

A guide to watching sports if you don't have cable

October 7 2015, by Tali Arbel



In this Jan. 5, 2015, file photo, Joe Clayton, president and CEO of Dish Network, introduces the Sling TV, a live television streaming service, at a news conference at the International CES in Las Vegas. The online service carries ESPN and ESPN2, which show a slew of professional, college and other sports. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong, File)

It's football season, and baseball playoffs are starting. Don't have cable? You can still watch.

With a digital antenna, you get games for free on [broadcast networks](#) like Fox, NBC and Univision. Antennas start at \$20. For cable channels, you can always go to a bar.

Online subscriptions are primarily for games that don't involve local teams. Otherwise, games are shown after they are over. Subscriptions aren't cheap, but most cost less than a traditional cable package.

Plenty of sites also show [sports](#) for free without legal rights to do so. And many people ask friends or relatives who have a cable subscription for a password to log in to, say, ESPN's app.

To stay above board, here are options for watching in the U.S. Access outside the U.S. varies.

FOOTBALL: Some websites offer a few free games: One NFL [game](#) each for Yahoo and NBC; the Super Bowl and six others for CBS; Verizon customers also get some games on phones. For others, subscriptions are required.

— Verizon's NFL Mobile

THE DEAL: Live streaming of regular-season games televised nationally on Sunday, Monday and Thursday nights; Sunday afternoon game for the local team; and playoff games and the Super Bowl. You can also watch the NFL Network channel, which has sports talk shows and reality series as well as games.

LIMITATIONS: Only on Verizon phones.

PRICE: Free for Verizon subscribers.

— DirecTV's NFLSundayTicket.TV

THE DEAL: Live regular-season games on Sunday afternoons, about a dozen total. You can switch between games that are playing at the same time.

LIMITATIONS: Available only if you can't get DirecTV satellite service where you live, typically apartment buildings, or homes that have signal issues. No local teams. You can stream on only one device at a time.

PRICE: \$200 on a tablet, phone or computer, or \$260 on a TV using Roku, a game console or Chromecast. \$360 for access on both. College and graduate students get both options for \$100.

— NFL GamePass

THE DEAL: Live audio only.

LIMITATIONS: Video of regular season and playoffs only after games are over (after all games are done for Sunday afternoons).

PRICE: \$100 for the full season, though prices come down as the season goes on. On [mobile devices](#) and computers, Apple TV and Xbox One.



In this June 7, 2015, file photo, Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James, left, shoots against Golden State Warriors forward Marreese Speights during the first half of Game 2 of basketball's NBA Finals in Oakland, Calif. There are several options for sports fans without cable to watch live games. (Kyle Terada/USA Today via AP, Pool, File)

BASEBALL: Playoffs will be shown on Fox, which is a free channel, and TBS, Fox Sports 1 and MLB Network, which are not. You can also access the playoffs online.

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— MLB.TV

THE DEAL: Live regular-season games. Audio only for postseason, unless you have a cable-subscription password for MLB Network, TBS

and Fox.

LIMITATIONS: Hometown team isn't shown live, whether at home or away. Nationally televised games, including the playoffs, are also unavailable live unless you have a password. Otherwise, wait 90 minutes after games end for video.

PRICE: For a full season, \$110 on computers only, \$130 on mobile devices and streaming gadgets as well. The price goes down throughout the season. For an extra \$5, you can get alternative camera angles for some postseason games—not what's shown on TV.

MEN'S BASKETBALL: A streaming subscription is available, but few options for local teams.

— NBA League Pass

THE DEAL: Live video during the regular season.

LIMITATIONS: Your hometown team won't be available until three days after the game. Games televised on ABC, ESPN, TNT or NBA TV won't be live, but available three hours after they end.

PRICE: \$200 for all games. \$120 for one out-of-market team's games, though if this team plays your hometown team, you won't get it. \$7 per game. On phones, tablets, computers and streaming devices.

— TNT Overtime

THE DEAL: Usually Thursday night regular-season games, and more [playoff games](#).

LIMITATIONS: You can see the court from four different camera angles, but it's not the same view of the action that you'd get on TV.

PRICE: Free. On phones, tablets and computers.



In this June 26, 2015, file photo, St. Louis Cardinals' Kolten Wong, left, is tagged out by Chicago Cubs catcher Miguel Montero during the first inning of a baseball game, in St. Louis. There are several options for fans without cable to watch live sports. (AP Photo/Jeff Roberson, File)

MULTIPLE SPORTS: It's like getting cable delivered over the Internet.

— Dish Network's Sling TV

THE DEAL: The online service carries ESPN and ESPN2, which show a slew of professional, college and other sports. Other channels for extra fee.

LIMITATIONS: If you're on a phone, you can't watch live NFL games, given Verizon's [deal](#) with the league. There are also local-market blackouts for baseball and basketball games. Sling works on only one device at a time.

PRICE: \$20 a month for the main package, \$5 extra for soccer-focused channels and \$5 for a "sports extra" package with SEC Network and other channels. On computers, mobile devices and streaming devices.

— Sony's PlayStation Vue



In this Sept. 20, 2015 file photo, Seattle Seahawks' Marshawn Lynch is tripped up by Green Bay Packers' Nick Perry (53) during the first half of an NFL football game, in Green Bay, Wis. There are several options for sports fans without cable to watch live games. (AP Photo/Jeffrey Phelps, File)

THE DEAL: The TV service lets customers watch a variety of channels, including Fox Sports 1, TNT, most broadcast networks and some local sports channels. Disney-owned ABC and ESPN aren't included.

LIMITATIONS: Available only in Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, Philadelphia, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Requires a PlayStation game console. Some nationally broadcast games may be blacked out.

PRICE: \$50 a month gets you broadcast networks and sports cable channels like Fox Sports 1 and NBCSN, while \$60 gets you the basic

package plus Big Ten Network, beIN Sports and local sports channels. Extra \$15 for soccer-focused service, Fox Soccer Plus.

WHAT ELSE?

There are sites and services for almost any sport you'd want to watch. Subscriptions are typically required.

For instance, go to willow.tv for cricket, nhl.com/gamecenterlive for hockey, foxsoccer2go.com and fubo.tv for soccer, and icenetwork.com for ice skating.

College sports are tricky. The CBS Sports site and app streams basketball games—last season, there were 27 free ones, but this year's streaming schedule hasn't been announced—and Southeastern Conference football games. The company also offers College Sports Live, but most football games only get an audio feed, not video. Fox has some Big East college sports online.

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