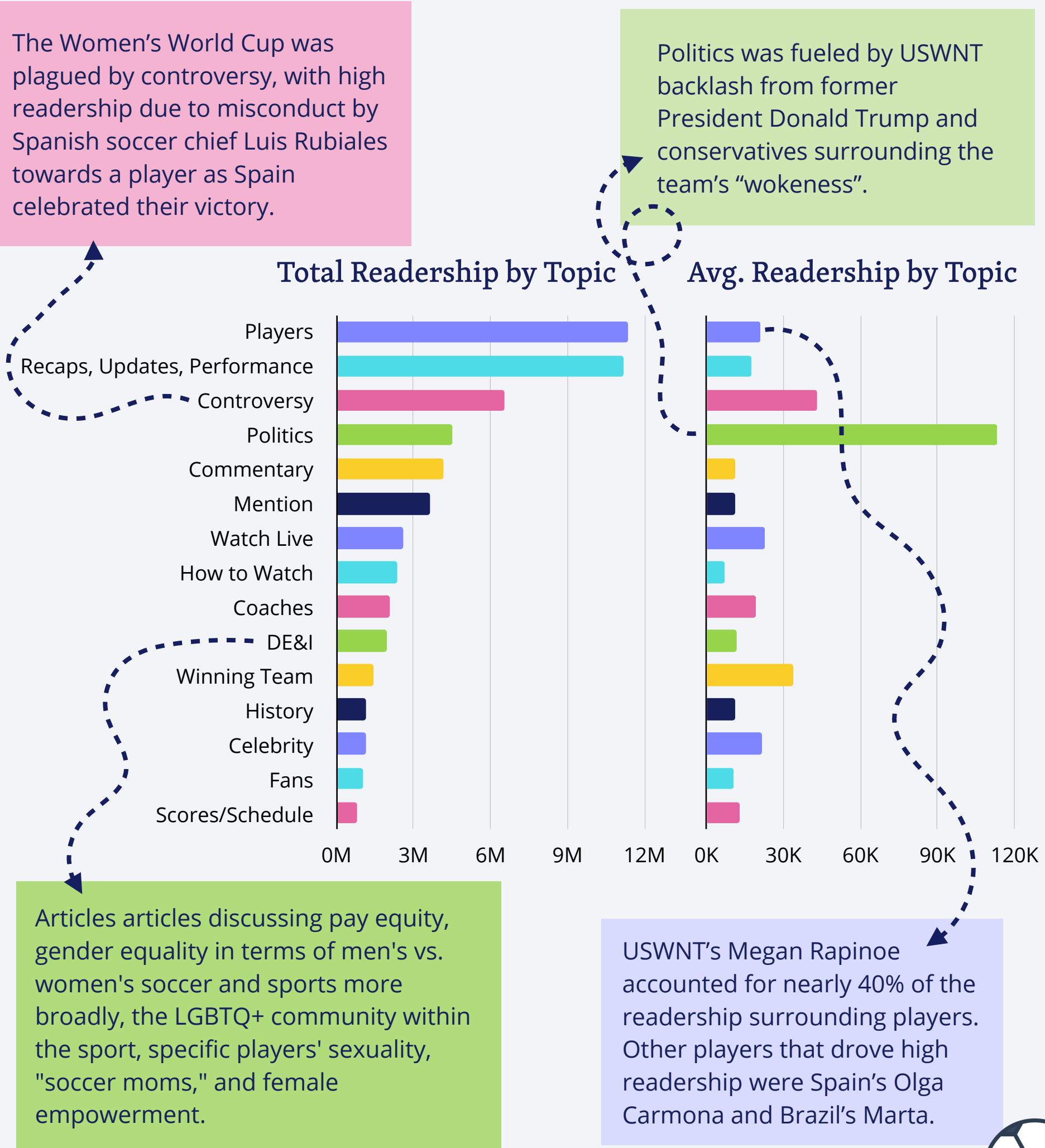
Readership Over Time: National + Sports Outlets



Women’s World Cup readership peaked during Week 3 following the **early exit of the U.S. Women’s National Team (USWNT)** after their loss to Sweden.

