



March Madness Sites Score Traffic
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American sports fans hit the Web in full force for March Madness 2004, sending traffic to related sites soaring. The moniker represents the month-long National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments, which determine the champions of college basketball.

[Hitwise](#) measured U.S. visits to the Fantasy category that encompasses Web sites that offer services, statistics and maintenance tools for fantasy sports games, finding 175 percent growth since the week ending Feb. 7, 2004, and traffic to the Basketball category grew 163 percent during the same time period.

Largest Increases in Share of U.S. Visits to Sports Fantasy and Basketball Sites, week ending March 20, 2004	
Site	Growth
ESPN Men's Tournament Challenge	+2820%
Yahoo! Sports Tournament Pick 'em	+1290%
NCAA Sports	+722%
ESPN Fantasy Games	+164%
Sportsline College Basketball	+163%
Source: Hitwise	

[Nielsen//NetRatings](#) reported that sports and March Madness-related sites attracted 20 million unique visitors from home, sending traffic soaring as much as 69 percent in a key one-week period.

Fastest Growing Sports Sites, week ending March 14, 2004 (U.S., Home)			
Brand or Channel	3/7 Unique Audience	3/14 Unique Audience	Growth
AOL Sports	1,231,000	2,080,000	69%
Sportsline.com	1,050,000	1,637,000	56%
Fox Sports	581,000	801,000	38%
USATODAY.com Sports	496,000	660,000	33%
SI.com	1,056,000	1,328,000	26%
ESPN	4,493,000	5,223,000	16%
Yahoo! Sports	2,396,000	2,781,000	16%
Source: Nielsen//NetRatings			

Hitwise found that roughly 16 percent of U.S. traffic to sports-related Web sites is for those in the Fantasy category, while Basketball captures 14.6 percent, and College accounts for 11.1 percent of the visits. Compared to March Madness 2003, visits to the Basketball and College categories have increased by 150 percent and 269 percent respectively.

Of the fantasy and basketball sites that Hitwise tracked for the week ending March 20, visitors spent the most time at ESPN Men's Tournament Challenge, logging 13 minutes and 33 seconds per session, followed by Yahoo! Sports Tournament Pick 'em at 9 minutes and 2 seconds.

The visitors to Hitwise's College, Basketball, and Fantasy categories were predominantly male, however, much fewer females were visiting Fantasy sites than the College and Basketball sites. College basketball visitors were slightly older than Basketball and Fantasy site visitors, and the majority of visitors to any of the three category sites had annual household incomes of \$75,000 per year or more.

Demographics of U.S. Visitors to College, Basketball, and Fantasy Sites		
Category	Male	Age
College	64%	35-44
Basketball	64%	25-34
Fantasy	73%	25-34

Source: Hitwise