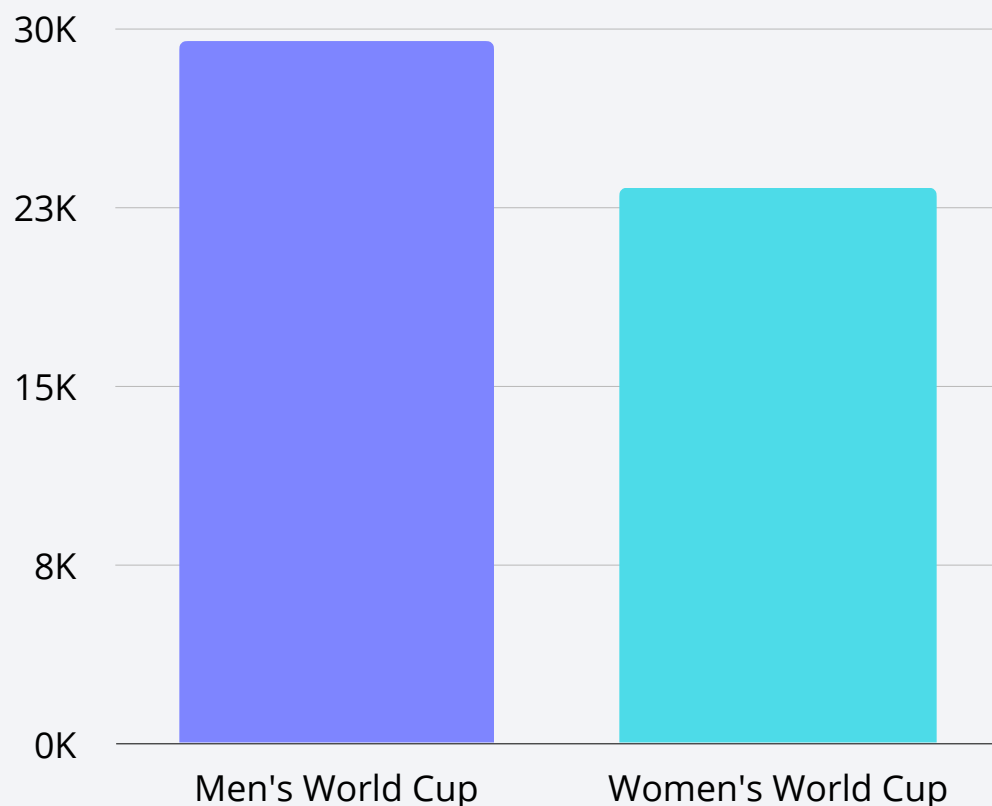
# WOMEN'S WORLD CUP READERSHIP DRIVERS

Readers were much more interested in politics and controversy as it relates to the Women's World Cup in terms of average readership rather than the players and the game itself.



# MEN'S VS. WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Average Readership: National Outlets



The 2022 Men's World Cup saw

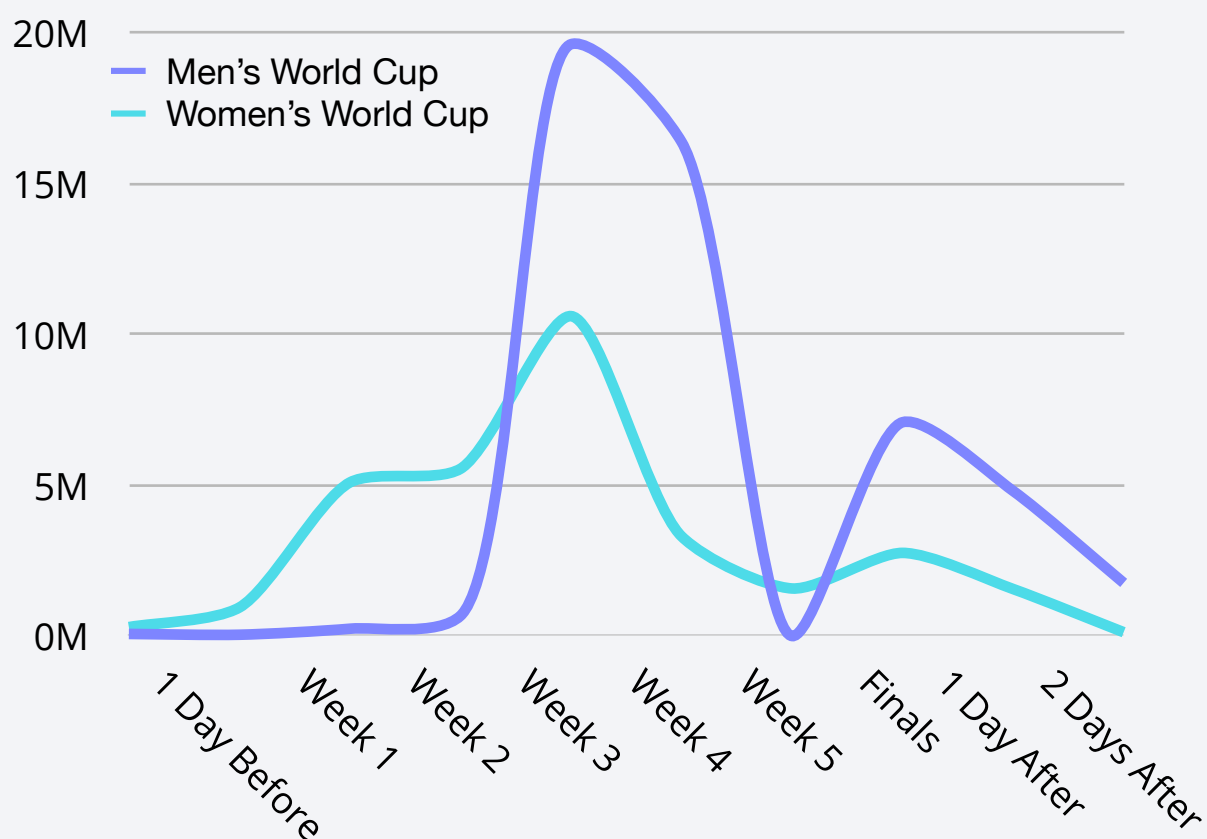
**26%**

more readers on national outlets compared to the 2023 Women's World Cup

The **Men's World Cup** drove higher readership on average compared to Women's World Cup readership. The higher average was largely fueled by the death of sports journalist Grant Wahl and player news.

## MEN'S VS. WOMEN'S READERSHIP OVER TIME

Readership Over Time: National Outlets

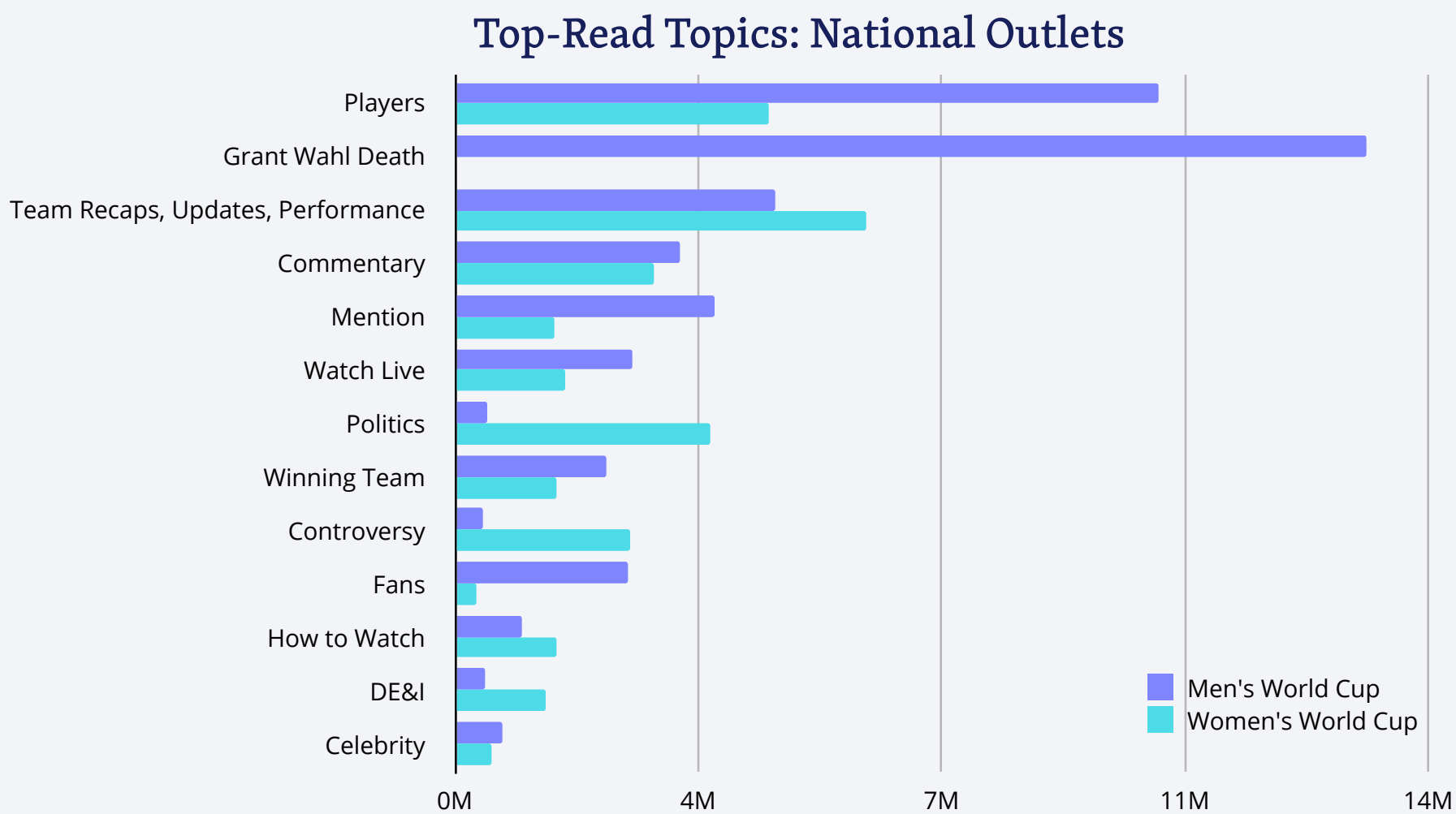


- Readership peaked during **Week 3** of the tournament for both men's and women's world cups due to game recaps, and team updates/performance.
- Readership saw a slight uptick during the finals, with the Men's World Cup finals capturing nearly **3x more readership than the women's final**.

\*The Women's world cup extended into week 5 with a 31 day duration of the tournament while the men's tournament consisted of 28 days

# MEN'S VS. WOMEN'S WORLD CUP TOPICS

The Women's World Cup saw greater interest in matters outside of the sport itself, including controversy, politics, and DE&I.



## Men's Topic Highlights

- ▶ Men's players attracted more than 2x the readership of women's players, especially surrounding Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.
- ▶ Argentina's win in the Men's World Cup garnered higher readership across national outlets compared to Spain's win in the Women's World Cup.
- ▶ Men's World Cup readership was highly fueled by the death of sports journalist Grant Wahl while covering the World Cup in Qatar.

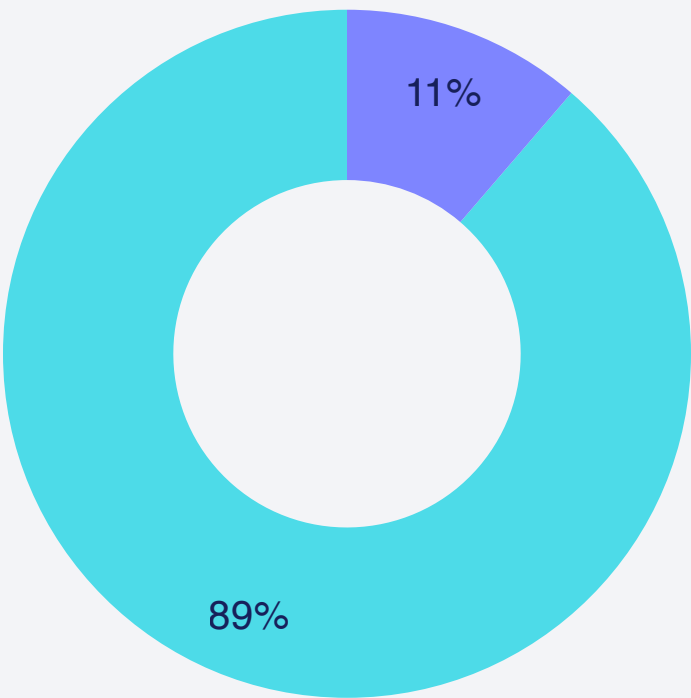
## Women's Topic Highlights

- ▶ The Women's World Cup saw nearly 7x more readership surrounding controversy compared to Men's, due to misconduct.
- ▶ Politics played a significantly larger role in the Women's World Cup compared to men's, as Donald Trump cheered the defeat of the USWNT and conservative backlash over the USWNT "wokeness".
- ▶ DE&I remains at the forefront of women's soccer. Ahead of the Women's World Cup final, FIFA President Gianni Infantino made controversial comments, "women should 'pick the right battles' to 'convince us, men, what we have to do' over equality issues in soccer".



# MEN’S VS. WOMEN’S U.S. NATIONAL TEAM

## Share of Coverage: National Outlets



- US Men's National Team
- US Women's National Team

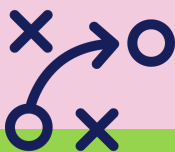
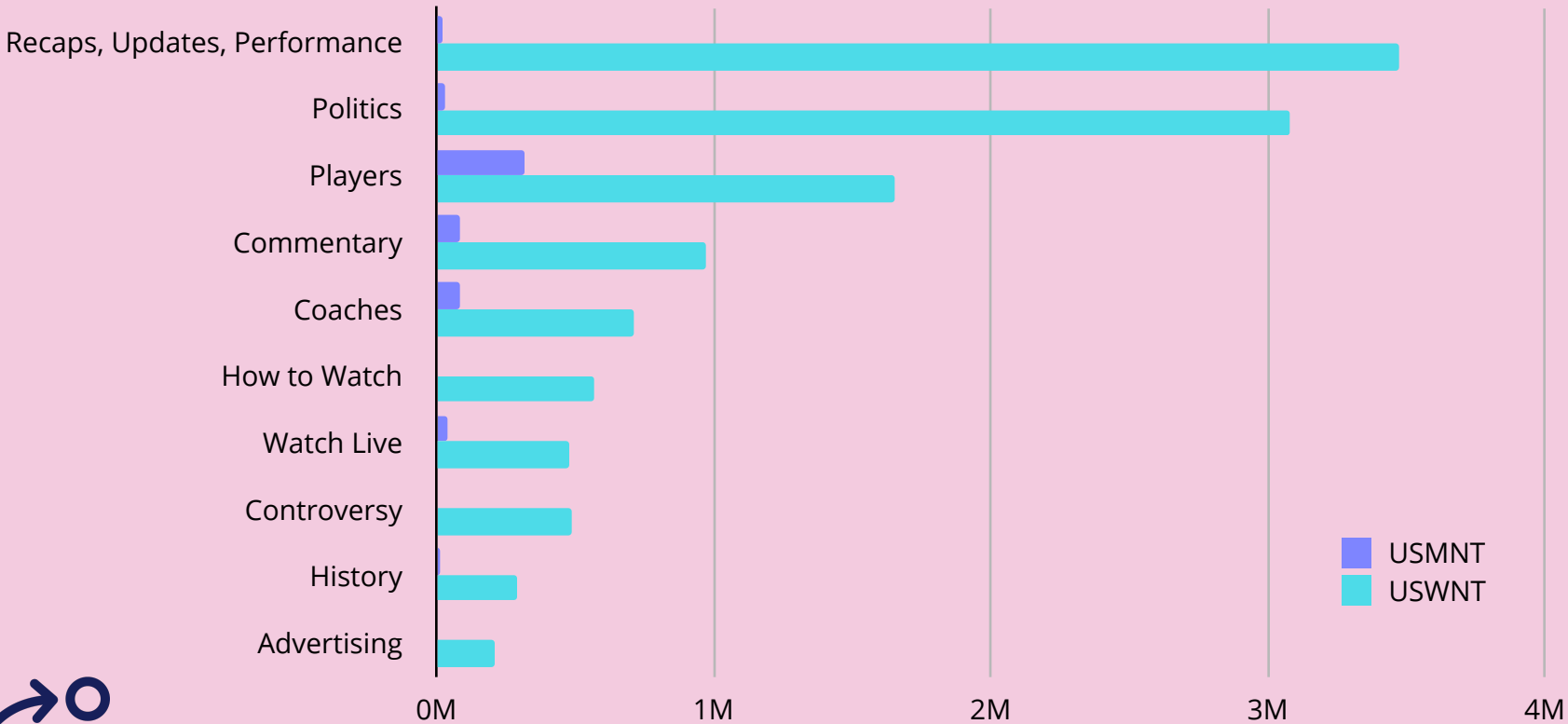
Despite Men’s World Cup seeing higher overall readership, the U.S. Women’s National Team (USWNT) saw nearly 8x more coverage than the men’s in national U.S. news outlets.

The USWNT was under more scrutiny compared to the U.S. Men’s National Team (USMNT), with coverage focused on their early exit from the tournament and politics.

Most-read articles surrounding the USWNT focused on the loss to Sweden which ended the team’s World Cup journey and political backlash against the team.

Several articles about the USWNT were negative in sentiment with the team being characterized as “disappointing” and “struggling”.

## Share of Readership by Topic



# Takeaways

- 1 **The Women's World Cup saw greater interest on matters outside of the sport itself**, including controversy, politics, and DE&I compared to the Men's World Cup.
- 2 **The U.S. Women's National Team was under more media scrutiny** compared to men's, receiving higher national coverage and readership relating to controversy, politics, and misconduct.
- 3 Despite the fight for sports equality, the **Men's World Cup captured higher national attention** than the Women's World Cup.
- 4 Both Men's and Women's World Cups saw **readership peak during the 3rd week of the tournament**.
- 5 Readers in the United States express **higher interest in Men's soccer players** compared to women's.





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